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SALSAS

Most salsa recipes are a mixture of low-acid foods (such as onions and peppers) with acid foods (such as tomatoes). These salsa recipes have been tested to ensure that they contain enough acid to be processed safely in a boiling water-bath canner.

INGREDIENTS

Tomatoes: The type of tomato you use affects the quality of salsas. Paste tomatoes (such as Roma) have firmer flesh and produce thicker salsas than large slicing tomatoes. Although both types make good salsas, slicing tomatoes usually yield a more watery salsa. Adding tomato paste can thicken salsa. Use only high quality tomatoes for salsas. Where recipes call for peeled tomatoes, remove the skin by dipping tomatoes into boiling water for 30-60 seconds or until skins split. Dip in cold water, then slip off skins and remove cores and seeds. You may substitute green tomatoes or tomatillos for tomatoes in any of these recipes.

Peppers: Peppers range from mild to fiery in taste. Very hot peppers are usually small (1-3 inches long); mild peppers are usually bigger (4-10 inches long). Anaheim, Ancho, College, Colorado, and Hungarian Yellow Wax are mild pepper varieties. Choose a mild pepper when the recipe calls for long green chiles.

Small, very hot peppers provide a distinct taste to salsas. Jalapeno is the most popular hot pepper. Other varieties include Serrano, Cayenne, Habanero, and Tabasco. Use rubber gloves when you cut or dice these peppers because they cause extreme irritation to the skin. Do not touch your face, particularly the area around your eyes, when you are working with hot chiles.

You may substitute bell peppers for some or all of the long green chiles. Canned chiles may be used in place of fresh. Use only high quality peppers. Do not increase the total amount of peppers in any recipe. However, you may substitute one type of pepper for another. The skin of long green chiles may be tough and can be removed by heating. Usually when peppers are finely chopped, they do not need to be skinned. Hot peppers (such as the jalapeno) do not need to be peeled, but seeds are often removed. If you choose to peel chiles, slit each pepper along the side to allow steam to escape. Peel peppers by heating in a gas flame or roasting in a very hot oven until the skins separate. After heating, place peppers in a pan and cover with a damp cloth. (This makes peeling easier.) Cool several minutes; slip off skins; discard seeds and chop.

Acids: The acid ingredients used in salsa help preserve it. You must add acid to **home canned** salsas because the natural acidity may not be enough. Commonly used acids in home canning are vinegar and lemon juice. Lemon juice is more acidic than vinegar but has less effect on flavor. Use only vinegar that is at least 5% acid and use only bottled lemon juice.

Spices: Spices add flavoring to salsas. The amount of spices and herbs may be altered in these recipes. Cilantro and cumin are often used in spicy salsas. You may leave them out if you prefer a salsa with a milder taste. For a stronger cilantro flavor, add fresh cilantro just before serving the salsa.

SALSA RECIPES FOR CANNING

IMPORTANT: *The only changes you can safely make in these salsa recipes are to substitute bottled lemon juice for vinegar and to change the amount of spices and herbs. Do not can salsas that do not follow these or other research-tested recipes. Untested recipes should be served fresh, stored in the refrigerator, or frozen instead of being canned.*

TOMATO SALSA (Using Paste Tomatoes)

This recipe works best with paste tomatoes. Slicing tomatoes require a much longer cooking time to achieve a desirable consistency.

7 quarts peeled, cored, chopped tomatoes	2 tablespoons salt
4 cups seeded, chopped long green chiles	1 tablespoon black pepper
5 cups chopped onion	2 tablespoons ground cumin (optional)
½ cup seeded, finely chopped jalapeno peppers	3 tablespoons oregano leaves (optional)
6 cloves garlic, finely chopped	2 tablespoons fresh cilantro
2 cups bottled lemon juice	

Combine all ingredients except cumin, oregano, and cilantro in a large pot and bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes. Add spices and simmer for another 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Ladle hot into pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Adjust lids and process in a boiling water canner for 15 minutes. Yield: 13 pints.

TOMATILLO GREEN SALSA

Tomatillos are also known as Mexican husk tomatoes. They do not need to be peeled or seeded, but the dry outer husk must be removed. You may use green tomatoes in this recipe instead of tomatillos.

5 cups chopped tomatillos	6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1 ½ cups seeded, chopped long green chiles	1 tablespoon ground cumin (optional)
½ cup seeded, finely chopped jalapeno peppers	3 tablespoons oregano leaves (optional)
4 cups chopped onions	1 tablespoon salt
1 cup bottled lemon juice	1 teaspoon black pepper

Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan and stir frequently over high heat until mixture begins to boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Ladle hot into pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Adjust lids and process in a boiling water canner for 15 minutes. Yield: 5 pints.

CHILE SALSA (Hot Tomato-Pepper Sauce)

10 cups peeled, cored, chopped tomatoes	1 cup vinegar
6 cups seeded, chopped chile peppers (use mixture of mild and hot peppers)	3 teaspoons salt ½ teaspoon pepper
4 cups chopped onions	

Combine ingredients in a large saucepan. Heat to a boil and simmer 10 minutes. Ladle hot into pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Adjust lids and process in a boiling water canner for 15 minutes. Yield: 6 to 8 pints.

TOMATO/GREEN CHILE SALSA

3 cups peeled, cored, chopped tomatoes	1 ½ cups vinegar
3 cups seeded, chopped long green chiles	½ teaspoon cumin (optional)
¾ cup chopped onions	2 teaspoons oregano leaves (optional)
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded, finely chopped	1 ½ teaspoons salt
6 cloves garlic, finely chopped	

Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan and heat, stirring frequently, until mixture boils. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Ladle hot into pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Adjust lids and process in boiling water-bath for 15 minutes. Yield: 3 pints.

TOMATO TACO SAUCE

8 quarts peeled, cored, finely chopped paste tomatoes	2 tablespoons salt
2 cloves garlic, crushed	1 ½ tablespoons black pepper
5 cups chopped onions	1 tablespoon sugar
4 jalapeno peppers, seeded, chopped	2 tablespoons oregano leaves (optional)
4 long green chiles, seeded, chopped	1 teaspoon ground cumin (optional)
2 ½ cups vinegar	

Combine ingredients in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer, stirring frequently until thick (about 1 hour). Ladle hot mixture into pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Adjust lids and process in boiling water-bath canner for 15 minutes. Yield: 11 pints.

TOMATO/TOMATO PASTE SALSA

3 quarts peeled, cored, chopped slicing tomatoes	2 cups bottled lemon juice
3 cups chopped onions	1 tablespoon salt
6 jalapeno peppers, seeded, finely chopped	1 tablespoon sugar
4 long green chiles, seeded, chopped	1 tablespoon ground cumin (optional)
4 cloves garlic, finely chopped	2 tablespoons oregano leaves (optional)
2 12-ounce cans tomato paste	1 teaspoon black pepper

Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Ladle hot mixture into pint jars, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch headspace. Adjust lids and process in a boiling water-bath canner for 15 minutes. Yield: 7 pints.

FILLING THE JARS

Follow the manufacturer's directions for pre-treating lids. Fill hot, clean jars with the hot salsa, being careful not to leave any salsa on the rims. Wipe jar rims with a clean, damp paper towel. Put on lids and screw on metal bands.

PROCESSING

Processing in a Boiling Water-Bath Canner

1. Use a rack to keep jars from touching canner bottom and to allow heat to reach all sides of the filled jars.
2. Put jars into a canner that contains simmering water.
3. Add boiling water if needed to bring water 1-2 inches above jar tops. Don't pour water directly on the jars. Place a tight-fitting cover on canner. (If you use a pressure canner for water bath canning, leave the cover unfastened and the petcock open to prevent pressure buildup.)
4. Bring water back to a gentle boil. Set a timer for recommended processing time. Watch closely to keep water boiling gently and steadily. Add boiling water if necessary to keep jars covered.
5. Remove the jars from the canner immediately after timer sounds. The food could spoil later if jars are left in hot water too long.

Cooling Jars

Put jars on a rack or cloth so air can circulate freely around them. Don't use a fan and avoid cold drafts. Do not retighten metal bands after processing.

Testing for Seal

Test each jar for a seal within 24 hours. Jars with flat metal lids are sealed if:

Lid has popped down in the center.

Lid does not move when pressed down.

Tapping the center of the lid with a spoon gives a clear, ringing sound (this is the least reliable method).

If a jar is not sealed, refrigerate the contents and use soon, or reprocess. Reprocess within 24 hours. When reprocessing, the salsa must first be heated to a boil before packing in hot jars. Wipe jar rims clean. Use a new lid and process for the full time listed.