

Salsa Substitutions

SAFE INGREDIENT SWAPS FOR HOME-CANNED SALSA

Salsa contains a combination of high- or borderline high-acid ingredients (such as tomatoes or fruit) and low-acid ingredients (such as peppers, onions, or other vegetables). Acid in the form of vinegar or bottled lemon juice is added to ensure the appropriate acidity level of the product is reached. It's a careful balancing act, and even small changes to a tested recipe can impact its overall safety. For this reason, we recommend that only recipes from reputable sources that follow the guidelines of the NCHFP be canned at home, and that their ingredients and instructions be followed precisely. If you would like to make up your own salsa recipe, it should be refrigerated (for up to 2 weeks) or frozen for longer storage.

That said, there are a few safe ingredient substitutions/changes that can be made to tested salsa recipes to accommodate personal preferences. You may:

- Swap the type(s) of peppers (hot, sweet, etc.) – but do *not* increase the overall amount. Note that this substitution refers only to swapping pepper types. Do *not* add or substitute other low-acid ingredients such as corn, beans, etc.
- Reduce the amount of low-acid ingredients, such as onions, celery, or peppers.
- Add a bit of tomato paste to thicken the salsa if desired (or simply drain the salsa when a jar is opened).
- Reduce the amount sugar or salt.
- Add a bit of sugar for a sweeter salsa – but absolutely do *not* change or reduce the type of acid called for in the recipe.

For further information on canning, visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP) at <https://nchfp.uga.edu> or contact your local Cooperative Extension office.

Brought to you by the UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County
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