

Using Pressure Canners

- A pressure canner is a large kettle with a cover that can be clamped or locked down to make the kettle steam-tight. It is designed to heat foods at temperatures higher than boiling.
- Most modern pressure canners have a removable rack and an overpressure plug. They also have an automatic vent port and a pressure regulator that permits exhausting of air from the pressure canner (venting).
- Most pressure canners have rubber gaskets to keep steam from leaking out around the cover. Most gaskets are removable and can be replaced if needed.
- There are two types of pressure canners: a weighted gauge canner and a dial gauge canner.
- Dial pressure gauges should be checked for accuracy before use.
 - Go to - <https://food.unl.edu/food-preservation-contacts> for a location near you for testing.
- All steps in preparing, cooking, and canning foods need to be followed.
- When canning low acid foods, temperatures of 240°F or above MUST be reached for correct process time.



Clostridium botulinum spores are very hard to destroy. This presents an increased risk for food borne illness in home canning. This is why the only safe method for processing low acid foods is pressure canning.

More information on canning methods from Nebraska Extension on the web:

<https://food.unl.edu/article/canning-basics>



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Foods to Preserve in a Pressure Canner

Low-acid foods include:

- Most vegetables
- Spaghetti Sauce with meat
- Game meat
- Poultry
- Meats
- Fish
- Seafood
- Soups
- Beans



Step by Step Using a Pressure Canner

1. **Before starting**, position the jar rack into the bottom of the canner. Fill the pressure canner with 2" to 3" of water and place on stove top to begin heating according to selected canning method. Be sure canner is centered on burner and sitting level.

HOT PACKED JARS - water in canner, 180°F

RAW PACKED JARS - water in canner, 140°F

2. Prepare food safely. Thoroughly wash, peel, cut, and rewash vegetables.
3. Load filled jars, fitted with lids and ring bands, into the canner one at a time, using a jar lifter positioning each jar on the rack.



4. Fasten the pressure lid on securely identifying the cover lock. Leave the vent port open. This is the pipe where the weighted gauge or pressure regulator will go.
5. Wait until the canner begins EXHAUSTING. Venting or exhausting the canner allows the boiling water to push the air out, filling that space with steam. This allows the processing to take place in a pure steam environment.
6. **Steam MUST flow freely from the open vent port** in the lid for **10 minutes** prior to pressurizing.
7. At the end of **10 minutes**, place the weight in place to begin to build pressure in the canner.



8. **Start counting processing time** when correct pressure has been reached. Adjust time or pressure for elevation, if needed.



9. Turn off heat at end of processing time. **DO NOT FORCE COOL!**
10. Wait 1 to 2 minutes after pressure drops to 0 pounds pressure to assure all pressure is gone.



11. Remove weighted gauge or pressure regulator. Wait an additional **10 minutes**.
12. Unlatch the canner lid and lift it away from your face. **BEING CAREFUL OF THE STEAM!**
13. Remove jars to a padded surface or cooling rack.
14. Cool jars 12 to 24 hours, undisturbed.
15. All jars should be properly sealed which can be checked by the lid curving inward.
16. Remove screw bands.
17. Wipe down sealed jars with sudsy water to remove any residue.
18. Label jars, with product name and date.
19. Store in cool, dry place out of direct. Best used within 1 year.

Canning Methods

Hot Pack

- Fresh produce is heated to a boil and simmered 5 minutes.
- Remove produce promptly and pack into clean jars.
- Additional hot liquid heated to 180°F is needed.
- Preferred method for most foods.
- Fewer jars are needed.
- Less floating of food, as boiling allows air to leave produce cells.
- Better color and flavor retention.
- Easier to pack, food is pliable.

Raw Pack

- Raw unheated produce is tightly packed in jars.
- Best method for foods that lose shape when cooked.
- Liquid should be heated to 140°F prior to filling jars.
- Pack food firmly without crushing.
- Food tends to float because of trapped air in produce cells.
- Results in more discoloration of produce.