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How to Make Homemade Canned Dill-Pickled Beans

You think making and canning your own pickled beans (also called pickled dill beans, or dilly beans) is difficult or expensive? Not at all! You can do it with basic equipment already in your kitchen - you just need a canning pot. And thanks to the vinegar in pickled beans, you can use either a plain open water bath pot or a pressure canner (which will also let you can low acid vegetables!) Prepared this way, the jars have a shelf life of about 12 months, and aside from storing in a cool, dark place, require no special attention.



Directions for Making Canned Dill Pickled Beans

Ingredients

- 4 pounds fresh, tender green or yellow beans (5- to 6-inches long)
- 8 to 16 heads fresh dill
- 8 cloves garlic - minced (optional)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup canning or pickling salt (NOT table salt)
- 4 cups white vinegar (5% acidity)
- 4 cups water
- 1 teaspoon hot red pepper flakes (optional)



Equipment

- Jar grabber (to pick up the hot jars)
- Jar funnel (\$2 at mall kitchen stores and local "big box" stores, but it's usually cheaper online from our affiliates)
- At least 1 large pot
- Large spoons and ladles
- Ball jars (Publix, Kroger, other grocery stores and some "big box" stores carry them - about \$7 per dozen pint jars including the lids and rings)
- 1 [Water Bath Canner](#) OR a pressure Canner (a large pressure pot with a lifting rack to sanitize the jars after filling about \$75 to \$200 at mall kitchen stores and "big box" stores, but it is cheaper online; [see this page for more about pressure canners](#)).

Recipe and Directions

Step 1 - Selecting the beans

The most important step! You need beans that are FRESH and crisp. Limp, old beans will make nasty tasting canned beans. Guests will probably throw them at you.. Select firm, crisp beans. Remove and discard any soft, diseased, spotted and bug-chewed beans.



How many beans and where to get them

You can grow your own, pick your own, or buy them at the grocery store. About 4 pounds of beans makes about 8 pints of pickled beans.

Step 2 - Prepare the jars and canner

Wash the jars and lids

This is a good time to get the jars ready! The dishwasher is fine for the jars; especially if it has a "sanitize" cycle. Otherwise put the jars in boiling water for 10 minutes. I just put the lids in a small pot of almost boiling water for 5 minutes, and use the magnetic "lid lifter wand" (available from target, other big box stores, and often grocery stores; and available online - see this page) to pull them out.



Get the canner heating up

Rinse out your canner, put the rack in the bottom, and fill it with hot tap water. (Of course, follow the instruction that came with the canner, if they are different). Put it on the stove over low heat just to get it heating up for later on.



Step 3 -Wash the beans!

I'm sure you can figure out how to scrub the beans in plain cold or lukewarm water using your hands or a vegetable brush.



Step 4 - Trim the ends and cut into smaller pieces

Just take a sharp knife and trim off beans tops, leaving an inch of stem and roots to prevent bleeding of color.

Of course, if you prefer French cut green beans, you can cut the beans lengthwise instead, or you can use a "bean Frencher". The "Frencher" enables you to prepare a huge quantity of beans quickly!



[See the bottom of this page for makes, models, prices and ordering info for bean frenchers.](#)

Step 5 - Pack the herbs into the jars

In each sterile (right out of the dishwasher) pint jar, place 1 to 2 dill heads and, if desired, 1 clove of garlic.

Step 6 - Pack the beans into the jars

Place the whole trimmed beans upright in jars, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch of headspace. Trim the beans to ensure proper fit, if necessary.



Step 7 - Make the Pickling Solution

Combine the salt, vinegar, water and pepper flakes (the latter if desired). Bring to a boil.

Step 8 - Pour the pickling solution into the jars

Use a ladle or pyrex measuring cup to carefully fill each packed jar with the hot vinegar solution, again allowing $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch headspace. The beans should be covered and there should still be 1/2 inch of airspace left in the top of each jar. Be careful not to burn yourself, (or anyone else - children should be kept back during this step!)

Step 9 - Put the lids and rings on

Put the lids on each jar and seal them by putting a ring on and screwing it down snugly (but not with all your might, just "snug").

Step 10 - Put the jars in the canner and the lid on the canner (but still vented)

Using the jar tongs, put the jars on the rack in the canner. Make sure the tops of the jars are covered by at least 1 inch of water.

Step 11 - Process for 5 minutes*

The chart below will help you determine the right processing time and pressure, if you have a different type of canner, or are above sea level. For most people, using a plain open water bath canner, the time will be 5 minutes (check the table below for altitudes above 1,000 ft). You can use either a plain water bath canner OR a pressure canner, since the vinegar adds so much acidity (if you can vegetables other than tomatoes without adding vinegar, you must use a pressure canner).



*Recommended Processing times For Pickled Beans in A Boiling Water (Open) Bath Canner			
		PROCESS TIMES (MIN) AT ALTITUDES OF:	
Jar Size	0-1000 ft.	1001-6000 ft.	Above 6000 ft.
Pints or Quarts	5	10	15

Step 12 - Remove the jars

Lift the jars out of the water and let them cool on a wooden cutting board or a towel, without touching or bumping them in a draft-free place (usually takes overnight), here they won't be bumped. You can then remove the rings if you like, but if you leave them on, at least loosen them quite a bit, so they don't rust in place due to trapped moisture. Once the jars are cool, you can check that they are sealed verifying that the lid has been sucked down. Just press in the center, gently, with your finger. If it pops up and down (often making a popping sound), it is not sealed. If you put the jar in the refrigerator right away, you can still use it. Some people replace the lid and reprocess the jar, then that's a bit iffy. If you heat the contents back up, re-jar them (with a new lid) and the full time in the canner, it's usually ok. You're done!



Other Equipment:

From left to right:

1. Jar lifting tongs to pick up hot jars
2. Lid lifter - to remove lids from the pot of boiling water (sterilizing)
3. Lid - disposable - you may only use them once
4. Ring - holds the lids on the jar until after the jars cool - then you don't need them
5. Canning jar funnel - to fill the jars



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is it safe to can beans in a traditional water bath? If so how long do you do process them?

A. The answer, quite simply is no. Quoting from the [Ohio State University Extension's Fact Sheet](#):

"Pressure canning is the only safe method for home canning vegetables. *Clostridium botulinum* is the bacterium that causes botulism food poisoning in low-acid foods, such as vegetables. The bacterial spores are destroyed only when the vegetables are processed in a pressure canner at 240 degrees Fahrenheit (F) for the correct amount of time.

Clostridium botulinum is the bacterium commonly found in vegetables and meats. It is harmless until it finds itself in a moist, low-acid, oxygen-free environment or a partial vacuum. Under these conditions, the bacterium can grow and produce toxins dangerous to people and animals.

Do not process (low acid) vegetables using the boiling water bath because the botulinum bacteria can survive that method.

And Clemson University provides these questions and answers:

Can fruits and vegetables be canned without heating if aspirin is used? No. Aspirin should not be used in canning. It cannot be relied on to prevent spoilage or to give satisfactory products. Adequate heat treatment is the only safe procedure.

Is it safe to can beans in a boiling water bath if vinegar is used? No. Recommended processing methods must be used to assure safety. Recommended processing times cannot be shortened if vinegar is used in canning fresh vegetables. (This does not refer to pickled vegetables.)

Salt and sugar are not preservatives for vegetables: they are added to stabilize and improve flavor, but will not prevent spoilage.

Salicylic acid is also NOT a preservative. The [University of Illinois reports](#):

Using Aspirin for Canning

Several years ago, a recipe circulated using aspirin to acidify tomatoes and beans for canning. Aspirin is not recommended for canning. While it contains salicylic acid, it does not sufficiently acidify tomatoes or beans for safe hot water bath canning. Beans are low acid foods and may only be processed safely in a pressure canner. Lemon juice or vinegar is recommended to acidify tomato products for safe water bath processing.

Think of it like smoking. We all know someone who smoke their entire life and lived to be 90. But the cemeteries are filled with the vast majority who didn't. You'll hear people say "my grandmother did it that way for 20 years". But of course, the people who died from food poisoning aren't around and often didn't have descendants to tell their tale...