As preservation season winds down...

Know that tomatoes which are:

- overripe
- damaged or decayed
- exposed to frost
- harvested from dead or frost-killed vines
- or late-season tomatoes ripened indoors may NOT be safe for canning.

Food safety experts recommend not using these tomatoes for canned tomatoes or juice because they can become lower in acid (with a pH greater than 4.6) than tomatoes ripened on the vine in the garden. These tomatoes may be preserved by freezing, eaten fresh or cooked.

Freezing tomatoes can be a great option at the end of the gardening season. To freeze tomatoes, dip them in boiling water for 30 seconds to 1 minute to easily remove the skins. You can quarter, chop, or puree the tomatoes. Put into a freezer bag or container, leave 1 inch headspace, seal and freeze.

Green tomatoes have more acid and can be canned or pickled safely – http://z.umn.edu/peg.

As the end of the growing season approaches, it's a chance to combine vegetables and meats for winter meals of homemade soup. Can soup safely using recommended pressure canner methods or freeze. Add noodles, pasta or thickeners when you are ready to serve your home-canned soup.

Prairie Spy for cooking? Honeycrisp for fresh eating? Fireside for baking? Apples are available to preserve by freezing, canning, drying or making jelly. How do you know which local apple to use for which purpose? Apples for Minnesota and Their Culinary Uses is the University of Minnesota Extension publication to answer your questions. It will guide you on the selection of apple varieties for multiple uses and preservation methods.
Canned Venison

Hunters often attend our preservation classes to learn one thing—how to can venison! Those experienced in eating canned meat share the benefits of quick meals, the tenderness of the venison, along with memories of grandma's canned meat. With a chuckle, they mention that canned meat in the jar is not the most eye-appealing product, but don’t let that hinder you from experiencing the taste or appreciating the convenience.

So, how do you can venison? Safety first! Venison is a low acid food and MUST be processed in a pressure canner to reduce the risk of botulism.

• Choose high-quality meat and keep it cool until ready to can.

• Trim the fat off the meat before canning. Excess fat left on the meat will melt and rise to the top during processing. If the fat comes in contact with the sealing edge of the lids, the jar may not seal.

• Meat is best if canned fresh. However, if you freeze meat prior to canning, trim visible fat to avoid off flavors. Wrap tightly in freezer wrap and freeze for up to 6 months. Before canning, completely thaw meat in the refrigerator. Once thawed, can it within 1 to 2 days.

• Venison can either be raw packed or hot packed processed in pint or quart jars. The processing time ranges from 75 to 90 minutes at 11 or 15 pounds pressure.

• For venison, you can follow the recommended time and pressure for cubed or ground beef or pork.

• Always bring home canned meat to a boil for 10 minutes prior to serving. Do not eat directly out of the jar.

For specific canning methods, visit the University of Minnesota Extension website: http://z.umn.edu/gsa.

Canning Fish

Salmon and trout are examples of fish that can be safely home canned.

We look to the National Home Food Preservation Center and our neighbors to the north, the University of Alaska, for fish canning information and instructions.

Home canned fish MUST be processed in a pressure canner. Do note the extensive pressure processing time needed to produce a safe home processed fish product.

To those of you interested in canning fish who attended preservation classes this summer, be sure to check out the print and video resources below:

Selecting, Preparing and Canning Fish (pint jars) National Center for Home Food Preservation – University of Georgia – http://z.umn.edu/pha

Canning Fish in Quart Jars – University of Alaska Fairbanks – http://z.umn.edu/pfr

Canning Fish in Jars – Alaska Cooperative Extension Service – Video: http://z.umn.edu/pfq

Home Canning Smoked Fish and Home Smoking Fish for Canning – University of Alaska Fairbanks – http://z.umn.edu/pfp

Preserving Fish Safely – University of Minnesota Extension – http://z.umn.edu/phe
Canning Pumpkin Butter

Making pumpkin butter for home canning is not recommended. Canning mashed or pureed winter squash or pumpkin is not recommended either. Because this product is extremely dense, there is inconsistent heat penetration throughout the jars to kill potential bacteria.

You may be asking: “I can buy canned pumpkin puree and pumpkin butter in the store, why can’t I use my pressure canner?” Answer: We do not have access to the same canning equipment used by commercial canning companies which process foods at higher temperatures.

To safely can winter squash or pumpkin, cut it into cubes and follow recommended pressure canner methods - [http://z.umn.edu/peu](http://z.umn.edu/peu).

If you want to puree or mash squash or pumpkin, serve it fresh or freeze for later use.

Preserving Garlic

Garlic can be preserved safely by drying, freezing or storing the bulbs in a mesh bag in a cool dry area. You can store garlic in wine or vinegar for a short period of time.

Canning garlic is not an option because it is a low-acid vegetable and you must use a pressure canner. When garlic is heated at a high temperature, it loses most of its flavor!

Storing garlic-in-oil products at room temperature is not safe. At room temperature, botulism toxins grow rapidly in oxygen-free environments with low acidity such as garlic-in-oil products.

If you are interested in storing or preserving garlic, check out the following resource: [http://z.umn.edu/pet](http://z.umn.edu/pet).

Why do Jars Break?

- Using commercial food jars rather than jars manufactured for home canning.
- Using jars that have hairline cracks.
- Putting jars directly on the bottom of the canner instead of on a rack.
- Putting hot food into cold jars.
- Putting jars of raw or unheated food directly into boiling water in the center, rather than into hot water. The sudden change in temperature between the temperature of the filled jars and the water in the canner before processing.

Why is there Liquid Loss in Jars?

- Not waiting 10 minutes after processing to remove pressure canner lid.
- Pressure canner got bumped and weight released pressure.
- Pressure fluctuates during processing.
- Pressure canner leaks steam.
- Jars not covered with water in water bath canner.
- Failure to remove excess air from jar before applying lid.
- Improper headspace
- Screwing the ring on too loose.
- Used the raw pack method.
- Sudden temperature change from a cool kitchen draft.
Canning Lids - heat or not heat?

Drop lids into a pan of hot, simmering water – fill your jars – take the lids out of the water and place on jar rim – the way we prep lids to soften the gasket and ensure a good seal.

“After many years of research, it was determined that preheating Ball and Kerr lids is no longer necessary. The sealing compound used for our home canning lids performs equally well at room temperature as it does preheated in simmering water (180°F). Simply wash lids in hot, soapy water, dry and set aside until needed.” – Jarden Company (Ball and Kerr Brands)

They further state that either method – to heat, or not heat lids, results in a good seal.

Frequently Asked Questions

How long will home-canned foods keep?

Properly canned food stored in a cool, dry place will retain best eating quality (including nutrition) for at least 1 year. Canned food stored in a warm place near hot pipes, a range, a furnace, or in indirect sunlight may lose some of its eating quality in a few weeks or months. Dampness may corrode cans or metal lids and cause leakage so the food will spoil.

I can’t find a processing time for salsa in quart jars?

At this time, there is no research or tested recipes for canning salsa in quarts. As a result, salsa must be canned in pint jars.

I’ve seen canning jars “Made in China” and wonder if they are safe to use?

At this time, we do not know the standards used for manufacturing canning jars made in other countries. We do know the sizes are a little different from American-made jars. When you are shopping for jars, inspect them closely and do not always use price as your deciding criteria.

What is the best way to store fresh vegetables?

For the best quality and nutritional value, check out the Harvesting and storing home garden vegetables chart with storage suggestions http://z.umn.edu/gsi.

What’s New in Food Preservation?

- Dill Relishes (cucumber)
- Choice Salsa – flexible measurements
- Fruit toppings
- Reduced Sugar Apple Butter
- Cranberry Sauce options
- Chili Con Carne
- and more at: National Home Food Preservation Center - http://z.umn.edu/pfu

Reliable Pinterest Board

Misinformation is everywhere and could make you and your family very sick!

University of Nebraska Extension Educators created a Pinterest Board with links to scientifically tested recipes and tips from the National Center for Home Food Preservation.

The Board provides “how-to” information on preserving foods and helps clear up misunderstandings. Check it out at: http://z.umn.edu/pfv

For more food safety information visit our website: extension.umn.edu/food-safety.

If you would like to stop receiving the Home Food Preservation newsletter, please email schmi374@umn.edu.