Extension Service
West Virginia University

WP 400-09

wecan Meats and Poultry

Food Preservation

These recommendations are for West Virginia conditions (maximum altitude, 4,000 feet). For canning directions in other locations, consult your county Extension office.

Important meat and poultry canning tips

Fresh or frozen meats and poultry can be canned safely at home. Since these products are low-acid foods, they must be processed in a pressure canner to destroy spoilage organisms, including those that cause botulism. For a safe product, follow all canning directions exactly.

To get ready for a safe canning season:

- Be sure your pressure canner is in good working condition and that the pressure gauge was checked for accuracy this season at your county Extension office. The weighted gauge – the one that jiggles – doesn't have to be tested.
- Check the gasket. If it is nicked, replace it.
- Have sufficient jars on hand and discard any with nicks and/or cracks. Use only pint or quart Mason jars made specially for home canning. Straight-sided or wide-mouth jars are easier to work with.
- Buy new lids. Old screw bands can be used if they are not rusted or bent.

Just before canning:

- Be sure your knives are sharp.
- Sanitize all cutting surfaces. (See containers of household bleach for directions.)
- Review directions for using the pressure canner.

Yields of canned food from fresh

The number of jars you can fill with meat or poultry depends upon the size of pieces and the way the meat is packed. For a quart jar, allow about the following amounts of fresh untrimmed meat with bone or ready-to-cook chicken:

Meat	*Number of pounds*
Round (beef)	3 to 3½
Rump (beef)	5 to 5½
Pork loin	5 to 5½
Canned with bone (chicken)	3½ to 4¼
Canned without bone (chicken)	5½ to 6¼

After canning:

- To cool, place hot jars, well separated, on rack or folded cloth away from drafts. Cool at room temperature for 12 to 24 hours.
- When jars are cool, remove the screwband and test the seal. If the lid did not seal, you have three options:

  Option 1: Use the food the same day or refrigerate immediately and use within several days.

  Option 2: Freeze the food in the same jar, if tempered for freezing, by increasing the headspace to 1½ inches, or freeze it in another freezer container. Mark that the food needs to be boiled in an uncovered container for 20 minutes before using.

  Option 3: Reprocess. Remove the lid and check the jar seal surface for tiny nicks. Fully process the jar for the correct time and at the correct temperature.

Canning and processing directions

If meat is home-produced, chill it to 40 degrees F or lower immediately after slaughter. This is to prevent spoilage and allow for tenderizing. If the meat is to be held longer than 2 to 3 days, freeze it at 0 degrees F or lower until ready to can. Then thaw it slowly in the refrigerator.

Meat Preparation – *beef, veal, pork, lamb, and large game animals (e.g., venison)*

Keep all meat as cool as possible during preparation for canning. Remove meat from bones, and trim off gristle, bruised spots, and fat. During processing, fat can rise to the top of the jar and keep the lid from sealing. Handle meat quickly and process as soon as the containers are packed.

Cut the meat into convenient sizes for your needs – strips, cubes, chunks, slices, chops, or larger pieces.

If desired, strong-flavored wild meats can be soaked for 1 hour in brine water (1 tablespoon salt per quart of water) before cutting it into pieces. Rinse before heating. Then process according to the following directions.

Strips, Chunks, or Cubes of Meat *(beef, pork, veal, venison, bear, and lamb)*

Procedure: Use quality chilled meat. Remove excess fat and large bones.

Hot Pack: Precook meat until rare by roasting, stewing, or browning in a small amount of fat. Add 1 teaspoon of salt per quart to the jar, if desired. Fill jars with meat and add boiling broth, meat drippings, water, or tomato juice (especially with wild game), leaving 1-inch headspace.

Raw Pack: Add 1 teaspoon of salt per quart to the jar, if desired. Fill jars with raw meat pieces, leaving 1-inch headspace. Do not add liquid. Wipe mouth of jar with a clean cloth; adjust lids and process.

Dial Gauge Pressure Canner: Process at 12 pounds of pressure for 75 minutes for pints and 90 minutes for quarts.

Weighted Gauge Pressure Canner: Process at 15 pounds of pressure for 75 minutes for pints and 90 minutes for quarts.

Stock (broth)

Beef: Saw or crack fresh trimmed beef bones to enhance flavor. Rinse bones and place in large stock pot or kettle, cover bones with water, add lid, and simmer 3 to 4 hours. Remove bones, cool broth, and pick

off meat. Skim off fat, add meat removed from bones to broth, and reheat to boiling. Fill jars, leaving 1-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process.

Dial Gauge Pressure Canner: Process at 12 pounds of pressure for 20 minutes for pints and 25 minutes for quarts.

Weighted Gauge Pressure Canner: Process at 15 pounds of pressure for 20 minutes for pints and 25 minutes for quarts.

Chicken or Turkey: Place large carcass bones in a large stockpot, add enough water to cover bones, cover pot, and simmer 30 to 45 minutes or until meat can be easily stripped from bones. Remove bones and pieces, cool broth, strip meat, discard excess fat, and return meat to broth. Reheat to boiling and fill jars, leaving 1-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process.

Dial Gauge Pressure Canner: Process at 12 pounds of pressure for 20 minutes for pints and 25 minutes for quarts.

Weighted Gauge Pressure: Canner Process at 15 pounds of pressure for 20 minutes for pints and 25 minutes for quarts.

Ground or Chopped Meat *(beef, lamb, pork, sausage, veal, venison, and bear)*

Procedure:

1. Select fresh, chilled meat. With venison, add 1 part high-quality pork fat to 3 or 4 parts venison before grinding. Use freshly made sausage, seasoned with salt and cayenne pepper (sage may cause bitter off-flavor). Shape chopped meat into patties or balls, or cut cased sausage into 3- to 4-inch links.
2. Cook until lightly browned. Ground meat may be sauteed without shaping. Remove excess fat.
3. Fill jars with pieces. Add boiling meat broth, tomato juice, or water, leaving 1-inch head space. Add 1 teaspoon of salt per quart, if desired.
4. Adjust lids and process.

Dial Gauge Pressure Canner: Process at 12 pounds of pressure for 75 minutes for pints and 90 minutes for quarts.

Weighted Gauge Pressure Canner: Process at 15 pounds of pressure for 75 minutes for pints and 90 minutes for quarts.

Chicken or Rabbit

Procedure: Choose freshly killed and dressed, healthy animals. Large chickens are more flavorful than fryers. Dressed chicken should be chilled for 6 to 12 hours before canning. Dressed rabbits should be soaked 1 hour in water containing 1 tablespoon of salt per quart and then rinsed. Remove excess fat. Cut the chicken or rabbit into suitable sizes for canning. Can with or without bones.

Hot pack: Boil, steam, or bake meat until about two-thirds done. Add 1 teaspoon salt per quart, if desired. Fill jars with pieces and hot broth, leaving 1¼-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process.

Raw pack: Add 1 teaspoon salt per quart, if desired. Fill jars loosely with raw meat pieces, leaving 1¼-inch headspace. Do not add liquid. Adjust lids and process.

Dial Gauge Pressure Canner: With bones (hot and raw pack) – process at 12 pounds of pressure for 65 minutes for pints and 75 minutes for quarts. Without bones (hot and raw pack) – process at 12 pounds of pressure for 75 minutes for pints and 90 minutes for quarts.

Weighted Gauge Pressure Canner: With bones (hot and raw pack) – process at 15 pounds of pressure for 65 minutes for pints and 75 minutes for quarts. Without bones (hot and raw pack) – process at 15 pounds of pressure for 75 minutes for pints and 90 minutes for quarts.

Chile Con Carne

Yield: 9 pints

Ingredients:

- 3 cups dried pinto or red kidney beans
- 5½ cups water
- 5 tsp. salt (divided)
- 3 pounds ground beef
- 1½ cups chopped onions
- 1 cup chopped peppers of your choice (optional)
- 1 tsp. black pepper
- 3 to 6 Tbsp. chili powder
- 2 quarts crushed or whole tomatoes

Procedure: Wash beans thoroughly and place them in a 2-quart saucepan. Add cold water to level of 2 to 3 inches above the beans and soak 12 to 18 hours. Drain and discard water. Combine beans with 5½ cups of fresh water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer 30 minutes. During the last few minutes of cooking, add 2 teaspoons salt. Stir and boil for 2 more minutes. Drain and discard water. Brown ground beef, chopped onions, and peppers, if desired, in skillet. Drain off fat and add 3 teaspoons salt, pepper, chili powder, tomatoes, and drained cooked beans. Simmer 5 minutes. Caution: Do not thicken. Fill jars, leaving 1-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process.

Dial Gauge Pressure Canner: Process at 12 pounds of pressure for 75 minutes for pints only.

Weighted Gauge Pressure Canner: Process at 15 pounds of pressure for 75 minutes for pints only.

For more information

ext.wvu.edu or contact WVU Extension Service Families and Health Programs at 304-293-2796.

Sources

Adapted from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's *Complete Guide to Home Canning,* No. 539, revised June 2006.

Revised

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