

Pressure Canning Green Beans

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Why should green beans be pressure-canned?

Canning and preserving low-acid foods such as green beans, requires pressure canning to kill microorganisms that are harmful if not destroyed before ingesting the food. Pressure canning at 240 degrees kills the botulism bacteria. If this temperature isn't achieved and the bacteria isn't destroyed, one taste of this spoiled food could be fatal. Simply boiling food will not kill any botulism and should not be considered a safety step.

How many pounds of green beans would I have to purchase for about a dozen pints of green beans?

It varies, but to be on the safe side, allow about 1 pound of green beans per pint.

What kind of equipment do I need?

- Pressure canner. (I prefer the dial-gauge.)
- Stock-pot to keep hot jars in
- Pint or quart-sized jars. (Use only approved Mason or Ball jars.)
- Lids
- Seals (They cannot be used from one year to the next.)
- Jar lifter
- Bubbler
- Funnel
- Timer
- Magnetic "seal-lifter"
- Sharp knife
- Cutting board
- Towels
- Paper-towels
- Large pot to boil/blanch green beans
- Large slotted spoons to lift green beans out of pot & spoon into funnel
- Saucepan for seals
- Thermometer to keep water for seals at 180 degrees
- Ladle to spoon hot water into jars

How do I prepare the green beans?

Select green beans at their peak of freshness. Wash and rinse carefully. Trim ends; remove any strings. Cut or break into 1" pieces. Prepare only enough for one canner load at a time.

1. Familiarize yourself with the recipe before you begin. Many people ask about canning salt. What is the difference between regular salt and canning salt?

Canning salt is a salt that is used for canning. It has a fine grain and is free of iodine. It will not turn vegetables a different color. (Table salt would.) It is available in most supermarkets. Pints would require ½ teaspoon salt. Quarts would require 1 teaspoon salt.

2. I hear a lot about altitudes. Will I need to adjust my recipe for the altitude here in Memphis?

Shelby County is about 300 ft. above sea level. We can green beans at 11 pounds of pressure for pints or quarts. Pints take 20 minutes, and quarts require 25 minutes.

3. Should I have my canner tested before I begin? Many people can from year to year with- out a problem, but we can test your pressure-canner dial gauge for accuracy at the Extension Office. Please do not wait until the day before you need it. If it registers high or low by more than 2 pounds, we recommend you replace it.

4. Also, be sure to check the gasket. If it is dry-rotted or loose, you may not get a good seal. Even the small gasket located below the pressure-gauge will make a big difference. You must have a good seal. (Be SURE to rub some oil around the gasket to make lid-removal easier.)

5. How much head-space do I leave? 1 inch head-space. Why? Leaving too much headspace may prevent the formation of a vacuum within the jar and cause the lid to come unsealed after processing. Not leaving enough headspace may prevent the lid from sealing. The food may not have enough room to expand, and will be forced between the lid and the top of the jar. Leave 1" headspace for vegetables, meats, poultry, sea-foods & soups; Leave ½" headspace for fruits and sauerkraut; ¼" headspace for jams, jellies or other preserves, pickles, relishes, and fruit juices.

Can I put raw green beans in the jars?

If raw green beans are used, (cold pack,) they should be covered with hot water once placed in the jars. (You may get better results by blanching them for about 5 minutes.)

Be sure to wipe the rim of the jars before placing lids on.

Why do the jars need to be heated? To prevent breakage from sudden changes in temperature. The jars and water in the canner should be hot. If foods are processed for more than 10 minutes, the jars do not have to be sterilized. (They should be washed in hot, soapy water, or run through the dishwasher.)

How much water do I put in the pressure canner?

2-3" of simmering water.

How long do I have to let the steam vent before I put the petcock on?

10 minutes.

When do I start counting time?

After the desired pressure has been reached. 11 pounds

Is it OK to multi-task or check my e-mails while I am pressure canning?

No. Do not leave the room. Do not let yourself get distracted by anything.

How long do I have to wait before I can take the lid off?

After the beans have pressurized for the time required, remove the canner from heat-source. Wait for dial gauge to return to ZERO. Wait an additional 10 minutes. Using pot-holders, carefully turn top of lid so that it opens, directing lid away from you. (There will be steam.)

Using a jar-lifter, transfer the jars to an area that is draft-free, on a cutting board with towels. Listen for "popping sounds" as lids seal.

Let remain undisturbed for 12-24 hours. Do not retighten lids. If the center of the lid is pressed down and does not pop back up, the jar has sealed. Wipe off the lid and jar surface with a clean, damp cloth to remove food particles or residue.

Be sure to label jars with product and date. Store in a cool, dry, dark place.

If the lids have not sealed, the food should be eaten or reprocessed for the full amount of time, using a new seal, as soon as possible.

If stored correctly, foods may be kept up to 2 years.

Remember to boil foods for 20 minutes before tasting, to be on the safe-side.

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