


PickYourOwn.org

Where you can find a pick-your-own farm near you!

Click on the printer icon that looks like this:  (at the top left, to the right of "save a copy") to print!
See www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm for many other canning directions and recipes

How to Make Homemade Canned Beets



You think making and canning your own beets is difficult or expensive? Not at all! You can do it with basic equipment already in your kitchen - the only special equipment required is a pressure canner. So, here's how to can beets! The directions are complete with instructions in easy steps and completely illustrated. In the winter when you open a jar, the beets will taste MUCH better than any store-bought canned beets! Prepared this way, the jars have a shelf life of about 12 months, and aside from storing in a cool, dark place, require no special attention.

One other important note: you will need a pressure canner. Beets are a low acid food, so you can not use a boiling water bath canner. It must be a pressure canner. Pressure canners cost more than water bath canners, but they are more versatile and last a lifetime, and your children and grandchildren may be using it. I've had mine for 20 years and it looks good for another 50 years. [See this page for more information about pressure canners.](#)

See this FAQ for more details: [Can I use a water-bath canner instead of a pressure canner for low acid foods?](#)

Directions for Making Canned Beets

Ingredients and Equipment

- 7 to 8 lbs of Beets (see step 1)
- 1½ teaspoons canning or pickling salt
- Jar grabber (to pick up the hot jars)
- Jar funnel (\$2 at Wal-Mart) At least 1 large pot and 1 medium pot or saucepan
- Large spoons and ladles
- Ball jars (Publix, Wal-Mart carry them - about \$7 per dozen pint jars including the lids and rings)
- 1 [Water Bath Canner](#) OR a pressure Canner (a large pressure pot with a lifting rack to sterilize the jars after filling about \$75 to \$200 at mall kitchen stores, Wal-Mart, cheaper online; [see this page for more about pressure canners](#)).

Recipe and Directions

Step 1 - Selecting the beets



The most important step! You need beets that are FRESH and crisp. Limp, old beets will make nasty tasting canned beets. Guests will probably throw them at you.. Select firm, crisp beets. Remove and discard any soft, diseased, spotted and chewed up beets. Beets with a diameter of 1 to 2 inches are preferred for whole packs. Beets larger than 3 inches in diameter are often fibrous.

How many beets and where to get them

http://www.pickyourown.org/beets_canning.htm

You can grow your own, pick your own, or buy them at the grocery store. About 7 pounds of 2- to 2½-inch diameter beets makes about 8 pints of beets. An average of 21 pounds (without tops) is needed per canner load of 7 quarts; an average of 13-1/2 pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints. A bushel (without tops) weighs 52 pounds and yields 15 to 20 quarts--an average of 3 pounds per quart.

Step 2 - Prepare the jars and canner



Wash the jars and lids

This is a good time to get the jars ready! The dishwasher is fine for the jars - put the lids into a pan of boiling water for at least several minutes. I just put the lids in a small pot of almost boiling water for 5 minutes, and use the magnetic "lid lifter wand" (available from WalMart, Target, and sometimes at grocery stores) to pull them out.

Get the canner heating up



Rinse out your canner, put the rack in the bottom, and fill it with hot tap water. (Of course, follow the instruction that came with the canner, if they are different). Put it on the stove over low heat just to get it heating up for later on. You can also get the large pot 2/3 filled with water boiling, and the saucepan with 6 quarts of water boiling too.

Step 3 - Trim the ends and cut into smaller pieces



Just take a sharp knife and trim off beet tops, leaving an inch of stem and roots to prevent bleeding of color.

Step 4 - Wash the beets!

I'm sure you can figure out how to scrub the beets in plain cold or lukewarm water using your hands or a vegetable brush.

Step 5 - Cook the beets

Put similar sized beets (hopefully, they're ALL of a similar size so they take the same time to cook) together with enough boiling water to cover them and cook until tender (usually about 30 to 45 minutes in an open pot, or 10 - 15 minutes in a pressure cooker). Drain and discard the liquid (it would weaken the pickling solution).



Step 6 - Cool the beets



You can pour ice over them, or just let them cool on their own. It's just to cool them enough so you can handle them to remove the skins, stems, roots and then slice or quarter them.

Step 7 - Rinse the pot and refill with fresh water

Rinse the pot that you cooked the beets in, and refill with fresh water and bring to a boil. You will use this to cover the beets, after you fill the jars in step 10.

Step 8 - Trim, peel and slice

Trim off the roots and stems. The skins should easily slide off. Slice the beets into $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slices. You can leave the beets whole (if they are small, say 1 inch or less), or cut medium or large beets into 1/2-inch cubes or slices. Halve or quarter very large slices.



Step 9 - Pack the beets in the canning jars

Fill the jars with beets and onions, leaving 3/4 to 1 inch headspace. Pack the jars fairly tightly, but be sure to leave 3/4 inch of space at the TOP of the jar. That is called "headspace" and is needed for expansion during heating in the water bath. Add 1 teaspoon of salt per quart to the jar, if desired (I don't add salt - you can always add it at the table; it doesn't affect the preserving!)



Step 10 - Pour boiling fresh water into each packed jar

Use a ladle or pyrex measuring cup to carefully fill each packed jar with fresh boiling hot water, leaving 3/4 to 1-inch headspace. The beets should be covered and there should still be 3/4 inch of airspace left in the top of each jar. Be careful not to burn yourself, (or anyone else - children should be kept back during this step!) If you wanted to add the canning salt (optional - only if you like the taste), add it to the cooking liquid and stir, before you pour the liquid into the jars.

Step 11 - Put the lids and rings on

Put the lids on each jar and seal them by putting a ring on and screwing it down snugly (but not with all your might, just "snug").

Step 12 - Put the jars in the canner and the lid on the canner (but still vented)

Using the jar tongs, put the jars on the rack in the canner. By now the water level has probably boiled down to 3 inches. If it is lower than that, add more hot tap water to the canner. When all the jars that the canner will hold are in, out on the lid and twist it into place, but leave the weight off (or valve open, if you have that type of pressure canner).

Step 13 - Let the canner vent steam for 10 minutes



Put the heat on high and let the steam escape through the vent for 10 minutes to purge the airspace inside the canner.



Step 14 - Put the weight on and let the pressure build

After 10 minutes of venting, put the weight on and close any openings to allow the pressure to build to 11 pounds.

Step 15 - Process in the pressure canner

if you have a dial-type pressure canner, like me, once the gauge hits 11 pounds, start your timer going - for 30 minutes for pint jars, 35 minutes for quart jars. Adjust the heat, as needed, to maintain 11 pounds of pressure.

Note: the chart below will help you determine the right processing time and pressure, if you have a different type of canner, or are above sea level.

http://www.pickyourown.org/beets_canning.htm

It is important to learn how to operate your pressure canner by reading the owner's manual that came with your particular canner. If you cannot find your owner's manual, you can obtain find one online: Here is where to find some common manufacturer's manuals:

- [Presto canner manuals](#)

or by contacting the company that made your canner. Give the model number to the manufacturer, and they will send you the right manual. [Click here for more information about pressure canners and a variety of models you can order.](#)

| Recommended process time for beets in a dial-gauge pressure canner. | | | | | |
|---|--------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| | | Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of | | | |
| Jar Size | Process Time | 0 - 2,000 ft | 2,001 - 4,000 ft | 4,001 - 6,000 ft | 6,001 - 8,000 ft |
| Pints | 30 min | 11 lb | 12 lb | 13 lb | 14 lb |
| Quarts | 35 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |

| Recommended process time for beets in a weighted-gauge pressure canner. | | | |
|---|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------------|
| | | | Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of |
| Jar Size | Process Time | 0 - 1,000 ft | Above 1,000 ft |
| Pints | 30 min | 10 lb | 15 lb |
| Quarts | 35 | 10 | 15 |

Step 16 - Turn off the heat and let it cool down



When the processing time from the chart above is up, turn off the heat, and allow the pressure canner to cool and the pressure to drop to zero before opening the canner. Let the jars cool without being jostled. After the pressure drops to zero (usually, you can tell by the "click" sound of the safety release vents opening, as well as by the gauge. Let the pressure in the canner drop to

zero by itself. This may take 45 minutes in a 16-quart canner filled with jars and almost an hour in a 22-quart canner. If the vent is opened before the pressure drops to zero OR if the cooling is rushed by running cold water over the canner, liquid will be lost from the jars. Too rapid cooling causes loss of liquid in the jars!

Step 17 - Remove the jars



Lift the jars out of the water and let them cool on a wooden cutting board or a towel, without touching or bumping them in a draft-free place (usually takes overnight), here they won't be bumped. You can then remove the rings if you like, but if you leave them on, at least loosen them quite a bit, so they don't rust in place due to trapped moisture. Once the jars are cool, you can check that they are sealed by verifying that the lid has been sucked down. Just press in the center, gently, with your finger. If it pops up and down (often making a popping sound), it is not sealed. If you put the jar in the refrigerator right away, you can still use it.

Some people replace the lid and reprocess the jar, then that's a bit iffy. If you heat the contents back up, re-jar them (with a new lid) and the full time in the canner, it's usually ok. You're done!

Other Equipment:

From left to right:

1. Jar lifting tongs helpful to pick up hot jars
2. Lid lifter - to remove lids from the pot of hot water
3. Lid - disposable - you may only use them once
4. Ring - holds the lids on the jar until after the jars cool - then you don't need them
5. Canning jar funnel - to fill the jars



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is it safe to can beets in a traditional water bath? If so how long do you do process them?

A. The answer, quite simply is no. Quoting from the [Ohio State University Extension's Fact Sheet](#):

"Pressure canning is the only safe method for home canning vegetables. *Clostridium botulinum* is the bacterium that causes botulism food poisoning in low-acid foods, such as vegetables. The bacterial spores are destroyed only when the vegetables are processed in a pressure canner at 240 degrees Fahrenheit (F) for the correct amount of time.

Clostridium botulinum is the bacterium commonly found in vegetables and meats. It is harmless until it finds itself in a moist, low-acid, oxygen-free environment or a partial vacuum. Under these conditions, the bacterium can grow and produce toxins dangerous to people and animals.

Do not process (low acid) vegetables using the boiling water bath because the botulinum bacteria can survive that method.

And Clemson University provides these questions and answers:

http://www.pickyourrown.org/beets_canning.htm

Can fruits and vegetables be canned without heating if aspirin is used? No. Aspirin should not be used in canning. It cannot be relied on to prevent spoilage or to give satisfactory products. Adequate heat treatment is the only safe procedure.

Is it safe to can beets in a boiling water bath if vinegar is used? No. Recommended processing methods must be used to assure safety. Recommended processing times cannot be shortened if vinegar is used in canning fresh vegetables. (This does not refer to pickled vegetables.)

Salt and sugar are not preservatives for vegetables: they are added to stabilize and improve flavor, but will not prevent spoilage.

Salicylic acid is also NOT a preservative. The [University of Illinois reports](#):

Using Aspirin for Canning

Several years ago, a recipe circulated using aspirin to acidify tomatoes and beets for canning. Aspirin is not recommended for canning. While it contains salicylic acid, it does not sufficiently acidify tomatoes or beets for safe hot water bath canning. beets are low acid foods and may only be processed safely in a pressure canner. Lemon juice or vinegar is recommended to acidify tomato products for safe water bath processing.

Think of it like smoking. We all know someone who smoke their entire life and lived to be 90. But the cemeteries are filled with the vast majority who didn't. You'll hear people say "my grandmother did it that way for 20 years". But of course, the people who died from food poisoning aren't around and often didn't have descendents to tell their tale...

Pressure canners!

If you want to can low-acid foods such as red meats, sea food, poultry, milk, and all fresh vegetables with the exception of most tomatoes, you will need a pressure canners. These foods fit into the low acid group since they have an acidity, or pH level, of 4.6 or greater. The temperature which must be reached and maintained (for a specified amount of time) to kill the bacteria is 240 F. Pressure canning is the only canning method recommended safe by the U.S.D.A. for low-acid foods such as vegetables, meats, and fish. Ordinary water bath canners can only reach 212 F and can not to kill the types of bacteria that will grow in low acid foods. This temperature can be reached only by creating steam under pressure as achieved in quality pressure canners.

There are several manufacturers of pressure canners. The two leading ones are Presto and All American (Wisconsin Aluminum). They are more expensive than water bath canners, but extremely well built - I bought mine in 1988 and it still looks and works like new!

Presto 01781 23-Quart Pressure Cooker/Canner

Amazon usually has this (through the links at left) for about \$79. (which is a GREAT price for a pressure canner). Click on the links at left for more info and current pricing.



Features:

- 17 by 15-1/2 inches; 12-year warranty
- Heavy-duty 23-quart aluminum pressure canner and cooker
- Comfortably ergonomic, stay-cool black plastic handles
- Strong-lock lid with pressure regulator, dial gauge, and overpressure plug
- Comes with canning rack to protect jars

http://www.pickyourown.org/beets_canning.htm

during canning

[Shown at left is the Presto 23 quart pressure canner. Features below and click here for more information or to purchase from Target.](#)



Features:

- The easy-to-read dial gauge automatically registers a complete range of processing pressures
- Includes cooking/canning rack and complete instruction/recipe book and has a 22-quart liquid capacity
- Aluminum construction
- Holds seven 1-quart Mason jars

All American Pressure Canner and Cooker #921

Features:

- Exclusive "metal-to-metal" sealing system
- Automatic overpressure release and easy-to-read geared steam guage
- Professional quality, extra heavy duty cast aluminum
- Holds 19 pint jars and 7 quart jars
- One-year warranty



Progressive 5-Piece Canning Kit



- Five-piece set: funnel, jar lifter, lid lifter, jar wrench, and tongs
- Vinyl coating improves grip and prevents heat transfer
- Extra-wide funnel mouth
- Ideal for home canning
- Hand washable only

Availability: Usually ships within 24 hours

Price: \$9.99

 Buy from [amazon.com](#)

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