

May: National Salsa Month

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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 and served as an ice cream topping. Salsas are enjoyed for their intense flavors and colors. Check out these tips to make sensational salsas.

Spice up Snacks and Meals with Salsa:

Spice up a meal or snack. 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. All can make meals tasty without adding lots of calories.

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 such as Fruit-Fresh (R), 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 and preparation methods used are important considerations in how a salsa is



canned. Salsas or other tomato-pepper combinations improperly canned have been implicated in more than one outbreak of botulism poisoning. Also, salsa

must be processed in a boiling water canner for safety. If you don't have a tested recipe or a boiling water canner, 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.

Photo source: National Center for Home Food Preservation

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. *New to canning or need a refresher course?* Check out the UNL Extension website's general canning page at <http://food.unl.edu/preservation/canning>.

Salsa Recipe Ideas!

Salsa Yogurt Dip: Mix two parts plain yogurt with one part salsa (for example, mix 1 cup plain yogurt with 1/2 cup salsa.)

Pinto Bean Salsa Dip:

- **Ingredients:** 1 can (approx. 15 oz.) pinto beans, drained and rinsed or 1-1/2 cups cooked dried beans, 1 cup shredded cheese, 1/2 to 1 cup chunky salsa, 1 to 2 tablespoons chopped onion (optional), and 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon chili powder or to taste (optional).
- **Directions:** Mash beans with a fork. Mix in cheese. Stir in enough salsa until mixture is desired consistency for dipping. Add onion and seasoning as desired. Serve cold or cook, stirring, over medium heat until the cheese melts and the mixture is well blended and hot (about 5 minutes).

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. Makes 8 servings.
- **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.

Additional Resources & Links:

- **Salsa Recipe Ideas** - Check out the following salsa recipes, such as mango salsa, peach apple salsa and tomato salsa, from the National Center for Home Food Preservation at http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_salsa.html.
- **UNL Extension Calendar** – National Food Days, Weeks, and Months for May. <http://food.unl.edu/web/fnh/may>

- **Let's Preserve: Tomato and Tomato Products** - UNL Extension (EC 437, 8 pg. brochure). Procedures for safely canning a variety of tomato products; includes recipes for tomato sauces, ketchups, relishes and salsas, plus recommended process times. <http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/live/ec437/build/ec437.pdf>
- **Canning Tomatoes, Tomato Juice** - Brief, 2-sided brochure including recipes from Buy Fresh, Buy Local® Nebraska and UNL Extension. <http://go.unl.edu/40c8>
- **Preparing Salsa** - 2-sided brochure including recipes from Buy Fresh, Buy Local® Nebraska and UNL Extension. Recipes include peach apple salsa, chile salsa, and tomato/tomato paste salsa. <http://go.unl.edu/bi3j>
- **USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning, 2009 Revision** http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/publications_usda.html

Sources:

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2. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. (March, 2013). Tip of the Day: National Salsa Month. Accessed at: <http://www.eatright.org/Public/content.aspx?id=6442476079>.
3. Henneman, A. (2013). 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

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