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Preserve Today, Relish Tomorrow

Create Your Own Salsa Bar

Salsa is one of the most popular condiments in homes today. Salsas are usually mixtures of acid and low-acid ingredients; they are an example of an acidified food. In fact, for home preserving purposes, a salsa is considered a pickle product because it is acidified. The specific recipe, and sometimes preparation method, will determine if a salsa can be processed in a boiling water canner, atmospheric steam canner, or a pressure canner. A process must be scientifically determined for each recipe. It is not safe to can your own original salsa recipe; refrigerate or freeze it instead. Salsa can be safely stored in the refrigerator for several weeks or frozen for months without processing. This handout includes several salsa recipes that can be safely canned using a boiling-water canner or atmospheric steam canner. Use any of the recipes included in this handout or other research-tested recipes to make a safe shelf-stable product at home.

Salsa Ingredients

Tomatoes: Use only high-quality tomatoes for canning salsa or any other tomato products. Avoid tomatoes that are overripe or from dead or frost-killed vines. These will result in a poor-quality and potentially unsafe product. Canning is never a good way to use overripe or spoiled tomatoes.

The type of tomato you use affects the quality of your salsa. For example, paste tomatoes, such as Roma, have firmer flesh, contain less liquid, and produce thicker salsas than large slicing tomatoes. Although both types make good-tasting salsa, slicing tomatoes usually yield a thinner, waterier salsa than paste tomatoes.



Where recipes call for peeled or skinned tomatoes, remove the skin by dipping tomatoes into boiling water for 30-60 seconds or until skins split. Immerse in cold water until cool enough to handle. Slip off skins and remove cores. Remove seeds if desired.

Tomatillos: Tomatillos are also known as Mexican husk tomatoes. They do not need to be peeled or seeded, but the dry outer husk must be removed. Tomatillos can be substituted for tomatoes in any tested salsa recipe.

Fruits: Some salsa recipes in this handout contains fruit. Fruits add another dimension of flavor to traditional salsas. When canning fruit salsas, you must follow the same safety rules as tomato-based salsas. This includes using a research-tested recipe, selecting fruits in the quantity and condition described, and preparing fruits according to the directions.

Peppers: Choose high-quality peppers. Peppers range from mild to fiery in taste. Very hot peppers are usually small (1-3 inches long), mild peppers are usually bigger (4-10 inches long). Anaheim, Ancho, and Hungarian yellow wax are mild varieties. Choose a mild pepper when the recipe calls for long green chilies.

Small, very hot peppers provide a distinct taste to salsas. Jalapeno is the most popular hot pepper. Other common hot varieties include Serrano, Cayenne, Habanera and Tabasco.

The terms *chili*, *pepper*, and *chile pepper* are used interchangeably in this handout. Although there is no clear standard for naming peppers, in many instances, chile is used for a hot pepper, or a pepper containing capsaicin, the

compound that gives the heat or burning sensation in the mouth. Chile peppers are generally classified as mild, medium, or hot. Sweet peppers, such as bell peppers, do not contain any capsaicin, or heat compounds.

Any combination of hot or mild peppers may be used as long as the quantity stated in any tested recipe is not changed.

Acids: The acid ingredients used in salsa help preserve it. The addition of acid to salsa recipes for canning is necessary because the natural level of acidity may not be adequate for. Commonly used acids in home canning are vinegar, lemon, and lime juices. Lemon and lime juices are more acidic than vinegar but have less effect on flavor. Use only vinegar that is at least 5% acid and only bottled lemon and lime juices made from Concentrate. Never use homemade vinegar or freshly squeezed lemon or lime juice because the level of acidity is variable and could result in an unsafe canned product.

Salt: Pickling or canning salt is recommended when preparing salsa recipes. It contains no anti-caking agents or iodine. Non-iodized table salt can also be used in salsa recipes. Check the label on the container; the ingredient list should only have one ingredient - salt.

Spices: Spices add flavoring to salsas. Cilantro and cumin are often used in spicy salsas. You may leave them out or reduce the amount if you prefer a salsa with a milder taste. For a stronger cilantro flavor, add fresh cilantro after opening the jar, just before serving.

Caution about additional ingredients: Adding ingredients not listed in a salsa recipe may result in an unsafe product if done before canning. This includes thickeners as well as ingredients not listed in the recipe.

Do not thicken salsas before canning. Salsa can be thickened after you open the jar by pouring off some of the liquid or adding cornstarch, tomato paste, or other thickening agents.

The flavor can be enhanced with additional ingredients such as corn, black beans, or other additions just before serving. Additions before canning may result in an unsafe product.



Adjustments to Salsa Recipes Some ingredients in salsa recipes can be adjusted to suit personal tastes. The changes are primarily limited to ingredient type. It is important not to change the amount of any ingredient, with the exception of dry spices. The table below summarizes the adjustments that can be made to the recipes in this handout without affecting the safety of your canned salsa.

Ingredients	Recipe Adjustments
Tomatoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As long as tomatoes are in good condition, any variety can be used. Paste tomatoes, such as Romas, have more solid tissue and will produce a salsa with a thicker texture. Slicing tomatoes will produce a runny, watery salsa. Under ripe green tomatoes or tomatillos can be substituted for ripe tomatoes. Although salsas are traditionally made with red tomatoes, any color of tomato can be used.
Peppers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One type of pepper can be substituted for another. Select any combination of hot and mild pepper to create a flavor you like, if you do not exceed the total amount specified. (For example, if the recipe calls for 2 cups of peppers, any mixture of hot and mild peppers can be used.) Bell peppers are an acceptable substitution for some or all of the long green chilies. Do not substitute the same number of whole peppers of a large size for the same number of peppers of a smaller size. (For example, do not use 6 bell peppers or long chilies in place of 6 jalapenos or serranos.) Canned chilies may be used in place of fresh.
Onions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Red, yellow, or white onions can be substituted for each other. Do not increase the total amount of onions. Green onions cannot be used in place of bulb onions. Do not use green onions in a canned salsa recipe unless they are specified as an ingredient.
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use fruits in the condition described in the recipe. When a recipe calls for green or unripe fruits do not use ripe fruits. This will change the final acidity of the mixture, resulting in an unsafe product. It is not safe to substitute one type of fruit for another.
Spices Herbs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amounts of dried herbs or spices can be altered. It is not safe to add or increase the amounts of fresh herbs or garlic before canning because they affect the acidity level.
Acids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> White distilled vinegar or cider vinegar can be used as long as it is 5% acidity. White vinegar has a tart flavor but will not discolor the salsa. Cider vinegar has a milder flavor but may affect the color of the final product. Never reduce the amount of vinegar, lemon juice, or lime juice in a recipe. An equal amount of bottled lemon or lime juice can be substituted for vinegar when the recipe calls for vinegar. The reverse is not true. When lemon or lime juice is the acid called for in the recipe, vinegar cannot be substituted. This is because vinegar is less acidic than lemon or lime juice, and the substitution would result in an unsafe salsa. Key lime juice should not be used as lime juice. If prepared salsa is too tart, a small amount of sugar can be added after opening to offset the acidic taste.



Canning Salsa in a Boiling Water Canner or Atmospheric Steam Canner (Generic Recipe)

Ingredients	Yield
1 cup tomatoes	1 pint
1 cup onions and peppers	
1/4 cup lemon or lime juice	

Guideline Salsa Recipe ~ per pint jar (multiply quantities by desired yield)

1/4 cup bottled lemon or lime juice from concentrate

1 cup tomatoes

- peeled, deseeded if desired
- diced to approx. 1/4-inch
- cook tomato juice and reduce volume by half for a thicker salsa

1 cup any combination of:

- onions
- sweet and hot peppers, diced to approx. 1/4"
- hot pepper seeds (heat)

Optional - 1 tsp dry spices (salt, cumin, pepper, garlic powder, or any mixture of dry spices)

Procedure: Peel tomatoes by placing them in boiling water for approximately 1 minute or until skins loosen. Plunge in cold water, then peel skins and discard them. Remove onion skins and discard them. Trim and wash peppers. Retain hot pepper seeds for desired heat level. Dice all vegetables to approximately 1/4-inch cubes.

Caution: Wear plastic or rubber gloves and do not touch your face while handling or cutting hot peppers. If you do not wear gloves, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face or eyes.

Hot Pack: Combine vegetable ingredients in a saucepan. Add salt and up to 1 tsp (total) dry spice as desired. Heat salsa to boiling, stirring constantly. Pour 1/4 cup bottle lemon or lime juice into each clean pint canning jar. Ladle hot salsa into jars, leaving 1/2" headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims clean. Place lids and rings on jars, tightening rings only finger tight. Process both pint and half-pint jars for:

0-1000 ft. = 15 minutes, 1001-6000 ft. = 20 minutes, above 6000 ft. = 25 minutes.

For boiling water canning, turn off the heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes.

For atmospheric steam canning, turn off the heat, leave canner lid on and wait 2-3 minutes.

Important: This recipe was designed to use 1/4 cup bottled lemon or lime juice per pint of salsa. Do not use fresh squeezed juice or vinegar or alter this acidification procedure. Doing so may not safely acidify the salsa resulting in a risk of botulism. This recipe can be personalized by altering the proportion of peppers (sweet or hot) and onions. Different varieties of onions or peppers (sweet or hot) can be used, but not green onions. It can also be personalized using a total of 1 tsp of dried spice. Some suggested dry spices to add are cumin, garlic powder, celery seeds, and coriander. **Other vegetable or herbs (not dried) are not permitted.**

Source: Brian A. Nummer, Ph.D., Extension Food Safety Specialist Utah State University

RECIPE: Pineapple Papaya Chili Salsa

Makes about 6 (8oz) half pint jars

- 4 cups cubed seeded peeled papaya (about 2 lb. or 2 med)
- 2 cups cubed cored peeled fresh pineapple (about half of a medium pineapple) or canned pineapple (about 1 20-oz can). Frozen pineapple may be used.
- 1 cup golden raisins
- 1 cup bottled lemon juice from concentrate.
- ½ cup bottled lime juice from concentrate.
- ½ cup pineapple juice.
- ½ cup chopped seeded Anaheim peppers (poblano, New Mexico chilies or hot banana peppers may be used as a substitute).
- 2 Tbsp finely chopped green onion.
- 2 Tbsp finely chopped cilantro.
- 2 Tbsp packed brown sugar.

Combine all ingredients in a large stainless-steel saucepan and bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and boil gently, stirring frequently, until slightly thickened, about 10 minutes.

Ladle hot salsa into hot jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rim. Center lid on jar and apply band, adjust to fingertip tight. Place jar in boiling water canner. Repeat until all jars are filled.

Process both pint and half-pint jars for: 0-1000 ft. = 15 minutes, 1001-6000 ft. = 20 minutes, above 6000 ft. = 25 minutes.

For boiling water canning, turn off heat, remove canner lid, wait 5 minutes, then remove jars, cool, and store. For atmospheric steam canning, turn off the heat, leave canner lid on, wait 2-3 minutes, then remove jars, cool, and store.

Source: *The All New Ball Book of Canning and Preserving*, 2023

RECIPE: Zesty Salsa

Makes about 6 pints

- 10 cups chopped cored peeled tomatoes (about 25 medium)
- 5 cups chopped seeded green bell peppers (about 4 large)
- 5 cups chopped onions (about 6 to 8 medium)
- 2 ½ cups chopped seeded chili peppers, such as hot banana, Hungarian wax, serrano or jalapeño
- (about 13 medium)
- 1 ¼ cups cider vinegar
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 Tbsp finely chopped cilantro
- 1 Tbsp salt
- 1 tsp hot pepper sauce, optional

Combine tomatoes, green peppers, onions, chili peppers, vinegar, garlic, cilantro, salt and hot pepper sauce, if using, in a large stainless-steel saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and boil gently, stirring frequently, until slightly thickened, about 10 minutes.

Ladle hot salsa into hot jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rim. Center lid on jar and apply band, adjust to fingertip tight. Place jar in boiling water canner.

Repeat until all jars are filled.

Process both pint and half-pint jars for: 0-1000 ft. = 15 minutes, 1001-6000 ft. = 20 minutes, above 6000 ft. = 25 minutes.

For boiling water canning, turn off heat, remove canner lid, wait 5 minutes, then remove jars, cool, and store.

For atmospheric steam canning, turn off the heat, leave canner lid on, wait 2-3 minutes, then remove jars, cool, and store.

Source: *Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving*, 2020

RECIPE: Corn and Cherry Tomato Salsa**Makes about 6 pints**

Salsa is delicious any time of year and this recipe is a real classic! Our Corn and Cherry Tomato Salsa is a festive favorite that's sure to brighten up your day with ripe cherry tomatoes and fresh corn kernels mixed with jalapeño and zesty lime juice.

- 5 lbs. cherry tomatoes roughly chopped
- 2 cups corn kernels (about 2 large ears fresh, but frozen thawed is fine)
- 1 cup red onion finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons salt
- ½ cup bottled lime juice
- 2 jalapeno peppers seeded and minced
- 1 tsp. chipotle chili powder, optional
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 6 (16 oz.) pint glass preserving jars with lids and bands

Prepare boiling water canner/atmospheric steam canner. Heat jars in simmering water until ready for use. Do not boil. Wash lids in warm soapy water and set aside with bands. Bring all the ingredients to a boil in a large stainless-steel or enameled saucepan. Reduce heat and simmer 5-10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Ladle the hot salsa into a hot jar, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe the jar rim. Center the lid on the jar. Apply the band and adjust to fingertip tight. Place the jar in the boiling water canner. Repeat until all the jars are filled.

Process both pint and half-pint jars for:

0-1000ft. = 15 minutes, 1001-6000 ft. = 20 minutes, above 6000 ft. = 25 minutes.

For boiling water canning, turn off heat, remove canner lid, wait 5 minutes, then remove jars, cool, and store.

For atmospheric steam canning, turn off the heat, leave canner lid on, wait 2-3 minutes, then remove jars, cool, and store.

Source: *The All New Ball Book of Canning and Preserving*, 2023

RECIPE: Peach Salsa**Yield: about 6 pints**

- ½ cup white vinegar
- 6 cups chopped pitted peeled peaches
- 1 ¼ cups chopped red onion
- 4 jalapeno peppers, finely chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, seeded and finely chopped
- ½ cup loosely packed, finely chopped cilantro
- 2 Tbsp liquid honey
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 ½ tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper

Prepare canner, jars and lids. In a large stainless-steel saucepan, combine vinegar and peaches; add onion, peppers, cilantro, honey, garlic, cumin, and cayenne. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and boil gently, stirring frequently, until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Ladle hot salsa into hot pint jars, leaving ½ " headspace. Remove air bubbles, wipe rim, and place two-piece lids on jars, adjusting 'til fingertip tight.

Process pint jars in a boiling-water canner or atmospheric steam canner for 15 minutes at 0-1000 ft, 20 minutes 1001-6000 ft, 25 minutes above 6000 ft.

For boiling water canning, turn off the heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes.

For atmospheric steam canning, turn off the heat, leave canner lid on and wait 2-3 minutes.

Allow jars to cool on a wire rack or kitchen towel, undisturbed, for 12-24 hours so seals can properly set.

Source: *Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving*, 2024

RECIPE: Tomatillo Salsa

Yield: about 5 pints

- 5 cups chopped, cored, husked tomatillos
- 1 ½ cups seeded, chopped, long green chiles
- ½ cup seeded, finely chopped jalapeño peppers
- 4 cups chopped onion
- 1 cup bottled lemon or lime juice
- 6 cloves garlic, finely chopped 1 tablespoon ground cumin (optional)
- 3 Tbsp, dried oregano leaves (optional)
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- 1 tsp. black pepper

Caution: Wear plastic or rubber gloves and do not touch your face while handling or cutting hot peppers. If you do not wear gloves, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face or eyes.

Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan and stir frequently over high heat until mixture begins to boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Ladle hot salsa into hot jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace, if necessary, by adding hot salsa. Wipe rims with a dampened clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids.

Process in a boiling water or steam canner for 15 minutes at 0- 1,000 feet elevation, 20 minutes at 1,001-6,000 feet, 25 minutes above 6,000 feet.

For boiling water canning, turn off the heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes.

For atmospheric steam canning, turn off the heat, leave canner lid on and wait 2-3 minutes.

Note: You may use green tomatoes in this recipe instead of tomatillos.

IMPORTANT: The only other change you can safely make in this salsa recipe is to change the amount of spices and herbs. Do not alter the proportions of vegetables to acid and tomatoes because it might make the salsa unsafe. Do not substitute vinegar for the lemon juice.

Source: USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning, 2015

RECIPE: Chipotle Tomatillo Salsa

Makes about 4 (8oz) half pint jars

- 2 lbs. tomatillos
- 1 onion (small)
- 4 cloves garlic
- 4 Tbsp. bottled lime juice from concentrate
- ½ tsp. salt
- 3 to 4 chipotle chiles (canned)

Line a rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil. Don't grease or spray. Set aside.

Remove and discard the husks from the tomatillos. Wash well. Arrange tomatillos on baking sheet stem side down. Wash the onion, leave unpeeled. Cut into halves. Place on baking sheet cut side down. Leave garlic unpeeled. Add to baking sheet. Bake until tomatillos and onion are soft and begin to char -- about 20 minutes.

Remove from oven and let cool until onion can be safely handled.

Peel the onion, discard the peel, add onion to food processor. Cut tips off garlic cloves, discard the garlic peel. Finely chop tomatillo, onions, and garlic. Transfer to a pot, add all other ingredients, and bring to a boil on the stove.

Ladle hot salsa into hot jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace, if necessary, by adding hot salsa. Wipe rims with a dampened clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids.

Process in a boiling water or steam canner for 15 minutes at 0- 1,000 feet elevation, 20 minutes at 1,001-6,000 feet, 25 minutes above 6,000 feet.

For boiling water canning, turn off the heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes.

For atmospheric steam canning, turn off the heat, leave canner lid on and wait 2-3 minutes.

Source: *The All New Ball Book of Canning and Preserving*, 2023

RECIPE: Salsa Ranchera

Makes about 4 pint jars

- 3 lb plum tomatoes, cored
- ¾ lb jalapeño peppers
- 4 garlic cloves
- 1 medium white onion, cut into ½ inch rings
- 2 tsp salt
- ½ cup fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1/3 cup bottled lime juice from concentrate

Preheat oven to 425°. Cover a large, rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil; arrange plum tomatoes, whole jalapeños, garlic cloves and white onion slices in a single layer. Roast for 20 minutes; remove garlic from baking sheet and roast 20 minutes more or until vegetables are very soft and beginning to char.

Transfer jalapeños to a bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Let stand at least 15 minutes.

Remove skins from tomatoes. Coarsely chop tomatoes, onions and garlic; place in a medium saucepan. Peel, seed and mince jalapeño peppers; add to tomato mixture along with salt. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring often. Reduce heat and simmer 2 minutes. Stir in cilantro and lime juice; remove from heat.

Ladle hot salsa into hot jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace, if necessary, by adding hot salsa. Wipe rims with a dampened clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids.

Process in a boiling water or steam canner for 20 minutes at 0- 1,000 feet elevation, 25 minutes at 1,001-6,000 feet, 30 minutes above 6,000 feet.

For boiling water canning, turn off the heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes.

For atmospheric steam canning, turn off the heat, leave canner lid on and wait 2-3 minutes.

Source: *The All New Ball Book of Canning and Preserving*, 2023

RECIPE: Huevos Rancheros

Makes about 4 servings

- 4 (6 inch) corn tortillas
- 3 Tbsp. olive oil
- 8 large eggs
- 1 cup refried beans, warmed
- 1 cup Salsa Ranchera, warmed

Toppings: grated cheese, avocado slices, fresh cilantro leaves

Cook tortillas in 2 batches in 1 tbsp. hot olive oil in a large non-stick skillet until crisp, adding more oil is necessary. Drain on paper towel.

Fry eggs in remaining oil.

Spread warm refried beans on each tortilla. Top each with 2 eggs and ¼ cup salsa. Add toppings.

Source: *The All New Ball Book of Canning and Preserving*, 2023

RECIPE: Home-style Pickled Jalapenos**Makes about 6 pint jars**

- 3 ½ lb (1.6 kg) jalapeno peppers seeded and quartered
- 1 cup (250 mL) thinly sliced white onion
- 2 large carrots, thinly sliced
- 2 ½ cups (625 mL) white vinegar (5% acidity)
- 2 ½ cups (625 mL) water
- 2 Tbsp. (30 mL) pickling salt
- 1 Tbsp. (15 mL) sugar
- 6 garlic cloves, crushed
- Pickle Crisp (optional)

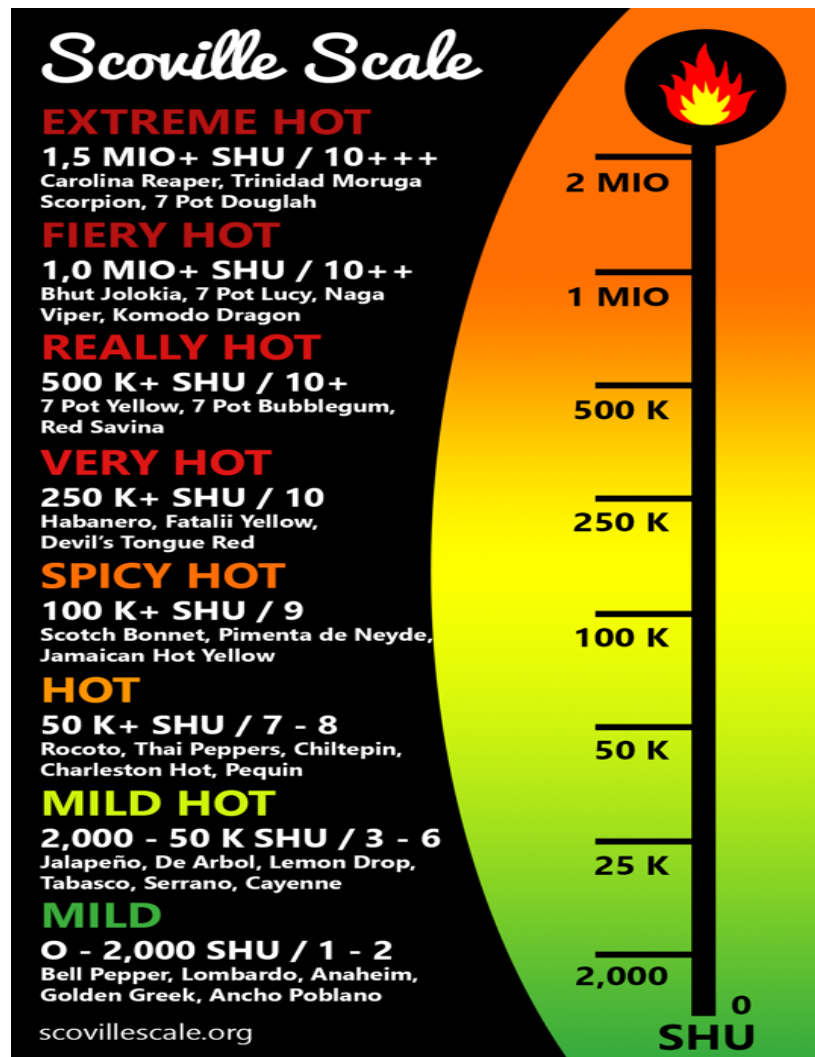
Put on gloves and cut peppers in half lengthwise; remove seeds. Cut halves lengthwise to create long strips. Place jalapeno strips in a large bowl. Add onion and carrot; toss well.

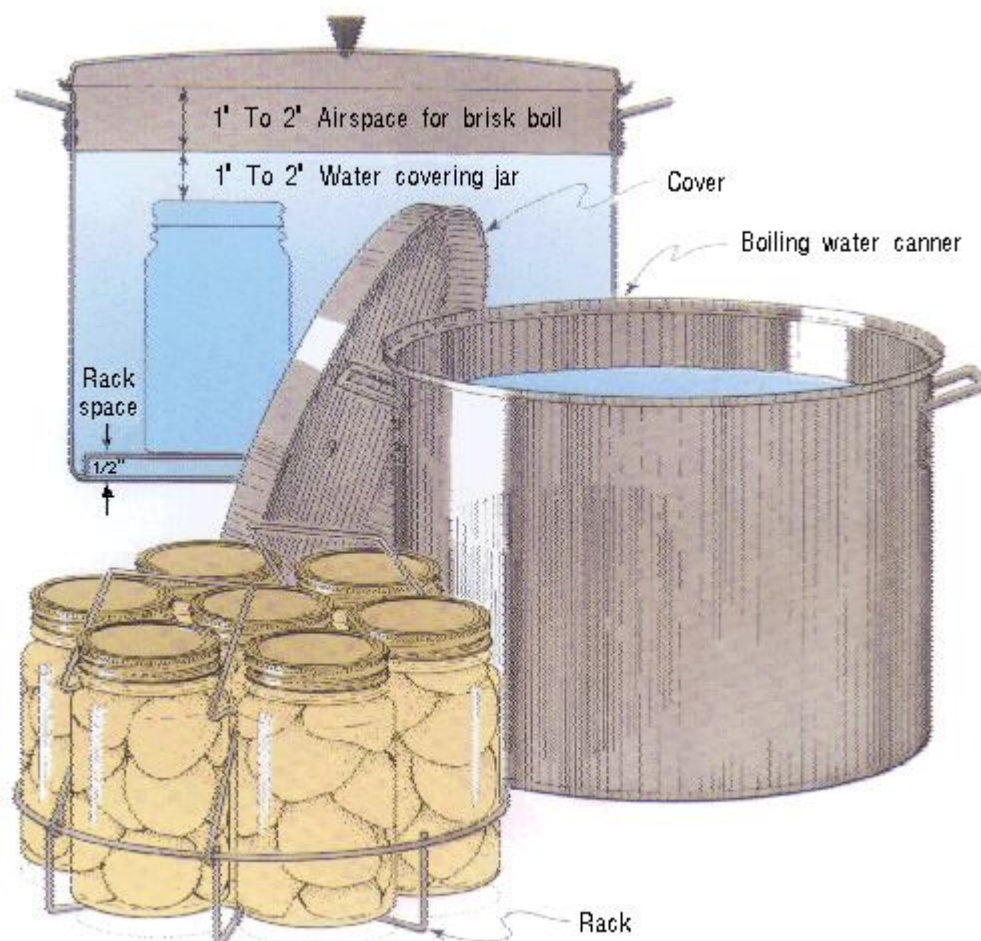
Combine vinegar and next three ingredients in a large stainless steel or enameled saucepan. Bring to a boil.

Place 1 crushed garlic clove in a hot jar, and pack jar tightly with vegetable mixture, leaving ½-inch headspace. Add ¼ tsp (.5 mL) Pickle Crisp to jar, if desired. Ladle hot pickling liquid over vegetables, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rim. Center lid on jar. Apply band and adjust to fingertip-tight. Place jar in boiling water canner. Repeat until all jars are filled.

Process jars 10 minutes, adjusting for altitude. Turn off heat, remove lid, and let jars stand 5 minutes. Remove jars from canner and let cool.

Source: *The All New Ball Book of Canning and Preserving: 2023.*





Safe preserving resources:

National Center for Home Food Preservation: <http://nchfp.uga.edu/>

Complete Guide to Home Canning. 2015. http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/publications_usda.html

Also available in paper copy from Purdue Extension (online store is located at https://mdc.itap.purdue.edu/item.asp?item_number=AIG-539)

So Easy to Preserve, Sixth Edition. 2014. Bulletin 989. Cooperative Extension/The University of Georgia/Athens

Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving. 2024, Newell Corporation

Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving, 2024. Newell Corporation.

All New Ball Bok of Canning and Preserving, 2023, Newell Corporation

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