Selecting, Preparing, and Canning: Tomatoes, Introduction[1]

United States Department of Agriculture Extension Service[2]

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

Caution: Do not can tomatoes from 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.

Recommendation: Use of a pressure canner will result in higher quality and more nutritious canned tomato products. If your pressure canner cannot be operated above 15 PSI, select a process time at a lower pressure.

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2. Reviewed for use in Florida by Amy Simonne, assistant professor, Food Safety and Quality, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville FL 32611.

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