Home Canned Salsa Recipe – Plus Tips for Safe Salsa Canning

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This home canned salsa recipe rates an “Awesome!” from friends and family alike. To keep the salsa “canning friendly”, it contains a higher proportion of tomatoes than most fresh salsa recipes, plus added vinegar to lower the pH.

You may use whatever sweet peppers you have on hand – red, yellow, green, orange, banana – just don’t exceed one cup chopped per batch. We used to use only one hot pepper when the kids were younger, now we use four. Meaty paste tomatoes are best, but slicing tomatoes will do in a pinch.

**Ingredients**

20-22 pounds of tomatoes

3 cups onions, finely chopped

2 cloves garlic, minced

¼ cup fresh cilantro or parsley, finely chopped

¼ cup celery, finely diced (optional)

1 cup assorted mild peppers, finely chopped

1 – 4 hot peppers, finely chopped

1 Tablespoon sea salt

½ teaspoon black pepper

1 teaspoon ground cumin (optional, but recommended)

1 cup 5% apple cider vinegar

(3) 6-ounce cans tomato paste (optional, for thicker salsa)

1. Blanch and skin the tomatoes.
2. To blanch tomatoes, place them in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds, until the skins start to split. As soon as the skins start splitting, remove the tomatoes and place them in a cold water/ice water bath. This stops the cooking so they don’t get mushy, and makes them cool enough to handle for peeling. Slip off skins.
3. Squeeze the tomatoes and put them to drain in a colander while you prepare the rest of the ingredients
4. To finish the tomato prep, dice the tomatoes into small chunks and place in colander to drain off excess juice. We prefer to scrape out most of the seeds and squeeze out excess juice for a thicker salsa. If desired, juice can be strained and drunk, or canned separately for later use.
5. Finely chop onions, garlic, cilantro (parsley), sweet and hot peppers.

*Caution: Use gloves when handling and chopping hot peppers. I leave the hot peppers until last to minimize risk of spreading the hot pepper juice around my work area.*

1. Prepare canning jars, two piece canning lids and water bath or pressure canner.
2. Place all salsa ingredients in a large stockpot. Mix salsa thoroughly.
3. Heat the salsa to a gentle simmer. There is no need to cook it; you just want to get hot enough for canning.
4. Fill the jars with salsa, allowing 1/4 inch headspace. Wipe rims for any spills. Seat the lids and hand-tighten the rings around them.
5. To water bath can the salsa: Put the jars in the canner and keep them covered with at least 1 inch of water. Keep the water boiling. Process the jars in a boiling-water bath for 15 minutes for 8 oz and pints and 20 minutes for quarts.
6. *To pressure can the salsa: Fill canner with water according to manufacturer’s directions. Process the salsa at a pressure of 10 to 11 pounds, 10 minutes for pint jars and 15 minutes for quarts*.
7. Makes around 12-13 pints.

What Makes a Salsa Safe for Canning?

Some safe salsa canning tips include:

1. Add acid, such as lemon juice or vinegar, to lower the pH. For water bath canning, pH should be ≤ 4.6.
2. Lemon may be substituted for vinegar, but vinegar may not be substituted for lemon. (Vinegar is less acidic then lemon.)
3. Use purchased vinegar with 5% acidity ([homemade vinegar](http://commonsensehome.com/apple-scrap-vinegar/) may be less acidic)
4. Use ripe, firm tomatoes, preferably paste tomatoes. Don't used fruit that is overripe or rotting.
5. It is safe to add additional dry spices such as salt, pepper or ground cumin. Do not add extra low acid fresh ingredients such as peppers or onions.
6. Store canned salsa in the refrigerator after opening.
7. Store any jars that did not seal in the refrigerator and use within a week.
8. Do not eat home canned salsa with bulging lids, off smells or any other signs of spoilage.
9. If you want to store your favorite salsa recipe but are not sure if it's safe for canning, try freezing instead, or refrigerate and use within a week.