For many people, summer is not summer without enjoying fresh tomatoes and other produce. This bounty of summer can also be (safely!) enjoyed year round by using good home food preservation practices. Tomatoes can be canned, frozen and even dried at home.

Many tomato varieties on the market today are sweeter and less acidic than in the past. However, acidity helps preserve foods. To ensure the safety of whole, crushed or juiced canned tomatoes, regardless of the variety, always add:

- **Quart Jars:** 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice or 1/2 teaspoon of citric acid per jar
- **Pint Jars:** 1 tablespoon of bottled lemon juice or 1/4 teaspoon of citric acid per jar

Acid can be added directly to the jars before filling with product. Sugar may be added to offset any acid taste. There are many scientifically tested recipes for canning tomato products, including ketchup, spaghetti sauce and salsa, as well as whole, crushed or juiced tomatoes.

Improperly preserved foods can cause the dangerous illness, botulism. Adding acid, using research-tested recipes and following instructions for processing procedures and times help keep you and your family safe, because these techniques fight the bacteria responsible for botulinum toxin.

Freezing tomatoes is a quick and easy way to enjoy them year-round. Tomatoes can be frozen raw, as juice or stewed. All tomatoes should be washed first. Some headspace should be left in the container before sealing and freezing. (continues on page 2)

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**Canned Tomato Paste**

Yield: About 8 or 9 half-pint jars

- 14 pounds Roma or paste-type tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon citric acid
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon canning or pickling salt
- 1 clove garlic (optional)

NOTE: Only the basic steps are listed. The detailed recipe is available from: [http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_03/tomato_paste2.html](http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_03/tomato_paste2.html)

1. Wash and rinse half-pint canning jars.
2. Rinse tomatoes and remove cores; do not peel. Chop tomatoes into ½- to ¾-inch pieces. Place in stockpot; cover and bring tomatoes to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for about 1 hour until volume is reduced by half. Stir frequently to prevent sticking and burning.
3. Press cooked tomatoes through a fine sieve.
4. Return sieved tomatoes to stockpot. Stir in citric acid thoroughly, and other listed ingredients. Continue cooking slowly on medium heat, uncovered, until volume is reduced again by half, about 2 ½ hours.
5. Fill hot paste into clean, hot half-pint jars, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars. Apply and adjust prepared canning lids.
6. Process in a boiling water canner for 45 minutes at altitudes less than 1,000 feet, 50 minutes at 1,001 to 3,000 feet and 55 minutes from 3,001 to 6,000 feet. Let cool, undisturbed, 12 to 24 hours and check for seals.

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**Enjoying Tomatoes Year Round**

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Enjoying Tomatoes Year Around Continued

This allows room for the product to expand when freezing. To freeze raw tomatoes, core and peel them. Then freeze them whole or in pieces in properly sealed containers. For juice, cut tomatoes into quarters or eighths and simmer 5 to 10 minutes. Press through a sieve. Pour into containers, seal and freeze. For stewed tomatoes, remove stem ends, peel and quarter ripe tomatoes. Cover and cook until tender (10 to 20 minutes). Place pan containing tomatoes in cold water to cool. Pack into containers, seal and freeze.

Source:

Local Contact Information:

Wildcat Extension District
Barbara Ames
410 Peter Pan, Suite B
Independence, KS 67301
620-331-2690

• Jars must cool in still, room temperature air. Cooling is important for safety. Jars should be cooled on a rack or towel away from drafts. Jars must not be cooled by dunking in water or any other means of force-cooling.

Source: Permission to use this information was granted from Barbara Ingham, Professor, Food Science Extension Specialist, and University of Wisconsin-Madison

Disclaimer: Reference to any specific commercial products, process, service, manufacturer, or company does not constitute its endorsement or recommendation.