



Spice up Family Meals with Home-Canned Salsa

Salsa can be a fun and easy way to preserve peak-of-season tomatoes and other garden produce for enjoyment all year round. And all ages find that salsa adds a welcome spice to any meal.

Use only high quality tomatoes for canning salsa or any other tomato product. Canning is not a way to use overripe or damaged tomatoes, or tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines, as these may cause the product to spoil and be unsafe to eat.

Italian plum-style or paste tomatoes will produce thicker salsas than large slicing tomatoes. You can thicken salsas by adding tomato paste or by draining off some of the liquid after you chop the tomatoes. Never, however, add flour or cornstarch to salsa before canning, as an unsafe product may result.

Peppers add color and heat to salsa recipes. Use high quality peppers, and do not increase the total amount of peppers in any one recipe. However, you may substitute one type of pepper for another, or use canned chilies in place of fresh. Small fiery hot peppers and mild bell-type peppers add unique characteristics to any salsa. Use caution, though: the volatile oils in hot peppers can cause burns. Wear gloves when you cut or dice these peppers. They can cause extreme irritation. Do not touch your face, particularly near your eyes. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water if you do handle hot peppers.

Tomatillos and fresh fruits can also be added to salsa, if the recipe directs. Carefully wash and prepare all garden produce according to the recipe directions. Do not attempt to can a recipe that has not been tested for safety, as food spoilage or a food borne illness may be the result. Untested recipes can often be successfully frozen, then thawed in the refrigerator before serving.

Adding acid is necessary to safely preserve salsa. Follow the recipe directions for adding vinegar (5 percent acetic acid) or bottled lemon juice to home canned salsa. Do not substitute vinegar for lemon juice unless this substitution is given in the recipe, or an unsafe product may result.

More information and recipes can be found in *Canning Salsa Safely* (B3570), which is part of The Wisconsin Safe Food Preservation Series by Barbara Ingham. The series also includes: *Canning Fruits Safely* (B0430), *Making Jams, Jellies and Preserves* (B2909), *Canning Vegetables Safely* (B1159), *Freezing Fruits and Vegetables* (B3278), *Homemade Pickles and Relishes* (B2267), *Tomatoes Tart and Tasty* (B2605), and *Canning Meat, Wild Game, Poultry and Fish Safely* (B3345). The publications are available from Outagamie County UW-Extension office or from Cooperative Extension Publications (877-947-7827) and online at <http://learningshop.uwex.edu>. There is a fee for the publications; some are printable online free of charge.

Salsa Recipes

Tomato Taco Sauce

8 quarts paste tomatoes, peeled, cored, and finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, crushed
5 cups onions, chopped (~5 medium)
4 jalapeño peppers, seeded and chopped
4 long green chilies, seeded and chopped
2-1/2 cups vinegar (5% acetic acid) or bottled lemon juice
2 tbsp. salt
1 tbsp. red or black pepper
1 tbsp. sugar
2 tbsp. oregano leaves
1 tsp. ground cumin

Yield: 11 pints

Combine ingredients in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer. Stir frequently until thick, about one hour. Ladle hot salsa into hot pint jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Clean jar rims and cap with properly pretreated lids. Adjust lids. Process in a boiling water canner for 20 minutes.

Note: This recipe works best with paste tomatoes such as Roma VF. Slicing tomatoes will yield a thin, watery sauce. Caution: Do not thicken salsa before canning; a thickening agent such as flour or cornstarch can be added before serving, or simply drain some liquid from the salsa before using.

Tomato/Tomato Paste Salsa

Note: This recipe works best with paste tomatoes, but slicing tomatoes will also work.

3 quarts tomatoes, peeled and chopped
4 cups green peppers, chopped (~2 large bell peppers)
12-ounce jar jalapeño peppers (in vinegar, drained)
1 cup long green chilies, seeded and chopped (~3 chilies)
3 cups onions, chopped (~3 medium)
3 cups celery, chopped
4 cloves garlic, minced
2 12-ounce cans tomato paste
2 cups bottled lemon juice
1 tbsp salt
1 cup sugar
1 tbsp ground cumin

Yield: 16 pints

Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and continue boiling for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Ladle hot salsa into hot pint jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Clean jar rims and cap with properly pretreated lids. Adjust lids. Process in a boiling water canner for 20 minutes.

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Peach Apple Salsa

6 cups (2-1/4 pounds) chopped Roma tomatoes (about 3 pounds tomatoes as purchased)
2-1/2 cups diced yellow onions (about 1 pound or 2 large as purchased)
2 cups chopped green bell peppers (about 1-1/2 large peppers as purchased)
10 cups (3-1/2 pounds) chopped hard, unripe peaches (about 9 medium peaches or 4-1/2 pounds as purchased peaches)
2 cups chopped Granny Smith apples (about 2 large apples as purchased)
4 tablespoons mixed pickling spice
1 tablespoon canning salt
2 teaspoons crushed red pepper flakes
3-3/4 cups (1-1/4 pound) packed light brown sugar
2-1/4 cups cider vinegar (5%)
Yield: About 7 pint jars

Procedure:

1. Wash and rinse pint canning jars; keep hot until ready to use. Prepare lids according to manufacturer's directions.
 2. Place pickling spice on a clean, double-layered, 6-inch-square piece of 100 % cheesecloth. Bring corners together and tie with a clean string. (Or use a purchased muslin spice bag).
 3. Wash and peel tomatoes (place washed tomatoes in boiling water for one minute, immediately place in cold water, and slip off skins). Chop into 1/2-inch pieces. Peel, wash and dice onions into 1/4-inch pieces. Wash, core, and seed bell peppers; chop into 1/4-inch pieces. Combine chopped tomatoes, onions and peppers in an 8- or 10- quart Dutch oven or saucepot.
 4. Wash, peel and pit peaches; cut into halves and soak for 10 minutes in an ascorbic acid solution (1500 mg in half gallon water). Wash, peel and core apples; cut into halves and soak for 10 minutes in ascorbic acid solution. Quickly chop peaches and apples into 1/2-inch cubes to prevent browning. Add chopped peaches and apples.
 5. Add the pickling spice bag to the saucepot; stir in the salt, red pepper flakes, brown sugar and vinegar. Bring to boiling, stirring gently to mix ingredients. Reduce heat and simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove spice bag from pan and discard.
 6. With a slotted spoon, fill salsa solids into hot, clean pint jars, leaving 1-1/4-inch headspace (about 3/4 pound solids in each jar). Cover with cooking liquid, leaving 1/2-inch headspace.
 7. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened, clean paper towel; apply two-piece metal canning lids.
 8. Process in a boiling water canner for 15 minutes.
- Serving Suggestion:* Serve as a side with or spooned on top of grilled pork chops or any grilled meat.

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