

Content Creator's Food Safety Style Guide and Checklist for Acidic Home Canned Recipes

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The *Content Creator's Food Safety Style Guide and Checklist for Acidic Home Canned Recipes* is designed for anyone who creates and publicizes recipes with a pH of 4.6 or lower for distribution to the public.

This Guide builds upon established best practices and standardization guidelines to create clarity and consistency within the language used in home canning techniques. In addition to adherence to USDA Home Canning Guidelines, this guide addresses issues related to readability, another factor in recipe comprehension, and reliance on Food Processing Authorities to approve recipes. Four critical control categories for home food preservation are addressed in this style guide: prevention of cross-contamination, proper acidification, adequate thermal processing, and vacuum sealing. This targeted educational outreach effort intends to minimize the risk of foodborne illness associated with the consumption of home-canned products.



The *Content Creator's Food Safety Style Guide and Checklist for Acidic Home Canned Foods* below is divided into categories or topics that will assist you as you write your recipe.

Food Safety Style Guide and Checklist	
Title of Recipe:	
Topic	Yes
A Food Processing Authority has approved the recipe	
General Layout and Design	
Use 14-point font for recipe title	
Use 12-point font for ingredient list and instruction text	
Use a sans serif font style	
Do not justify text format	
Ingredients Style	
List ingredients in a bulleted list	
List ingredients in the order in which they are used in the instructions	
Ingredients are written as they are measured (e.g. 1 cup 1/4-inch chop onion instead of 1 cup onion, 1/4-inch chop)	
Include all the ingredients used in the recipe in the ingredients list	
Indicate if ingredients are optional using (optional) after the ingredient	
Use lowercase text except for proper nouns	
Specify the canning jar size and quantity needed	
Units of Measure	
List measurements in the imperial, standard units of measurement, not metric	
If using abbreviations: Use abbreviations T. (tablespoon) and tsp. (teaspoon)	
Use numerals not words (i.e. 1 garlic clove, not one garlic clove)	
Do not use subscript (i.e. ½); for readability use 1/2	
Use a hyphen between whole numbers and fractions (i.e. 4-1/2 cups) and between a number and a word (i.e. 1/2-inch)	
Avoid numeral runs by separating numbers with parentheses (e.g. 1 (15-ounce) can of kidney beans)	
Spell out the word inch instead of the using quote mark (") abbreviation	
Use the easiest units of measure (i.e. 1/4 cup instead of 4 tablespoons)	

Topic	Yes
As Needed, Ingredients Must Include:	
Brand name of pectin, as recipes are brand-specific.	
Standard chop measurements defined by the actual size (i.e. use 1/4-inch chop instead of small chop; use 1/2-inch chop instead of medium chop; use 3/4-inch chop instead of large chop) and set off by a comma (ex. 1 cup onion, 1/4-inch chop).	
Acidification: specify (5% acidity) after vinegar; specify bottled lemon (or lime) juice.	
Salt is referred to as “canning and pickling salt.”	
In salsa recipes, specify “Do not drain tomatoes.”	
Instructions Style	
Use numbered steps that contain complete sentences and an active voice; steps should be in manageable task units.	
Include “Before” Any Instructions Specific to the Recipe:	
To ensure you are using current canning recommendations, refer to USDA’s <i>Complete Guide to Home Canning</i> or the <i>National Center for Home Food Preservation</i> for an overview of canning procedures.	
Products that have had Product and Process Review by a Food Processing Authority should be clearly stated.	
Clean the kitchen area and wash hands with soap and water.	
Wash and rinse standard mason-style canning jars; keep warm until ready to use. Wash two-piece screw bands and lids.”	
If processing time is under 10 minutes include: Sterilize jars by submerging for 10 minutes in boiling water.	
Do not include information on simmering lids in warm water.	
As Needed, Recipe Instructions Include:	
Directions to wash produce under running water.	
Clear cooking directions (boil and length of time).	
Instructions for making safe substitutions.	
Standard Instructions for Filling Jars:	
Immediately pour hot [product name] into hot jars, leaving [#]-inch headspace.	
Remove air bubbles and adjust the headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a clean, damp paper towel; apply two-piece metal canning lids until fingertip tight.	
Place the jar in a preheated boiling water bath canner (140°F for raw pack, 180°F for hot pack) with a rack. Repeat until all jars are filled. Check that the water level in the canner is at least 1” over the jars.	
Once the water in the canner has come to a vigorous boil, process for [#] minutes, adjusting for altitude. Turn off the heat, remove the lid, and let the jars stand for 5 minutes.	
Remove jars from the canner and let cool, undisturbed, for 12 to 24 hours	
<p>Check that vacuum seals have formed. Label and date jars; remove screw bands; store in a clean, cool, dark, dry place and use within 1 year for best quality. Refrigerate after opening and use within 2 weeks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include yield as number and size of jars (e.g. Yield: 5 to 6 pint jars) • Include recipe attribution when necessary: “Adapted from Title of Resource” 	

Sample recipe using Food Safety Style Guide for Acidic Home Canned Recipes

Let's Preserve: Tomato Salsa with Paste Tomatoes

- 7 quarts, peeled, cored, 1/2-inch chopped paste tomatoes, do not drain tomatoes
 - 4 cups seeded, 1/4-inch chopped long green chilies
 - 5 cups 1/4-inch chopped onions
 - 1/2 cup seeded, finely chopped jalapeno peppers
 - 6 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 - 2 cups bottled lemon or lime juice
 - 2 tablespoons canning and pickling salt
 - 1 tablespoon ground black pepper
 - 2 tablespoons ground cumin (optional)
 - 1 tablespoon dried oregano leaves (optional)
 - 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro, minced (optional)
- 1 To ensure you are using current canning recommendations, refer to USDA's Complete Guide to Home Canning or the National Center for Home Food Preservation.
 - 2 Clean the kitchen area and wash hands with soap and water.
 - 3 Wash and rinse standard mason-style canning jars; keep warm until ready to use. Wash two-piece screw bands and lids.
 - 4 Wash produce under running water. Combine all ingredients except cumin, oregano, and cilantro in a large pot and bring to a boil, stirring frequently, then reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes. Add spices and simmer for another 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.
 - 5 Ladle hot salsa into pint jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust the headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a clean, damp paper towel; apply two-piece metal canning lids until fingertip tight.
 - 6 Place the jar in a preheated (180°F) boiling water bath canner with a rack. Repeat until all jars are filled. Check that the water level in the canner is at least 1 inch over the jars.
 - 7 Once the water in the canner has come to a vigorous boil, process for 15 minutes, adjusting for altitude. Turn off the heat, remove the lid, and let the jars stand for 5 minutes.
 - 8 Remove jars from the canner and let cool, undisturbed, for 12 to 24 hours.
 - 9 Check that vacuum seals have formed. Label and date jars; remove screw bands; store in a clean, cool, dark, dry place and use within 1 year for best quality. Refrigerate after opening and use within 2 weeks.

Yield: 16 to 18 pints

Adapted from the *National Center for Home Food Preservation*

References

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