



*“Teaching research-based practices of safe home food preservation to the residents of Solano and Yolo Counties.”*

## Recommendations from the USDA’s 2015 Complete Guide to Home Canning

Link to this recommended source: [https://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/publications\\_usda.html](https://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/publications_usda.html)

**Do I need to sterilize my jars before canning?** It is unnecessary to pre-sterilize jars for jams, jellies, fruit butters, fruits, tomatoes, pickled or fermented foods that will be processed **10 minutes or longer** in a Boiling-Water Canner.

Empty jars used for vegetables, meats, and fruits to be processed in a Pressure Canner need not be pre-sterilized.

All jams, jellies, and pickled products processed **less than 10 minutes** should be filled into sterile empty jars.

To sterilize empty jars after washing in detergent and rinsing thoroughly, submerge them, right side up, in a boiling-water canner with the rack in the bottom. Fill the canner with enough warm water so it is 1 inch above the tops of the jars. Bring the water to a boil, and boil 10 minutes at altitudes of less than 1,000 ft. At higher elevations, boil 1 additional minute for each additional 1,000 ft elevation. Reduce the heat under the canner and keep the jars in the hot water until it is time to fill them. Remove and drain hot sterilized jars one at a time, saving the hot water in the canner for processing filled jars. Fill the sterilized jars with food, add lids, and tighten screw bands.

It is safe to process foods in thoroughly cleaned jars if processing for 10 minutes or longer in a Boiling Water Canner rather than sterilizing.

**Cooling the Jars processed in a Boiling Water Canner:** When jars have been boiled for the recommended processing time, turn off the heat and remove the canner lid. Wait 5 minutes before removing jars from the canner. Let them sit in the hot water. Then, using a jar lifter, remove the jars upright, not tipping them to drain off water, and place them on a towel, leaving at least 1-inch spaces between the jars during cooling. Let jars sit undisturbed to cool at room temperature for 12 to 24 hours.

**Source:** USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning, Chapter 1 pages 14-15 and 18.

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