



Prepare and Preserve Homemade Salsa

Salsa is one of the most popular condiments used today. Because of its popularity, many cooks want to prepare and can salsa at home.

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Most salsa recipes are a mixture of low-acid foods like onions and peppers, and acid foods such as tomatoes or fruit. It's recommended to follow a USDA tested recipe if you'd like to preserve salsa rather than experiment with your own homemade recipe. The proportions of the tomatoes, peppers, herbs and other vegetables will determine which method of

canning should be used. If the final pH of the salsa is less than 4.6, then the boiling water canning method can be used. However, if the mixture is less acidic, then pressure canning would be necessary.

It's important to note that canning salsa is not a good way to use overripe or spoiling tomatoes. Use only high quality tomatoes. Paste tomatoes, such as Roma, have firmer flesh and produce a thicker salsa. Large slicing tomatoes will produce a thinner, more watery salsa. Do not use tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines. Poor quality or overripe tomatoes will produce very poor or unsafe salsa.

Below is a USDA tested salsa recipe which you can try. If you do not wish to preserve it, you can consume it as a fresh product. Store it for up to a week in the refrigerator or freeze it for up to one year.

Tomato/Tomato Paste Salsa

- 3 quarts peeled, cored, chopped slicing tomatoes

- 3 cups chopped onions
- 6 jalapeño peppers, seeded, finely chopped
- 4 long green chilies, seeded, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 12-oz cans tomato paste
- 2 cups bottled lemon or lime juice
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- 1 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 Tbsp. ground cumin (optional)
- 2 Tbsp. oregano leaves (optional)
- 1 tsp. black pepper

Yields:

7 to 8 pints

A word of caution

Wear plastic or rubber gloves and do not touch your face while handling or cutting hot peppers. If you do not wear gloves, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face or eyes.

Directions:

- Peel, wash, and chop onions.
- Wash tomatoes and dip in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds or until skins split.
- Dip in cold water, slip off skins, and remove cores.
- Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Fill hot salsa into hot jars, leaving ½ inch of headspace.
- Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace, if needed.
- Wipe rims of jars with a dampened, clean paper towel.
- Adjust lids.
- Process pint jars in a boiling water bath for 15 minutes.