

May: National Salsa Month

By: Lisa Franzen-Castle, RD, PhD, Nutrition Specialist
University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension
Author E-mail: lfranz2@unl.edu



UNIVERSITY OF
Nebraska
Lincoln®



Salsas, Spanish for the word "sauce," are low in calories, full of flavor, and available with a variety of ingredients, from tomatoes, jalapenos and



habaneras to mangoes, pineapples, strawberries and even beans. May is National Salsa Month, and the perfect way to celebrate is by experimenting with different salsa recipes.

Salsas can be scrambled in eggs, dished as a garnish for chicken and fish, or served as an ice cream topping. Salsas are enjoyed for their intense flavors and colors. Check out the following tips for sensational salsas.

Spice up Snacks and Meals with Salsa:

Add taste without adding lots of calories. A combination of tomatoes, onions and peppers can



add zest to chips. A mixture of fruit, herbs, onion, and pepper added to meat or fish can add unique flavors to dishes. There are a variety of salsa options for different

preferences and dishes such as spicy, hot, sweet, savory, herbal and aromatic.

Salsa ingredients and preparation tips. Keep cut fruits, such as apples, pears, bananas and peaches,



from turning brown by coating them with an acidic juice such as lemon, orange or pineapple juice. Or use a commercial produce protector and follow the

manufacturer's directions. Cover and refrigerate cut fruit and veggies until ready to serve. Most salsas taste best if refrigerated for about an hour before serving to let flavors blend.

Serve salsa safely. Perishable foods like dips, salsas, and cut fruit and vegetables should not sit at



room temperature for more than two hours. If you will be serving items such as these for a longer period than this, set out a smaller bowl and then replace it

with another one when it is empty. Do not add fresh dip or salsa to dip or salsa that has been sitting out. Refrigerate and use up any that has not been served within three to four days of preparation.

Salsa canning basics. Canning your own salsa recipe or changing the proportions of ingredients in a tested salsa recipe can be unsafe. The types and amounts of ingredients used, as well as the



preparation method, are important considerations in how a salsa is canned. Improperly canned salsas or other tomato-pepper combinations have been implicated in more than

one outbreak of botulism poisoning. If you don't have a tested recipe or proper canning equipment, you might try freezing your salsa. Be aware there may be changes in texture and flavor after freezing and thawing. Try freezing a small amount the first time. Herbs and spices may taste better if they are added fresh just before serving. If you are new to canning or need a refresher course, check out <http://food.unl.edu/canning>. Photo source: Alice Henneman

Salsa is great for snacks and entrées, but it can also be used in desserts and baked goods. The choices are truly endless with the different combinations of fruits, vegetables, and herbs and spices. Check out the Nebraska Extension Food Calendar for more salsa recipe ideas and other national food days, weeks, and months to celebrate at <http://food.unl.edu/may-food-calendar>.

Salsa Recipe Ideas!

Mango Tango Black Bean Salsa

- **Ingredients:** 1 mango, 1/4 c. onion, finely chopped, 1/4 c. fresh cilantro, coarsely chopped, 1 (15 oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed, 2 T. lime juice, 1 (7 oz.) can whole kernel corn with peppers, drained, 1 tsp. garlic salt, and 1/4 tsp. ground cumin.
- **Directions:** Wash and peel the mango, then cut in half length wise. Throw away the seed. Cut into 3/4-inch cubes. In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients and mix well. Refrigerate until ready to use. Serve with tortilla chips.
- **Source:** <http://food.unl.edu/mango-tango-black-bean-salsa>

Fruit Salsa with Cinnamon Chips

- **Ingredients:** 1 cup chopped fresh strawberries or 1 (10 oz.) package frozen strawberries, 1 apple, cored and chopped, 2 kiwi, peeled and chopped, 1/2 cup crushed pineapple, drained, 2 Tablespoons pineapple juice, 8 (8-inch) flour tortillas, 2 teaspoons water, 2 teaspoons cinnamon, and 3/4 cup sugar.
- **Directions:** Chop strawberries, apple and kiwi. Add drained crushed pineapple and 2 Tablespoons pineapple juice to chopped fruit. Chill. Sprinkle tortillas with water or spray with water. Sprinkle each tortilla with the cinnamon and sugar mixture. Cut each tortilla in 8 wedges and place on baking sheet. Bake at 350° for 6 minutes. Cool on rack and store cinnamon chips in an airtight container. Makes 8 servings.
- **Source:** <http://go.unl.edu/25gs>

Fresh & Simple Salsa

- **Ingredients:** 4 cups fresh tomatoes, chopped, 1/4 cup finely chopped onion, 1 jalapeno, seeded and chopped, 1 tablespoon vinegar or lime juice, 1 teaspoon cumin, 1 teaspoon minced garlic, and 1 teaspoon salt, optional.
- **Directions:** In a medium bowl, combine all ingredients and mix well. For better flavor, let the ingredients stand in the refrigerator for at least one hour. Refrigerate until ready to eat. Serve with veggies, tortilla chips, quesadillas, or on a salad or baked potato. Makes 14 servings.
- **Source:** <http://food.unl.edu/servingupsalsa>

Additional Resources & Links:

Family Fun on the Run. Family Fun on the Run is a monthly newsletter designed to help families add physical activity to their already hectic schedules. <http://food.unl.edu/family-fun-on-the-run>

All the Healthy Bites. *Healthy Bites* is a newsletter that focuses on a different food, nutrition and / or health theme for each month. http://food.unl.edu/fnh/healthybites_archives

Cook it Quick. Our goal is to make you "hungry for healthy food" by offering tips and delicious, quick-to-prepare, inexpensive recipes. <http://food.unl.edu/fnh/cook-it-quick-recipes>

Food Fun for Young Children. Serving up quick, healthy snack ideas for younger children. <http://food.unl.edu/fnh/food-fun-for-young-children>

Sources:

1. UNL Food. (2016). Canning Tomatoes, Tomato Products, and Salsa. University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension. Accessed at: <http://food.unl.edu/preservation/tomatoes>.
2. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. (May, 2014). Do the Salsa. Accessed at: <http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/planning-and-prep/cooking-tips-and-trends/do-the-salsa>.
3. Henneman, A. (2016). Delicious Dips Using Common Ingredients. University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension. Accessed at: <http://food.unl.edu/fnh/delicious-dips>.
4. Andress, E., and D'sa, E. (July, 2005). Preserving Food: Sensational Salsas. University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service. Accessed at: http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/uga/sensational_salsa.pdf.

Updated: April 2016