

Serving up Salsa

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The month of July reminds me of two of my favorite things, outdoor celebrations and gardening. If you have a garden, consider planting basic salsa ingredients: tomatoes, peppers, onions, and cilantro. Even if you do not have the space for a garden, you can have a container garden. You can start plants in pots inside and move them outside when the weather permits. Salsa is simple to prepare and can include many different fruits and vegetables depending on what you have on hand or what you are craving. Gardening can teach your kids about where food comes from. Have them help you prepare the foods from the garden and it will increase the chances that they will try different fruits and vegetables. Making salsa is also something that children of all ages can help with. Age appropriate kitchen tasks related to making salsa include:

At 2 years:

- Pick produce out of the garden
- Rinse fruits and vegetables

At 3 years (items mentioned above, plus):

- Add ingredients
- Talk about cooking
- Name and count foods

At 4 years (items mentioned above, plus):

- Help measure ingredients

At 5 years (items mentioned above, plus):

- Cut soft fruits and vegetables with a dull knife

At 6-8 years (items mentioned above, plus):

- Wash dishes
- Put away ingredients
- Light chopping of fruits and vegetables

At 9-12 years (items mentioned above, plus):

- Follow a recipe
- Operate small appliances like blenders and mini-choppers



Fresh Salsa

14 servings

- 4 cups fresh tomatoes, chopped
- ¼ cup finely chopped onion
- 1 jalapeno, seeded and chopped
- 1 tablespoon vinegar or lime juice
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt, optional

1. 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.
2. Refrigerate until ready to eat.
3. Serve with veggies, tortilla chips, quesadillas, or on a salad or baked potato.

For more information check out Nebraska's Nutrition Education Program at <http://food.unl.edu/nep> and Food Fun for Young Children at <http://go.unl.edu/chi>

This material was funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-800-430-3244.