

Canning Meats & Poultry

Meats and poultry are low acid foods (pH above 4.6) that provide a good environment for the growth of *Clostridium botulinum*, the cause of deadly foodborne botulism. Please remind your friends and neighbors that no safe way to use a boiling water canner for these foods exists; meats and poultry must be pressure canned for safety.

Canning Meat (Strips, Cubes or Chunks of Bear, Beef, Lamb, Pork, Sausage, Veal or Venison)

Choose high quality, chilled meat. If frozen, thaw completely in the refrigerator, under cold running water or in the microwave. Remove excess fat. Soak strong-flavored wild meats for 1 hour in brine water containing 1 tablespoon of salt per quart. Rinse. Remove large bones. Cut into 1-inch wide strips, cubes or chunks.

- Hot pack – Precook meat until rare by roasting, stewing, or browning in a small amount of fat. Add ½ teaspoon of salt per pint or 1 teaspoon of salt per quart to the jar, if desired. Pack hot meat loosely into hot jars leaving 1-inch headspace. Fill jars with boiling broth, meat drippings, water, or tomato juice (especially for wild game) to 1 inch from top of jar. Remove bubbles, wipe jar rims, adjust lids and process in pressure canner.
- Raw pack – Add 1 teaspoon per pint or 2 teaspoons of salt per quart to the jar, if desired. Fill jars with raw meat pieces, leaving 1-inch headspace. Do not add liquid. Wipe jar rims adjust lids and process in pressure canner.

For hot and raw pack jars of meat, process pints for 75 minutes and quarts for 90 minutes.

- Dial-gauge pressure canner - process jars at 11 pounds pressure (altitudes of 0 to 2,000 ft) or at 12 pounds pressure (altitudes of 2,001 to 4,000 ft).
- Weighted gauge pressure canner - process jars at 10 pounds pressure (altitudes of 0 to 1,000 ft) or at 15 pounds pressure (altitudes above 1,000 ft).

Canning Poultry (Chicken, Duck, Goose, Turkey, Game Birds) or Rabbit

Choose freshly killed, dressed, healthy animals. For more flavor use large chickens, not fryers. Chill dressed poultry for 6 to 12 hours before canning. Soak dressed rabbits for 1 hour in salt water (1 tablespoon salt per quart) and rinse. Remove excess fat. Cut poultry or rabbit into suitable sizes for canning. Can with or without bones. The hot pack is preferred for best liquid cover and quality during storage. Natural poultry fat and juices are usually not enough to cover the meat in raw packs.

- Hot pack – Boil, steam or bake meat until about two-thirds done. Add 1 teaspoon salt per quart to the jar, if desired. Fill jars with pieces and hot broth, leaving 1-1/4 inch headspace.
- Raw pack – Add 1 teaspoon salt per quart, if desired. Fill jars loosely with raw meat pieces, leaving 1-1/4 inch headspace. Do not add liquid.

For jars of poultry or rabbit without bones (both hot and raw pack), process pints for 75 minutes and quarts for 90 minutes. For jars of poultry or rabbit with included bones (both hot and raw pack), process pints for 65 minutes and quarts for 75 minutes.

- Dial-gauge pressure canner - process jars at 11 pounds pressure (altitudes of 0 to 2,000 ft) or at 12 pounds pressure (altitudes of 2,001 to 4,000 ft).
- Weighted gauge pressure canner - process jars at 10 pounds pressure (altitudes of 0 to 1,000 ft) or at 15 pounds pressure (altitudes above 1,000 ft).

Safe procedures for canning chicken or turkey stock, ground or chopped meat, meat stock, meat soups, mincemeat pie filling or chili con carne can be found in “So Easy to Preserve” and at the [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#). Procedures for canning seafood will be provided in an upcoming Canning Coach Tip.

For more Tips, see [Carolina Canning Tips](#).

Note: Remember that spoilage and disease-causing microorganisms thrive on meats and poultry. Following the four “C’s” (clean, chill, don’t cross contaminate, and pressure can properly) is critical to producing safe, high quality canned meats

Sources:

- Andress, E.A. and J.H. Harrison, eds. 5th ed. 2006. So Easy to Preserve. Cooperative Extension Service, University of Georgia, Athens.
- Andress, E.A. and J.H. Harrison, eds. 6th ed. 2014. So Easy to Preserve. Cooperative Extension Service, University of Georgia, Athens.
- [HGIC 3515. Safe Handling of Wild Game Birds](#). P.H. Schmutz, R.D. Willey, and E.H. Hoyle. Revised 2/07
- [HGIC 3516. Safe Handling of Wild Game Meats](#). P.H. Schmutz, R.D. Willey, and E.H. Hoyle. Revised 3/07
- National Center for Home Food Preservation. [How Do I... Can Meats? Preparing and Canning Poultry, Red Meats and Seafoods](#).