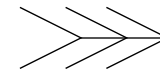


Cucumbers are up. Tomatoes too. Corn and berries are right behind. Enjoy sun-ripened flavors all year long with homemade dill pickles, tomato sauce, salsa, corn relish, and jam. We provide the techniques and a pantryful of surprising (and surprisingly easy) variations.



SAVING SUMMMER

by RICHARD SWEARINGER photos ANDY LYONS recipes MARYELLYN KRANTZ food styling JILL LUST prop styling SUE MITCHELL



Two dozen tomatoes—a dozen dinners done. With this blend of tomatoes and herbs on hand, you can make pizzas and pot roasts, soups and casseroles, and, of course, an irresistible plate of spaghetti. (And it's half the cost of store-bought pasta sauce.)

TOMATO-BASIL
SIMMER SAUCE

Just corn, celery, sweet pepper, and spices. Get adventurous and add green olives, or take it down home with apples and caraway. So delicious, we predict there won't be a jar left by August.



BLUE RIBBON
CORN RELISH
Recipes begin on page 174

Impatient gardeners, this is the salsa for you. It works just as well with green tomatoes as it does with ripe ones. Big chunks give it great looks and bold flavor with less chopping.



CHUNKY TOMATO SALSA



BEST-EVER DILL PICKLES
Recipes begin on page 174

Even first-timers can make crisp dills in under an hour. These use 5 ingredients and take 3 simple steps.



Pretty jam. As in, pretty easy with our foolproof instructions. And pretty delicious, because you choose the ripest berries for the best flavor.



HOMEMADE
STRAWBERRY JAM

Recipes begin on page 174



**TOMATO-BASIL
SIMMER SAUCE**

Beyond pasta, try this sauce over grilled chicken or as a dip for garlic bread and grilled cheese sandwiches.

PREP: 2 1/2 HRS. **COOK:** 70 MIN. **PROCESS:** 35 MIN.

- 12 lbs. ripe tomatoes (about 25), peeled (See "Quick-Peel Tomatoes," right)
- 3 Tbsp. packed brown sugar
- 4 tsp. salt
- 1 Tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cups lightly packed fresh basil leaves, chopped
- 1 cup lightly packed assorted fresh herbs (such as oregano, thyme, or parsley), chopped
- 6 Tbsp. lemon juice

1. Cut peeled tomatoes into chunks. Place some of the chunks in a food processor or blender. Cover; process or blend until finely chopped. Transfer chopped tomatoes to a 7- to 8-qt. heavy nonreactive pot. Repeat to chop remaining tomatoes and add to pot.

2. Stir brown sugar, salt, vinegar, and black pepper into tomatoes. Bring to boiling. Boil steadily (rapidly breaking bubbles), uncovered, for 70 to 80 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until mixture is reduced to about 11 cups and is desired consistency. Remove from heat; stir in herbs.

3. Meanwhile, prepare jars (see page 174). Spoon 1 Tbsp. lemon juice into each of six hot, clean pint canning jars. Ladle hot sauce into jars with lemon juice, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Wipe jar rims; adjust lids. Process filled jars in a boiling-water canner for 35 minutes (start timing when water returns to boiling). Remove jars; cool on wire racks. **MAKES ABOUT 11 CUPS SAUCE (6 PINTS).**

SPICY SIMMER SAUCE Add 2 Tbsp. crushed red pepper to the sauce with the herbs.

ROASTED GARLIC SIMMER SAUCE Stir in 3 Tbsp. chopped roasted garlic with the herbs (see "Roasted Garlic," above right).

DOUBLE TOMATO SIMMER SAUCE Stir in 1 cup snipped dried tomatoes with the herbs.

EACH SERVING (1/2 CUP) 57 cal, 1 g fat, 0 mg chol, 540 mg sodium, 13 g carbo, 3 g fiber, 2 g pro.

ROASTED GARLIC Preheat oven to 400°F. Peel away dry outer layers of skin from 1 garlic bulb, leaving skins and cloves intact. Slice off about 1/2 inch from the pointed top portions. Place garlic bulb, cut side up, in a small oven-going dish. Drizzle with about 1 Tbsp. of olive oil. Cover dish with foil. Roast for 40 to 50 minutes or until garlic is soft. Remove from oven. When garlic is cool enough to handle, squeeze the bottom of the bulb to push the roasted garlic cloves out.



QUICK-PEEL TOMATOES



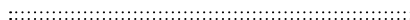
SCORE THE TOMATOES Make an X in the blossom end of each tomato with a small, sharp knife.



BLANCH Heat a large pot of water to boiling. Drop in the tomatoes to cook for 1 or 2 minutes.



COOL AND PEEL Immediately plunge the tomatoes into icy water to loosen the skins. The skins will peel off easily. Core the stem ends with a small, sharp knife. Proceed as directed in the recipe.





BLUE RIBBON CORN RELISH

Use this tangy-sweet relish on burgers, hot dogs, and fish. Or add to quesadillas.

PREP: 1½ HRS. **PROCESS:** 15 MIN.

- 16 to 20 fresh ears of corn
- 2 cups water
- 3 cups chopped celery (6 stalks)
- 1½ cups chopped red sweet pepper (2)
- 1½ cups chopped green sweet pepper (2)
- 1 cup chopped onion (2 medium)
- 2½ cups vinegar
- 1¾ cups sugar
- 4 tsp. dry mustard
- 2 tsp. pickling salt
- 2 tsp. celery seeds
- 1 tsp. ground turmeric
- 3 Tbsp. cornstarch

1. Remove husks and silks from corn; cut corn from cobs (do not scrape cobs).

Measure 8 cups of corn and place in an 8- to 10-qt. heavy nonreactive pot with the 2 cups water. Bring to boiling; reduce heat.

Simmer, covered, for 5 minutes or until corn is nearly tender; drain.

2. In same pot, combine cooked corn, celery, peppers, and onion. Stir in vinegar, sugar, mustard, pickling salt, celery seeds, and turmeric. Bring to boiling. Boil gently, uncovered, for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir together cornstarch with 2 Tbsp. water; add to corn mixture. Cook and stir until slightly thickened and bubbly; cook and stir 2 minutes more.

3. Meanwhile, prepare jars (see page 174). Ladle hot relish into hot, clean half-pint or pint jars, leaving a ½-inch headspace.

Wipe jar rims; top with lids. Process filled jars in a boiling-water canner for 15 minutes (start timing when water returns to boiling). Remove jars; cool on wire racks.

MAKES ABOUT 10 HALF-PINTS OR 5 PINTS.

CUMIN-POBLANO CORN RELISH Use 1½ cups chopped poblano peppers in place of the chopped green sweet pepper. Reduce vinegar to 2 cups and add ½ cup lime juice. Omit celery seeds and turmeric and replace with 2 Tbsp. ground cumin.

APPLE CORN CHUTNEY Reduce corn to 6 cups and add 2 cups chopped Granny Smith apples. Omit celery seed and turmeric and replace with 2 tsp. caraway seed.

CORN OLIVE RELISH Add 2 cups coarsely chopped pitted green, black, and/or kalamata olives with the celery.

EACH SERVING (2 TBSP.) 39 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 55 mg sodium, 9 g carbo, 1 g fiber, 1 g pro.

5 COMMON PROBLEMS

PROBLEM Foods become black, brown, or gray in the jar.

CAUSE Natural substances in the foods may be reacting with metal kitchen tools or hard water.

PREVENTION If you live in an area with hard water, use distilled water for canning. Also be sure to use nonmetallic, nonreactive pans, bowls, and utensils. If there is any sign of spoilage or an odd odor, discard.

PROBLEM Mold occurs during storage.

CAUSE Too much headspace or improper processing.

PREVENTION Measure headspace carefully. Process in a boiling-water canner for the time specified in a current, reliable recipe. Discard if mold is present.

PROBLEM Jar seals properly but comes unsealed during storage.

CAUSE Food could be spoiling, the lid wasn't put on properly, or too much air remained in the jar after processing. Never use food from a jar that has come open, even if it smells and looks safe.

PREVENTION Use a current, reliable recipe and process for recommended time. Create headspace precisely as specified in the recipe. Always be sure to get out air bubbles before putting on the lid (See Step 2, page 174).

PROBLEM Jam is too soft or runny.

CAUSE Pectin, which interacts with natural and added sugar and acid, was not allowed to develop properly. Or fruit may have been overripe with too much natural sugar.

PREVENTION Be sure to measure all ingredients precisely and cook for the recommended time. Do not double jam and jelly recipes. A thin jam is still safe—serve as a fruit sauce over cake or ice cream.

PROBLEM Pickles shrivel in the jar.

CAUSE Cucumbers did not properly absorb the brine.

PREVENTION Precisely measure brine ingredients and mix well before adding to cucumbers. Prick whole cucumbers before canning. Never use waxed cucumbers (you can tell by scraping your nail along the peel).



CHUNKY TOMATO SALSA

PREP: 2 HRS. COOK: 1 HR. 40 MIN. PROCESS: 15 MIN. STAND: 30 MIN.

- 8 lbs. ripe tomatoes (about 16)
- 2 cups seeded and chopped Anaheim or poblano chile peppers (2 to 3)
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup seeded and chopped fresh jalapeño chile peppers (2 large)
- 2 cups chopped onions (2 large)
- 1/2 cup lime juice
- 1/2 cup white vinegar
- 1/2 of a 6-oz. can (1/3 cup) tomato paste
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. cumin seeds, toasted and crushed
- 3 cups yellow or green cherry tomatoes, halved
- 3/4 cup torn fresh cilantro

1. Seed, core, and coarsely chop tomatoes (should be about 15 cups). Place tomatoes in a large colander. Let drain 30 minutes.
2. Place tomatoes in a 7- to 8-qt. heavy nonreactive pot. Bring to boiling; reduce heat. Boil gently, uncovered, about 1 1/2 hours or

until desired consistency, stirring occasionally. Add peppers, onions, lime juice, vinegar, tomato paste, garlic, cumin seeds, and 1 tsp. each *salt* and *pepper*. Return to boiling; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, 10 minutes; remove from heat. Stir in cherry tomatoes and cilantro.

3. Meanwhile, prepare jars (see page 174). Ladle hot salsa into hot clean pint canning jars, leaving a 1/2-inch headspace. Wipe jar rims; top with lids. Process in boiling-water canner for 15 minutes (start timing when water returns to boiling). Remove jars; cool on a rack. **MAKES ABOUT 5 PINTS.**

GREEN SALSA Use green tomatoes in place of red ones. Omit initial 30-minute stand and tomato paste. Cook as directed, reducing cooking time to 20 minutes.

PINEAPPLE SALSA Reduce chopped tomatoes to 12 cups. Proceed as directed, reducing cooking time to about 1 1/4 hours. Stir in 3 cups chopped pineapple with peppers.

CHIPOTLE SALSA Omit jalapeño peppers. Stir in one 7-oz. can chipotle peppers in adobo sauce, chopped with the Anaheim peppers.

EACH SERVING (2 TBSP.) 13 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 40 mg sodium, 3 g carbo, 1 g fiber, 1 g pro.

CANNERS

BOILING-WATER

CANNERS are used for fruits, tomatoes, salsas, pickles, relishes, jams, and jellies. It's a simple setup of a very large pot with a rack on which to set jars. The rack allows water to flow beneath jars for even heating.



PRESSURE CANNER

This canner is used for most vegetables and other low-acid foods. It's also used to process some foods that contain low-acid ingredients, such as soups and meat sauces. The canner produces pressurized steam, so it can heat foods to 240°F, hot enough to kill the tougher microorganisms found in low-acid foods. Unlike a boiling-water canner, put only 2 to 3 inches of water into the bottom—don't fill it—because you're creating steam, not a roiling bath.





BEST-EVER DILL PICKLES

The pickles shown are not yet processed. Processed pickles turn a nice olive green color.

PREP: 30 MIN. PROCESS: 10 MIN. STAND: 1 WEEK

- 3 to 3¼ lbs. small pickling cucumbers
- 4 cups water
- 4 cups white vinegar
- ½ cup sugar
- ⅓ cup pickling salt
- 6 Tbsp. dill seeds

1. Thoroughly rinse cucumbers. Cut off a thin slice from both ends of each cucumber. Slice into ¼- to ½-inch-thick slices. In large nonreactive pot combine water, vinegar, sugar, and pickling salt. Bring to boiling.
2. Meanwhile, prepare jars (see page 174). Pack cucumbers loosely into hot, pint canning jars, leaving a ½-inch headspace. Add 1 Tbsp. dill seeds to each jar. Pour hot vinegar mixture into jars, leaving a ½-inch headspace. Discard any remaining vinegar

mixture. Wipe jar rims; top with lids.

3. Process in a boiling-water canner for 10 minutes (start timing when water returns to boiling). Remove jars; cool on racks. Let stand 1 week. **MAKES 6 PINTS.**

HOT GARLIC PICKLES Prepare as directed, except substitute cider vinegar for the white vinegar and add 1 to 2 whole hot red chile peppers (Thai or cayenne) and 2 cloves of garlic (cut in half) to each jar when packing cucumbers.

SWEET DILL PICKLES Prepare as directed except increase sugar to 3 cups.

CRUNCHY DILL AND ONION CHIPS Use 12 cups sliced cucumbers and 2 cups thinly sliced onions. In a large bowl gently toss cucumbers and onions with the pickling salt. Transfer to colander set in extra-large bowl, layering with ice, and finishing with a layer of ice. Top with heavy plate to weight. Chill overnight. After chilling, remove any unmelted ice and discard liquid in bowl. Pack cucumbers and onions in jars and proceed as directed.

EACH SERVING (¼ CUP) 25 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 859 mg sodium, 5 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 0 g pro

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PERFECT PICKLES

CUCUMBERS Pickling cucumbers make crunchier pickles than other varieties. Select unwaxed ones and use soon after harvesting. Wash them just before canning. Be sure to always slice off blossom ends, which contain enzymes that could affect the pickles.

SALT Use granulated pickling or canning salt as directed in recipes. Do not use table salt, which might cause the pickles to darken or make the brine cloudy.

VINEGAR Cider vinegar is often used for pickles, but white vinegar can be used for a lighter-color product. Always use the vinegar specified to ensure proper acidity.

SPICES Don't substitute ground spices for whole spices, as they may cloud the brine.

WATER If you live in an area with hard water, use distilled water; hard water might prevent pickles from curing properly.

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HOMEMADE STRAWBERRY JAM

Whether picking your own or purchasing strawberries, choose brightly colored ones that are blemish-free with green caps still attached. Wash and hull just before using.

PREP: 40 MIN. PROCESS: 5 MIN.

- 3 qts. fresh strawberries (about 3 lbs.), hulled
- 1 13/4-oz. package regular powdered fruit pectin
- 1/2 tsp. butter
- 7 cups sugar

1. Place 1 cup of berries in an 8-qt. heavy pot. Crush berries with a potato masher. Continue adding berries and crushing until you have 5 cups crushed berries. Stir in pectin and butter. Heat on high, stirring constantly, until mixture comes to a full rolling boil. Add sugar all at once. Return to boiling; boil 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; skim off

foam with a thin metal spoon.

2. Meanwhile, prepare jars (see page 174). Ladle into hot, clean half-pint canning jars, leaving a 1/4-inch headspace. Wipe jar rims; adjust lids. Process in a boiling-water canner for 5 minutes (start timing when water returns to boiling). Remove jars; cool on wire racks. **MAKES ABOUT 10 HALF-PINTS.**

CHUNKY STRAWBERRY JAM Prepare as directed; do not crush berries. Use 5 cups quartered or coarsely chopped strawberries.

STRAWBERRY BANANA JAM Prepare as above except use 4 cups crushed strawberries and 1 cup chopped banana. Stir 2 Tbsp. creme de banana into the berry mixture with the pectin mixture.

STRAWBERRY-BASIL JAM Prepare as directed, stirring in 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh basil to the crushed strawberries.

EACH SERVING (1 TBSP.) 38 cal, 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 0 mg sodium, 10 g carbo, 0 g fiber, 0 g pro.

JAM AND JELLY TIPS

- Add liquid or powdered pectin as called for; do not substitute one for the other.
- Accurately measure the sugar called for in the recipe; it acts as a preservative, develops flavor, and aids in jelling.
- Prepare only one batch at a time; do not double or triple recipes.
- To prevent overboiling, fill pots no more than one-third full with jam or jelly mixture.

CANNING JARS

New to canning? Look for jars at mass retailers and grocery stores among seasonal items. The jars can be reused from year to year, but use new lids each time. *Better Homes and Gardens* canning jars for Walmart; in stores only starting in late July.

