

## What about Salsa?

When you home-bottle salsa, you want to use a recipe that has been scientifically tested and found safe from microorganism growth. Because salsas combine low acid foods (i.e., onions, peppers, etc.) with semi-acid foods (i.e., tomatoes), it is critical to make sure the recipe we are using has enough acidity to counterbalance the low-acid products. It is not recommended to home-can your favorite salsa, unless it is from an approved source.

When making salsas from an approved source, the only changes you can safely make are:

1. Substitute bottled lemon or bottled lime juice for vinegar in the approved recipe. Some people don't like the taste of vinegar. If you prefer a milder tasting acid, use bottled lemon juice. However, because lemon juice (citric acid) is a stronger acid than vinegar (acetic acid), you cannot substitute vinegar in a recipe that calls for lemon juice. Additionally, use **bottled** lemon juice, which has a consistent pH level. Fresh lemons vary in acidity from lemon to lemon.
2. Change the types of dried spices and herbs, but keep the amounts the same.
3. Reduce the number of hot peppers, but proportionally increase the number of sweet peppers and onions. For example, if your recipe calls for  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of hot peppers, but you prefer mild salsa, reduce to  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of hot peppers and add an additional  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup of sweet peppers to the recipe.

### **DO NOT...**

- DO NOT use a recipe that is from a friend of a friend of a friend or from your favorite relative... unless it has been tested or is from an approved source! There are many delicious salsa recipes in the USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning (available @ [http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/usda/4\\_USDAcanningGuide3\\_06.pdf](http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/usda/4_USDAcanningGuide3_06.pdf)) and in the Ball Blue Book (available @ <http://www.freshpreserving.com/> then click on Recipes and Salsas).
- DO NOT change the thickness by adding more vegetables or tomatoes than the recipe calls for.
- DO NOT change the thickness by adding cornstarch, flour, clear jel, etc.
- DO NOT forget to add the acid (lemon juice or vinegar)

What if I have a favorite salsa recipe?

- A. Make it and eat it FRESH! This is how you like it, so enjoy it this way!
- B. Make it and FREEZE it in small containers. Leave a  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch head-space and tightly close. It will last in your freezer for 3 to 5 months, perhaps longer.
- C. Make it and process it using a Pressure Canner. You'll need to process it for the same length of time needed for green peppers or dried beans depending on your recipe. Follow procedures for those exactly. This will make your recipe safe from possible botulism poisoning, but will over-process everything else in the jar and it won't taste the same as the fresh salsa you love and enjoy!

Try our USU Extension Generic Salsa Recipe (see instructions on the other side). Amounts are per jar, so increase amount proportionally to do one full batch (9 pints).

# UtahStateUniversity

## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

Boiling Water Canning

### GENERIC SALSA

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#### Generic Salsa Recipe –per pint jar

(multiply quantities by desired yield)

¼ cup bottled lemon or lime juice\*

½ cup tomatoes (peeled, deseeded\*\*, and diced to approx ¼")

½ cup any combination of onions, bell peppers (diced to approx. ¼") and pureed hot peppers including seeds (other vegetables not permitted)

¼-½ tsp salt\*\*\* (up to 1 tsp)

0-1 tsp dry spice (cumin, pepper, garlic powder, celery seeds, coriander)

\*This recipe was designed to use ¼ cup bottled lemon or lime juice per 1 pint salsa. Do not use fresh squeezed juice or vinegar or alter this acidification procedure. Doing so may not safely acidify the salsa resulting in a risk of botulism.

\*\*Drain and discard tomato juices for a thicker salsa

\*\*\*Optional

**Procedure:** Peel tomatoes by placing them in boiling water for approximately 1 minute or until skins loosen. Plunge in cold water, then peel skins and discard them. Peel onion skins. Wash peppers. Dice all vegetables to approximately ¼ inch cubes.

Puree hot peppers including seeds (the heat of hot peppers is concentrated in seeds). **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.**

**Hot pack** – combine vegetable ingredients in a saucepan. Add salt and up to 1 tsp (total) of dry spice as desired. Heat salsa to boiling with constant stirring. Pour ¼ cup bottled lemon or lime juice into each clean pint canning jar. Pour in hot salsa ingredients leaving ½ inch headspace. Attach 2 piece canning lid. Invert jar several times to mix salsa and lemon/lime juice. Process using the following recommendations:

#### **Recommended process time for Generic Salsa in a BOILING-WATER canner**

Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time at Altitudes of			
		0 – 1,000 ft	1,001 – 3,000 ft	3,001 – 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Pints	15 min	20 min	20 min	25 min

Sources:

Hillers, V.A. & Doughter, R. (1996, rev. 2000). Salsa recipes for canning. Washington State University Cooperative Extension.

USDA. (1994, rev 1999). USDA Complete guide to home canning. Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 539. Retrieved from

[http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/usda/utah\\_can\\_guide\\_00.pdf](http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/usda/utah_can_guide_00.pdf)

Nummer, B.A., Thacker, M., D'Sa, E.M., & Andress, E.L. (2004). Studies on safe acidification of salsa for home boiling water canning. University of Georgia. Retrieved May 15, 2008 from [http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/papers/2004/04ift-tomatosalsaPoster\\_combined.html](http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/papers/2004/04ift-tomatosalsaPoster_combined.html)