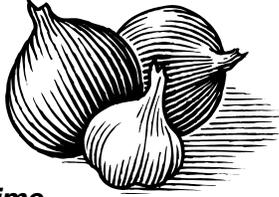


## 10. As a Margin of Safety

Boil the food for 15 minutes at least, before eating it. If you are baking the home canned product, it must reach 165° F.



## 11. Processing Time

If you're processing time was interrupted, or the pressure dipped below the required level for even seconds start counting the time from zero and continue for the full recommended time.

## 12. Storing Your Preserved Food

Clean the jars after they have completely cooled. You can add vinegar to the water in your pressure canner or boiling water bath canner to eliminate hard water on the jars and in the canners.

Test for a good seal, remove rings, label jars with the recipe used and date canned. Inventory and rotate your food storage!

**A sealed jar is not necessarily a safe jar.**



For More Information  
Contact a  
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# IMPORTANT CANNING DO'S AND DON'TS



Most important, always follow a USDA  
approved canning recipe.

## PREPARATION

### **1. Use Current, Tested Recipes**

University of Idaho and USDA resources are listed below:

- USDA Ag. Information Bulletin No. 539 Complete Guide to Home Canning
- Ball Blue Book of Preserving, 2005 or newer
- Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving, 2006
- So Easy to Preserve Fifth Edition, 2006  
University of Georgia
- Current UI Publications available at your local Extension Office

### **Websites:**

- National Center for Home Food Preservation:  
<http://www.uga.edu/nchfp>
- University of Idaho  
CALs Publishing:  
<http://www.info.ag.uidaho.edu/catalog/catalog.html>
- Jarden Home Brands: Ball Fresh Preserving:  
<http://www.homecanning.com/>



### **2. Don't Make UP Your Own Canning Recipes!**

Don't add thickeners, oil or low acid vegetables like peppers, garlic or onions to any tested recipe. Don't change amounts.

### **Feel Free To Make These Exceptions to the Rule:**

- Change the salt level in anything EXCEPT pickles.
- Change the sugar level in syrups used for canned fruits.
- Add extra vinegar or lemon juice.
- Decrease ANY vegetable EXCEPT tomatoes in salsas.
- Substitute bell peppers, long green peppers, or jalapeno peppers for each other in salsas **AS LONG AS THE TOTAL AMOUNT** of peppers in the tested recipe is **NOT** increased or decreased.

### **3. If you're in doubt about the safety of a recipe -- FREEZE it!**

If you make up your own recipe, or change a tested one in ANY way, freezing is a safe alternative to preserve foods. Or follow a tested recipe and adjust it when you prepare the food to serve.

### **4. Tomatoes need added acid as a margin of safety – this includes salsas! For salsas – follow a tested recipe exactly!**

For tomatoes, add 1 tablespoon commercially prepared lemon juice to each pint or 2 tablespoons per quart. This will affect flavor, so sugar may be added to mask the tartness. Or, add ¼ teaspoon crystalline CITRIC (NOT ascorbic) acid per pint or ½ teaspoon per quart. Citric acid is usually available where canning supplies are sold or at the pharmacy.



### **5. Don't use over-ripe, bruised, frozen or low quality produce when canning.**

Preservation doesn't improve the quality of any food. It's a waste of time and energy to try to "hide" inferior quality produce in preserved foods. Also, the microbe level could be higher than normal so processing will not kill all the bacteria that can cause spoilage. In time, jars may spoil in storage.

## PROCEDURES

### **6. Adjust Processing Times and Pressure Used For YOUR Elevation!**

This could be the most common mistake home canners make. For boiling water canning of high acid foods, add processing time for any tested recipe, depending on your altitude.

Canner pressure needs to be adjusted for your specific elevation. Add pounds pressure when using both a dial and a weighted gauge canner. For finding out what your elevation is, contact your local University of Idaho Extension Office or find your elevation at the following website:

<http://www.topozone.com/>

### **7. Have your pressure canner dial gauge tested often to help insure the safety of your home canned foods.**

Annually is recommended. However, if the lid is bumped or the needle is jumping, have it tested again. UI Extension Offices have details about testing.

### **8. Choose and use the proper equipment for the job.**

All food must be processed either in a pressure canner or a boiling water canner following a tested recipe. Pressure canners are used for low acid foods. Boiling water canners are used for high acid foods. A pressure saucepan is NOT a substitute for a pressure canner.

Use regulation canning jars and new lids. Follow manufacturer's directions for preheating lids and tightening screw bands.

### **9. Pressure Canners**

Vent steam from the canner for 10 minutes to insure the temperature is high enough inside the canner, before placing on the weight. After processing time, and the pressure has returned to zero, wait 2 minutes, then remove the weight from the vent. Unlock and remove lid, making sure that the steam escapes away from you. Let jars sit in the canner for 10 minutes to adjust to the lower temperature in the room. Cool canned foods according to current directions. Don't speed cooling of the canner or the jars. Microbes are still being killed as the jars are cooling.

