



UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County

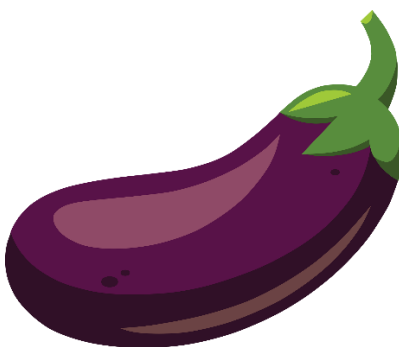
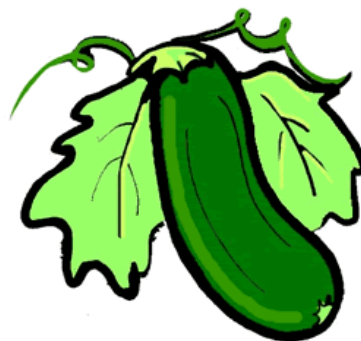
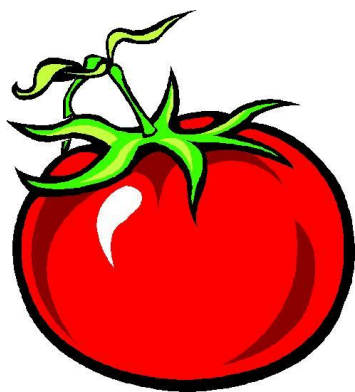
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Ask a Master Food Preserver: <https://link.ucanr.edu/mfp-cs-ask>

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"Preserve today, Relish tomorrow"

Tomatoes, Zucchini And Eggplant



**Saturday July 26, 2025
9:00 a.m. – Noon.**

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Food Safety / Preserving Basics

Food preservation starts with food safety. Cleaning and sanitizing your work area, washing hands frequently, properly handling produce and meat, and avoiding cross-contamination are all part of the process in avoiding food-borne illness.

Following recipes from trusted resources is the next step in ensuring safety when preserving food. This is especially important when canning: It's critical to follow a current, research-based recipe and to use the correct canning method for the food being processed.

For further details on food safety in general, as well as information on a variety of food preservation topics, visit our Food Safety website, where you'll find free, downloadable publications and educational posters:

https://ucanr.edu/sites/mfp_of_cs/Food_Safety/.

You can also access the site by scanning this QR code with your smartphone or tablet.



RECIPES

To be sure your home-canned food is safe and of high quality, follow the guidelines outlined in our publication **High Acid Canning**, which is available to download for free from our website:

https://ucanr.edu/sites/mfp_of_cs/files/395907.pdf and

Dehydrating Basics: Produce <https://ucanr.edu/sites/default/files/2024-06/398681.pdf>

Whether you're brand new to canning in general or could simply use a refresher, you'll find all the current information you need to know, including the types of canners (and which to use when), preparing jars for canning, basic do's and don'ts of canning, and safe food handling.

Tomatoes

Quality: Select only disease-free, preferably vine-ripened, firm fruit for canning.

Caution: Do not can tomatoes from diseased, dead or frost-killed vines. Green tomatoes are more acidic than ripened fruit and can be canned safely with any of the following recommendations.

Acidification: To ensure safe acidity in whole, crushed, or juiced tomatoes, add two tablespoons of bottled lemon juice or 1/2 teaspoon of citric acid per quart of tomatoes. For pints, use one tablespoon bottled lemon juice or 1/4 teaspoon citric acid. Acid can be added directly to the jars before filling with product. Add sugar to offset acid taste, if desired. Four tablespoons of a 5 percent acidity vinegar per quart may be used instead of lemon juice or citric acid. However, vinegar may cause undesirable flavor changes.

All tomato products must be acidified including pressure canning.

Seasoned Tomatoes – 3 ways

Yield: about 6 pint jars

- 12 cups halved, cored and peeled tomatoes, about 5 lb, 12-15 medium large
- Spice blend(s).
- Bottled lemon juice, 1 Tbsp or ¼ tsp. citric acid per pint jar
- Salt, optional

Select and prepare required quantities of one or more of the spice blends. These blends are intended as guidelines, ingredient proportions may be adjusted to suit personal preferences. For each pint jar use 2 ¼ tsp. If omitting red pepper*, use only 2 tsp per jar.

Italian Spice Blend

- 4 tsp Basil leaves
- 2 tsp Thyme leaves
- 2 ½ tsp Oregano leaves
- 1 ½ tsp Rosemary leaves
- 1 ½ tsp Sage
- 1 tsp Garlic powder
- 1 tsp crushed red pepper*, optional

Mexican Spice Blend

- 6 tsp Chili powder
- 2 tsp Ground cumin
- 2 tsp Oregano leaves
- 2 tsp Garlic powder
- 2 tsp Ground coriander
- 1 ½ Seasoned salt**, optional

Cajun Spice Blend

- 3 tsp Chili powder
- 2 tsp Paprika
- 1 ½ tsp Onion flakes
- 1 ½ tsp Garlic powder
- 1 ½ tsp Ground allspice
- 1 ½ tsp Thyme leaves
- 1 tsp Cayenne powder

Herbs de Provence

- 2 Tbsp dry basil
- 4 tsp dry oregano
- 2 tsp dry marjoram
- 2 tsp dry tarragon
- 2 tsp dry thyme
- 2 tsp dry savory
- 1 ½ tsp crushed Bay leaves
- 1 tsp fennel seed
- 1 tsp dry mint
- 1 tsp ground sage
- 1 tsp dry rosemary
- 1 tsp dried lavender (optional)

Blanch, peel and halve tomatoes. Place in a large stainless steel saucepan. Add enough water to cover tomatoes; bring to a boil. Boil gently 5 minutes.

In a hot jar, place specified quantity of chosen spice blend, 1 tbsp lemon juice and 1/4 tsp salt, if using. Pack tomatoes into a hot jar to within 3/4 inch of top rim. Add hot cooking liquid to cover tomatoes to within ½ inch of top rim (headspace). Using nonmetallic utensil, remove air bubbles and adjust headspace, if required, by adding more tomatoes and hot liquid. Wipe jar rim removing any food residue before applying lid on clean jar rim. Screw band down according to manufacturer's directions. Return filled jar to rack in canner. Repeat for remaining tomatoes and hot liquid.

Place jars in canner a boiling water or atmospheric steam canner. Process for 40 minutes from 0 to 1000 ft, 45 minutes from 1001-3000 ft., 50 minutes from 3001- 6000 ft, and 55 minutes above 6001 ft.

When processing time is complete, remove canner lid, wait 5 minutes, then remove jars .Cool upright, undisturbed 24 hours; DO NOT RETIGHTEN screw bands.

After cooling remove rings and check jar seals. Clean jars, especially threads, and dry. Store screw bands separately or replace loosely on jars, as desired. Label and store jars in a cool, dark place.

Source: Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving, 2024

Herbed Tomato Jam

Yield: about 4 eight ounce jars

Great to serve on a cheeseboard or over meatloaf.

- 6 lb. plum tomatoes, cored and chopped
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 ½ cups sugar
- ½ cup balsamic vinegar (5% acidity)
- ¼ cup Pino Grigio or other dry white wine
- 2 tsp. herbs de Provence

Combine the first 5 ingredients in pot. Cook, uncovered over medium-high heat for 1 hr or until reduced by half, stirring often to prevent scorching.

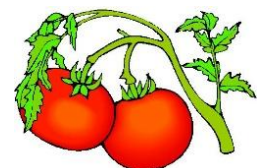
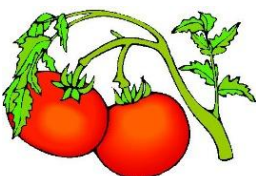
Stir in sugar and next 3 ingredients. Cook uncovered over medium-high heat for 45 minutes or until thick, stirring occasionally. Remove and discard bay leaves.

Ladle hot jam into hot jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Wipe rims; place lids and rings on jars. Tighten rings only according to manufacturer's instructions.

Place jars in canner a boiling water or atmospheric steam canner. Process for: 0-6000 ft. = 10 minutes, above 6000 ft. = 15 minutes. Turn off the heat, wait 5 minutes. Remove canner lid then remove jars without tilting and place them upright on a protected work surface. Cool upright, undisturbed 24 hours; DO NOT RETIGHTEN screw bands.

After cooling remove rings and check jar seals. Clean jars, especially threads, and dry. Store screw bands separately or replace loosely on jars, as desired. Label and store jars in a cool, dark place. For best quality, use home canned foods within one year

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



Dehydrating Tomatoes

- Slice tomatoes 1/4" to 1/2"
 - A thinner slice gets you a crispier chip, but also lends itself to sticking.
 - A thicker slice is a more intense flavor, and has more of a fruit leather feel to it.
- Dry in dehydrator at 125F/52C for 8-12 hours.
- Flip after 5 hours
 - Flipping the tomato slices after five hours will help reduce the risk of the tomato slices sticking to your trays.
- Test for dryness
 - They should easily bend in half and not break or stick when folded. Remove dried tomatoes from dehydrator. Continue to dry tomatoes that are sticky or moist. Turn tomatoes and rotate racks.
- Rehydrating is not necessary. Add dried tomatoes directly to sauces, soups, pizza or your favorite recipe.

How to Condition Dehydrated Food

- Fully dry your produce
- The first step is always completely drying your food, whether it is fruit, vegetables, herbs, or jerky. Go by the times posted in my posts, in the best dehydrating recipe books, or other information you find on the internet. But know that those times are relative. You need to ensure that your batch is dry and allow it to come to room temperature.
- Place in an airtight container with space
 - This does not have to be the container you plan on storing your food in your pantry. You need a little extra space to shake the jar and move the food around a bit. Jars are easiest, but any airtight container will work that gives them space. You just don't want a considerable amount of room, as extra air can introduce even more moisture.
 - You do not have to vacuum seal at this point.
- Shake once a day for five days or if you see moisture on the sides of the jar.
- You want to move the produce around so that there are no sticking areas and give all of the surfaces a chance to be free
- What to look for:
 - Moisture beads on glass – put them back into the dehydrator
 - Food sticking to the sides or bottom of the glass – shake gently – if the food comes off, you're fine. If it requires a larger shake to get it off, return it to the dehydrator
 - Food sticking together – a gentle shake should break clumps of sugary food (carrots, onions, fruits). If it takes effort to break them up – put it all back in the dehydrator.
- Pasteurization
 - Foods exposed to insects before or during the drying process should be pasteurized to destroy insect eggs. Preheat an oven to 175° F. Spread the food loosely, not more than 1 inch deep, on trays. Do not put more than two trays in the oven at once. Heat brittle, dried vegetables for 10 minutes; heat fruits 15 minutes. Oven pasteurizing results in additional loss of vitamins, and may scorch food.
 - Freezer method: Seal dried food in heavy freezer containers (bags or boxes). Freeze for 48 hours to kill insects and insect eggs. Remove and let reach room temperature before packaging for permanent storage.

Use dried tomatoes in soups and stews.

- Pulverize dried tomatoes in a blend or food processor to make tomato power. It can be used to make DIY tomato paste, added to taco meat, added to soups and stews.
- Sprinkle the DIY spice blends for canning tomatoes onto your tomato slices before dehydrating to make flavored tomato chips.

Zucchini

Cucumber pickle recipes are not interchangeable with zucchini pickles recipes. Zucchini is less acidic and requires more vinegar in the brine. However, zucchini may be substituted in cucumber RELISH recipes because they all contain more vinegar to compensate for the other low acid vegetables that are typically in relishes, such as onions, peppers, etc.

Zucchini, like cucumbers, are cucurbits and can become bitter. Bitterness is caused by adverse conditions such as weather or pests. Although the bitterness can be tasted throughout the fruit, it is concentrated near the stem end. Do not can bitter cucurbits, as the bitterness is amplified once canned. Taste before preserving!

Dilled Zucchini Slices

Yield: about 4 pint jars

- 4 ½ lb zucchini, 12 – 14 medium
- 3 Tbsp pickling salt
- 2 ½ cups white vinegar
- 1 ¼ cups granulated sugar
- 1 tsp each: celery seed and dill seed
- 1 medium cooking onion, thinly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves and 4 sprigs dill weed

Wash zucchini, retaining peel and removing ends; cut into ¼-inch slices. Layer zucchini and salt in a large glass, enamel or stainless steel bowl; let stand 1 hour.

In a stainless steel or enamel saucepan, combine vinegar, sugar, celery and dill seeds; bring to a boil. Rinse zucchini in cold water; drain thoroughly; pat dry. Add zucchini and onions to pickling liquid; bring to a boil; boil 5 minutes.

Place 1 clove of sliced garlic and 1 large sprig of dill weed in a hot jar. Pack zucchini and onions into a hot jar to within ¾ inch of top of jar. Add boiling hot liquid to cover vegetables to within 1/2 inch of top of jar (headspace). Using nonmetallic utensil, remove air bubbles and adjust headspace, if required, by adding more vegetables and hot liquid. Wipe jar rim removing any food residue. Center lid on clean jar rim. Screw band down per manufacturer's instructions. Place filled jar to canner. Repeat for remaining vegetables and hot liquid.

Place jars in canner a boiling water or atmospheric steam canner. Process for: 0-1000 ft. = 10 minutes, 1001 ft-6000 ft = 15 minutes, above 6001 ft. = 20 minutes. Turn off the heat, wait 5 minutes. Remove canner lid, wait 5 minutes, then remove jars without tilting and place them upright on a protected work surface. Cool upright, undisturbed 24 hours; DO NOT RETIGHTEN screw bands.

After cooling remove rings and check jar seals. Clean jars, especially threads, and dry. Store screw bands separately or replace loosely on jars, as desired. Label and store jars in a cool, dark place. For best quality, use home canned foods within one year

Source: <https://www.bernardin.ca/recipes/en/dilled-zucchini-slices.htm>



Mock Canned Pineapple (Zucchini-pineapple)

Yield about 8-9 pint jars

Zucchini-pineapple tastes like canned pineapple and may be substituted wherever canned pineapple chunks or crushed pineapple is used.

- 4 qts cubed or shredded zucchini
- 1½ cups bottled lemon juice
- 46 oz canned unsweetened pineapple juice
- 3 cups sugar

Peel zucchini and either cut into ½-inch cubes or shred. Mix zucchini with other ingredients in a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Simmer 20 minutes. Fill jars with hot mixture and cooking liquid, leaving ½-inch headspace. De-bubble and adjust headspace as needed. Wipe jar rim removing any food residue. Center lid on clean jar rim. Screw band down per manufacturer's instructions. Place filled jar to canner. Repeat for remaining jars.

Place pints or half-pint jars in canner a boiling water or atmospheric steam canner. Process for: 0-1000 ft. = 15 minutes, 1001 ft-6000 ft = 20 minutes, above 6001 ft. = 25 minutes. Turn off the heat, wait 5 minutes. Remove canner lid, wait 5 minutes, then remove jars without tilting and place them upright on a protected work surface. Cool upright, undisturbed 24 hours; DO NOT RETIGHTEN screw bands.

After cooling remove rings and check jar seals. Clean jars, especially threads, and dry. Store screw bands separately or replace loosely on jars, as desired. Label and store jars in a cool, dark place. For best quality, use home canned foods within one year

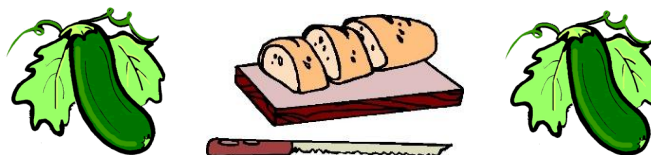
Source: <https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can/canning-fruits-and-fruit-products/zucchini-pineapple/>

Pineapple Zucchini Bread

- 3 eggs
- 2/3 c. canola oil
- 1 1/3 c. sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 pint shredded zucchini pineapple, including juice (recipe from USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning, pg 2-22)
- 3 c. flour, unsifted
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- 1 ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¾ tsp. ground nutmeg

In a bowl, stir together flour, baking soda, salt, baking powder, cinnamon and nutmeg. Set aside. In a large bowl, beat eggs until frothy; add oil, sugar and vanilla; continue beating until mixture is thick and foamy. Stir in zucchini pineapple. Add dry ingredients; stir gently until just blended. Spoon batter equally into 2 greased and flour-dusted 9 x 5 or 4 x 8 loaf pans. Bake at 350° for 50 minutes to 1 hour or until breads begin to pull away from sides of pans and a wooden skewer inserted in centers comes out clean. Let cool in pans for 10 minutes; then turn out onto racks to cool completely.

From the kitchen of MFP Mary Grove



Zucchini Chips

- Wash Zucchini
- Cut off blossom end
- Peel if desired
- Cut into 1/8" slices. You can go a little thicker if you'd like, but these make really crisp chips – similar to Lays potato chips
- Season with DIY seasoning blends (see tomato section)
- Place on dehydrator trays lined with mesh or parchment/baking paper
- Dry at 135-140°F or 60°C for 6-10 hours.
- Cool before testing. Chips should easily break
- Condition (see tomato section)
- Store in airtight container.

Note: see pasteurizing dehydrated fruits and vegetables on pg. 5

Source: adapted from The Purposeful Pantry

Eggplant

Roasted Eggplant and Pepper Putanesca Sauce

Yield: about 6 pints

A great meal in a jar. Serve over pasta to make a quick meal on a busy day.

- 6 pounds plum tomatoes
- Vegetable cooking spray
- 2 pounds eggplant, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 3 large onions, unpeeled and quartered
- 3 red bell peppers, halved and seeded
- 2 cups dry red wine
- ½ cup balsamic vinegar
- 1 ½ cups chopped pitted Kalamata olives
- 1 tablespoon anchovy paste or chopped anchovies (optional)
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 6 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 (3.5-ounce) jar capers, drained

Preheat oven to 400°F. Core tomatoes and cut in half lengthwise. Arrange tomato halves on 2 large rimmed baking sheets lined with aluminum foil. Bake at 400°F for 45 minutes or until softened and beginning to char. Remove from oven. Let cool in pan on a wire rack. When tomatoes are cool enough to handle, peel and coarsely chop. Place tomatoes and accumulated juice in a 6-quart stainless steel or enameled Dutch oven.

Replace foil on baking sheets; coat foil with cooking spray. Arrange eggplant on 1 baking sheet; onion and bell pepper halves on another. Bake at 400°F for 30 minutes or until edges of eggplant are golden brown and onion and bell pepper are crisp-tender. Add eggplant to tomatoes.

Remove peel and coarsely chop onion and bell pepper; add to tomato mixture. Stir in wine and remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil; reduce heat, and simmer, uncovered, 15 minutes.

Fill hot jars, leaving ½-inch headspace. Debubble and adjust headspace as needed. Wipe jar rim removing any food residue. Center lid on clean jar rim. Screw band down per manufacturer's instructions. Place filled jar to canner. Repeat for remaining jars.

Process in a boiling water canner with at least 2 inches of water above the jars for 45 minutes at 0-1,000 feet elevation, 50 minutes at 1,001-3,000 feet, 60 minutes at 3,001-6,000 feet, 65 minutes above 6,001.

After cooling remove rings and check jar seals. Clean jars, especially threads, and dry. Store screw bands separately or replace loosely on jars, as desired. Label and store jars in a cool, dark place. For best quality, use home canned foods within one year

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

Ajvar (Eggplant and Pepper Spread)

Yield: about 4 eight ounce jars

Used as a spread, dipping sauce and condiment to embellish any meal, Full of eggplant and bell pepper, this robust Serbian condiment brings a pinch of heat to the table.

- 1 ½ lbs eggplants (2-3 medium)
- 2 ½ lbs red bell peppers (5-6 large)
- 2 garlic cloves
- 2 tsp salt
- ⅔ cup apple cider vinegar or white wine vinegar (at least 5% acidity)
- 1 hot red pepper (seeded) or pinch of cayenne pepper (optional)

Slice eggplants in half, place skin side up on a baking sheet, and pierce skin a few times.

Cut red bell peppers in half, seed them, place skin side up on second baking sheet. If desired, add optional hot red pepper. Roast together in oven until skin begins to char, about 20 minutes for peppers and up to 30 minutes for eggplant.

Remove bell peppers from the oven and place them in a covered bowl to steam skins loose. Let sit for 10 minutes. Use a sharp knife to peel skins off; discard skins. Place bell peppers in the bowl of a food processor fitted with a sharp blade.

Remove eggplant from the oven and let cool to the touch. Scoop eggplant flesh out, discarding seeds and skins. Place eggplant in the food processor with peppers, garlic cloves, salt as well as hot peppers if using. Pulse food processor on chop or puree on low, leaving the spread chunky or creating a smooth puree.

Scoop spread into a saucepan set over medium heat, add vinegar. Bring Ajvar to a boil, stirring constantly to eliminate splattering.

Ladle into a hot jar, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids.

Process in a boiling water canner with at least 2 inches of water above the jars for 15 minutes at 0-1,000 feet elevation, 20 minutes at 1,001-6,000 feet, 25 minutes at 30 minutes at above 6,001

After cooling remove rings and check jar seals. Clean jars, especially threads, and dry. Store screw bands separately or replace loosely on jars, as desired. Label and store jars in a cool, dark place. For best quality, use home canned foods within one year

Source: Ball Blue Book Guide To Preserving, 2024

Freezing Eggplant

Remember that freezing stops microbial activity in the freezer, but it does not kill microbes. The botulism toxin will not develop in frozen foods, so there is not the concern with botulism as when canning these low acid foods.

Preparation – Harvest before seeds become mature and when color is uniformly dark. Wash, peel and slice 1/3-inch thick. Prepare quickly, enough eggplant for one blanching at a time.

Water blanch 4 minutes in 1 gallon of boiling water containing 1/2 cup lemon juice. Cool, drain and package, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

For Frying – Pack the drained slices with freezer wrap between slices. Seal and freeze.

- Eggplant quickly darkens when sliced and exposed to air. Add ½ cup lemon juice to the blanching water to reduce the enzymatic reactions that cause darkening.
- Consider the age, size, and variety of eggplant you are using. Small thin varieties may have tender skin and not require peeling. Older larger varieties with more seeds may have a bitter taste; those slices may be salted to draw out bitter juices.
- Consider the end use of the product. Use frozen raw eggplant in dishes where it does not need to stay firm such as soups, stews, sauces, and dips.
- Cooked eggplant may be frozen.
- Cook and puree eggplant for use in dips or sauces. Roasted eggplant works well to puree.

Resources for tested recipes:

National Center for Home Food Preservation: <https://nchfp.uga.edu/#gsc.tab=0>

Complete Guide to Home Canning. 2015. <https://nchfp.uga.edu/resources/category/usda-guide#gsc.tab=0>

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. 2016. Bulletin 989. Cooperative Extension/University of Georgia, Athens

Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving. 2024. Newell Corporation.

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

The All New Ball Book of Canning and Preserving, 2023, Newell Corporation

Bernardin: <https://www.bernardin.ca/>

Ball: <https://www.ballmasonjars.com>

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https://ucanr.edu/sites/mfp_of_cs/Recipes/Archived_Recipes/

UC Master Food Preserver Program

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