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Where you can find a pick-your-own farm near you!

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See www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm for many other canning directions and recipes

How to Make Home and Can Tomato Juice at Home - Easily!

Making and canning your own tomato juice is also quite easy. And imagine how much better it will taste in the winter, with the flavor of home grown tomatoes! Just scroll down this page to see how to do it, in easy steps and completely illustrated. I like it with the basil, but you can also make plain tomato juice, too. The only special equipment you need is a pressure canner and canning jars with new lids. Caution: Do not add other vegetables or thickening agents to home canned tomato juice.)

Ingredients

- Tomatoes (any quantity - see step one)
- Lemon Juice (less than a cup)



Equipment

- Jar funnel (\$2 at WalMart, Target, and sometimes at grocery stores) or order it as part of the kit with the jar grabber.
- Jar grabber (to pick up the hot jars)- WalMart carries it *sometimes* - or order it here. It's a tremendously useful to put jars in the canner and take the hot jars out (without scalding yourself!). The kit sold on the website (photo above) has everything you need, and at a pretty good price.
- At least 1 large pot; I prefer 16 to 20 quart Teflon lined pots for easy cleanup.
- Large spoons and ladles
- 1 Water Bath or Pressure Canner - [see this page for more information](#)).

- Canning jars (Publix, WalMart carry them - about \$7 per dozen 8 ounce jars including the lids and rings)
- Lids - thin, flat, round metal lids with a gum binder that seals them against the top of the jar. They may only be used once.
- Rings - metal bands that secure the lids to the jars. They may be reused many times.

Optional stuff:

- Lid lifter (has a magnet to pick the lids out of the boiling water where you sterilize them. (\$2 at WalMart or it comes in the kit at left)

Directions

Step 1 - Selecting the tomatoes

It's fun to go pick your own and you can obviously get better quality tomatoes! Wash, remove stems, and trim off bruised or discolored portions of the tomatoes.



Quantity: An average of 23 pounds is needed per canner load of 7 quarts, or an average of 14 pounds per canner load of 9 pints. A bushel weighs about 53 pounds and yields 15 to 18 quarts of juice - an average of 3¼ pounds per quart.

At right is a picture of tomatoes from my garden - they are so much better than anything from the grocery store. And if you don't have enough, a pick-you-own farm is the place to go! At right are 4 common varieties that will work:

Top left: Beefsteak	Top right: Lemon Boy, yellow
Bottom left: Roma, paste-type	Bottom right: Better Boy

Also, you don't want mushy, bruised or rotten tomatoes!

Caution: Do not can tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines. Green tomatoes are more acidic than ripened fruit and can be canned safely, also.

Step 2 - Wash the jars and lids



Now's a good time to get the jars ready, so you won't be rushed later. The dishwasher is fine for the jars; especially if it has a "sterilize" cycle, the water bath processing will sterilize them as well as the contents! If you don't have a dishwasher with a sterilize cycle, you can wash the containers in hot, soapy water and rinse, then sterilize the jars by boiling them 10 minutes, and keep the jars in hot water until they are used.

NOTE: If unsterilized jars are used, the product should be processed for 5 more minutes. However, since this additional processing can result in a poor set (runny jam), it's better to sterilize the jars.

Put the lids into a pan of hot, but not quite boiling water (that's what the manufacturer's recommend) for 5 minutes, and use the magnetic "lid lifter wand" to pull them out. Leave the jars in the dishwasher on "heated dry" until you are ready to use them. Keeping them hot will prevent the jars from breaking when you fill them with the hot jam.

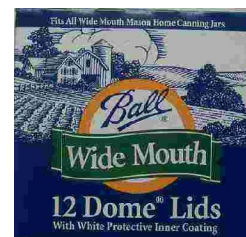


Lids: put the lids into a pan of hot water for at least several minutes; to soften up the gummed surface and clean the lids.



Need lids, rings and replacement jars?

[Get them all here, delivered direct to your home, at the best prices on the internet!](#)



Step 3 - Cut up the tomatoes and quickly put into the pot

To prevent the juice from separating, quickly cut about 1 pound of tomatoes at a time into quarters and put directly into a saucepan on the stove. (If you are not concerned about juice separation, simply slice or quarter all of the tomatoes at once into a large saucepan.)



Juicers? Can you use a juicer? Certainly! It will eliminate step 6 and 7 later on, but, of course, you will need to simmer for 5 minutes (step 5). The one potential downside to using a juicer is that the juice may later separate (clarify) into a top and bottom portion, for the reasons already explained above.

Step 4 - Heat to boiling and keep adding tomatoes



Heat immediately to boiling while crushing (I use a potato masher). Continue to slowly add and crush freshly cut tomato quarters to the boiling mixture; repeating steps 4 and 5. Make sure the mixture boils constantly and vigorously while you add the remaining tomatoes.

Step 5 - Continue cooking

Simmer 5 minutes after you add all pieces. Crush, heat, and simmer for 5 minutes before juicing.

Step 6 - Sieve

Press the heated tomato juice through a sieve or food mill to remove skins and seeds. I use the Foley food mill, shown at right



There is also a VERY nice, versatile strainer pictured at below! Click on the links there or see the bottom of this page for more information and to order! The VillaWare model can handle higher volumes than a Foley food mill (without giving you cramps!) And yes, you can use your juicer, if it can handle boiling hot liquids!

To see a greater variety of [strainers in other types, sizes, and prices, check the website!](#)

Step 7 - Heat the strained tomato juice again

Heat the juice again to boiling.

Step 8 - Add lemon juice and seasoning TO EACH STILL EMPTY JAR

Add bottled lemon juice or citric acid to jars, as described in the next paragraph, to acidify the contents. This helps avoid spoilage and increase safety.

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 (such as "Fruit Fresh") 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 1 tablespoon of 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, compared with lemon juice or citric acid.

Seasoning: Add 1 teaspoon of salt per quart to the jars, if desired. I also add 1 teaspoon of ground basil.

Step 9 - Fill the jars and put the lid and rings on

Fill jars with hot tomato juice, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process following to the instructions in the tables below according to the type of canner you have. (Acidification is still required for the pressure canning options; follow all steps in the Procedures above for any of the processing options.)

Note: the charts below will help you determine the right processing time and pressure, if you have a different type of canner, or are above sea level.



Water Bath Canner:

Table 1. Recommended process time for Tomato Juice in a boiling-water canner. (shown at left)

Hot pack		Process Time at Altitudes of		
Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 3,000 ft	3,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Pints	35 min	40	45	50
Quarts	40	45	50	55

Pressure canners:

Table 2. Recommended process time for Tomato Juice in a dial-gauge pressure canner. (not shown)					
Hot pack			Canner Gauge Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of		
Jar Size	Process Time	0 - 2,000 ft	2,001 - 4,000 ft	4,001 - 6,000 ft	6,001 - 8,000 ft
Pints or Quarts	20 min	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	9 lb
	15	11	12	13	14

Table 3. Recommended process time for Tomato Juice in a weighted-gauge pressure canner (not shown).			
Hot pack			Canner Gauge Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes
Jar Size	Process Time	0 - 1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Pints or Quarts	20 min	5 lb	10 lb
	15	10	15
	10	15	Not Recommended

Step 10 - 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. 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!

Once cooled, they're ready to store. I find they last up to 12 months. But after about 6 to 8 months, they get darker in color and start to get runny. They still are safe to eat, but the flavor and texture aren't as good. So eat them in the first 6 months after you prepare them!