

Canning Tomatoes

Easter H. Tucker
Associate Professor -
Nutrition

Introduction

What reminds you more of summer than those red delicious tomatoes hanging on the vine? They are just as tasty from your garden, the neighbor's garden or the local farmer's market. With proper canning equipment and a reliable recipe, you can enjoy those tomatoes when the vines have long withered away. Did you know tomatoes are canned more than any other produce from the garden? They may be canned in a variety of ways – crushed, whole or halved. Let's look at safe ways to process tomatoes.



tomatoes, use the recommendations in Table 1. Acidification is required when pressure canning or boiling water bathing tomatoes.

General Instructions

Selection – Tomatoes have a pH close to 4.6, and some precautions should be taken to can them safely. Use only firm, ripe tomatoes that have no spoiled parts or mold. Do not can tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines. These tomatoes are low in acid. They can be eaten fresh or frozen, but do not can them. Green tomatoes are more acidic than ripened fruit and can be canned safely with any of the following recommendations. For best results, process tomatoes as soon after harvest as possible.

Acidification – Tomatoes have a pH between 4 and 4.6. To ensure safe acidity of whole, crushed or juiced

Add acid directly to the jars before filling with tomatoes. If desired, add up to 1 tablespoon of sugar per quart to offset acidic taste. Vinegar may cause undesirable flavor changes.

Sodium – The use of salt is optional in all canned tomato products. Salt can be used for flavor or color protection.

Processing

Even though both boiling water bath and pressure processing times are given (see Tables 2 and 3), recent research shows that for some tomato products, pressure processing will result in a more nutritious and higher

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Table 1. Acidity recommendations for canning tomatoes

| Acid | Pint | Quart |
|-----------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Bottled lemon juice | 1 tablespoon | 2 tablespoons |
| Citric acid | ¼ teaspoon | ½ teaspoon |
| Vinegar (5 percent acidity) | 2 tablespoons | 4 tablespoons |

quality canned good. Recipes that specify pressure canning only may contain many low-acid ingredients and can only be safely canned in a pressure canner at the specified pressure and time.

Crushed Tomatoes (no added liquid)

About 22 pounds of tomatoes are needed per canner load of 7 quarts; 14 pounds are needed per canner load of 9 pints.

Wash tomatoes and dip in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds or until skins split, then dip in cold water. Slip off skins and remove cores. Trim off any bruised or discolored portions and quarter.

In a large pot, quickly heat one-sixth of the tomato quarters. As tomatoes are added to the pot, crush them with a wooden mallet or spoon. This draws off some juice. Continue heating the tomatoes. Stir to prevent burning.

As soon as the tomatoes boil, gradually add the remaining quartered tomatoes. Stir constantly. The remaining tomatoes do not need to be crushed; they will soften with heating and stirring. Continue until all tomatoes are added. Boil gently for 5 minutes.

Add bottled lemon juice or citric acid to jars as listed in the acidification table. If desired, add 1 teaspoon of salt to each quart jar, or ½ teaspoon to each pint. Fill hot jars immediately with hot tomatoes. Leave ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust lids and process jars as described in Table 2 or 3.



Photo courtesy of the National Center for Home Food Preservation

Whole or Halved Tomatoes

About 21 pounds of tomatoes are needed per canner load of 7 quarts; about 13 pounds are needed per canner load of 9 pints.

Wash tomatoes. Dip in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds or until skins split; then dip in cold water. Slip off skins and remove cores. Leave whole or halve.

Add bottled lemon juice or citric acid to jars as listed in the acidification table. If desired, add

Table 2. Recommended processing times for tomatoes in a pressure canner

| Product | Style of Pack | Jar Size | Process Time | Canner gauge pressure for different altitudes (in pounds) | | |
|--|------------------|-----------------|--------------|---|------------|----------------|
| | | | | Dial gauge | | Weighted gauge |
| | | | | 0-2,000 ft | 0-1,000 ft | 1,000+ ft |
| CRUSHED tomatoes | HOT | pints or quarts | 20 min | 6 lb | 5 lb | 10 lb |
| | | pints or quarts | 15 min | 11 lb | 10 lb | 15 lb |
| Whole or halved tomatoes PACKED IN WATER | HOT or RAW | pints or quarts | 15 min | 6 lb | 5 lb | 10 lb |
| | | pints or quarts | 10 min | 11 lb | 10 lb | 15 lb |
| Whole or halved tomatoes PACKED IN JUICE OR WITHOUT ADDED LIQUID | HOT or RAW | pints or quarts | 40 min | 6 lb | 5 lb | 10 lb |
| | | pints or quarts | 25 min | 11 lb | 10 lb | 15 lb |

Table 3. Recommended processing times for tomatoes in a boiling-water canner

| Product | Style of Pack | Jar Size | Time in minutes for altitudes of | |
|--|------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| | | | 0-1,000 ft. | 1,001-3,000 ft. |
| CRUSHED tomatoes | HOT | pints | 35 min | 40 min |
| | | quarts | 45 min | 50 min |
| Whole or halved tomatoes PACKED IN WATER | HOT or RAW | pints | 40 min | 45 min |
| | | quarts | 45 min | 50 min |
| Whole or halved tomatoes PACKED IN JUICE OR WITHOUT ADDED LIQUID | HOT or RAW | pints or quarts | 85 min | 90 min |

1 teaspoon of salt per quart or ½ teaspoon to each pint.

Packed in Water

Hot Pack – Add enough water to cover the tomatoes, and boil gently for 5 minutes. Fill jars with hot tomatoes. Add hot cooking liquid to cover, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe the rims of jars. Adjust lids and process jars as described in Table 2 or 3.

Raw Pack – Fill clean jars directly with raw peeled tomatoes. Add boiling water to cover, leaving ½-inch headspace. Wipe the rims of jars. Adjust lids and process jars as described in Table 2 or 3.



Photo courtesy of the National Center for Home Food Preservation

Adapted from *Canning Tomatoes*, The Ohio State University.

Packed Raw Without Added Liquid

Fill clean, hot jars with raw tomatoes. Press tomatoes in the jars until spaces between them fill with juice. Leave ½-inch headspace. Wipe the rims of jars. Adjust lids and process jars as described in Table 2 or 3.

Packed in Tomato Juice

Hot Pack – Put tomatoes in a large saucepan and add enough tomato juice to completely cover them. Boil tomatoes and juice gently for 5 minutes. Fill jars with hot tomatoes, leaving ½-inch headspace. Add hot tomato juice to the jars to cover the tomatoes, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of the jars. Adjust lids and process jars as described in Table 2 or 3.

Raw Pack – Heat tomato juice in a saucepan. Fill jars with raw tomatoes, leaving ½-inch headspace. Cover tomatoes in the jars with hot tomato juice, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of the jars. Adjust lids and process jars as described in Table 2 or 3.

References

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EASTER H. TUCKER is associate professor - nutrition, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, Little Rock.

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