

Basic Guide to Canning Using Retort Vacuum Sealer Bags

As this is an article on canning warnings must be given. You need to educate yourself on the pros and cons of home canning. For more details see your local University Extension Service. This is information only to be used as a guideline to help you determine if canning is for you. It is your responsibility to learn the proper techniques and procedures of pressure canning foods.

Retort canning is very safe and is widely used in commercial canning of foods for retail use. Home use of these bags is easy and fun. Use safe food practices, keep all products very cold until placed in canner for processing. Retort pouches do not contain any BPA and are food grade safe.

These charts are guidelines for canning foods and used to translate into canning with retort pouches.

Never hot pack in retort pouches. All products must be cooled completely before vacuum sealing. Then remain in a cold environment until placed directly into the pressure canner for processing.

Strong flavored fish and game may be soaked in salt water before canning if desired. Use lean meat for canning; remove most of the fat. Cut off gristle and remove large bones.

Cut into pieces convenient for canning, not more than 2-1/2 to 3 inches in diameter. Steaks can be cut about 1 inch thick. Other meat may be cut into cubes.

Precook meat until red color changes to brown, it may be broiled, fried, roasted or smoked. Meat should not be browned with flour nor should flour be used in the gravy of meat used for canning. It is desirable to use a little gravy or broth with hot packed meats. Make the broth from bones and scrapes not used for canning. Meat may be pre-cooked in the broth. Use 1 teaspoon salt to each quart of meat. More may be used to suit individual taste or may be added at serving time.

Fish should be canned only when fresh. Since all fish are not canned the same way, it is advisable to write the United States Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service for their Conservation Bulletin No. 28 "Home Canning of Fishery Products," for detailed information on processing fish.

When fish is canned, use only very fresh fish that has been thoroughly cleaned. Wash in fresh water. Remove back bone from larger fish; leave it in smaller ones to help hold piece together. Precook slightly by frying, baking or boiling. When frying, use a minimum amount of fat. Chill product completely before vacuum packing.

Never hot pack in retort pouches. The bag could burst causing burns or other problems. All products must be cooled completely before vacuum sealing. Then remain in a cold environment until placed directly into the pressure canner for processing.

General Guide for pressure canning:

Use 2 quarts water in Cooker for all processing. Some special canners may use less. . Read your manual! Time and pressure given in the charts apply only to altitudes 2,000 feet or less. If your altitude is over 2,000 feet, add 1 pound pressure for each additional 2,000 feet. Do not increase processing time.

Raw products should have salt added for preserving. Some like salt added directly in the packet others like a soak of 1 to 2 hours in salted water 1/2 cup salt to 1 gallon water.

Do not vacuum seal warm foods!

Here are a few warning to heed – I am sure there are many more, but these apply to all processing.

- *NEVER let the cooker boil dry. Be sure to use sufficient water*
- *NEVER set retort pouches on the bottom of the Cooker --Use basket*
- *NEVER crowd in more retort pouches than the canner can easily hold. Do not pack tightly leave space between bags to allow for steam to move freely as it would with a jar.*
- *NEVER try to raise pressure until cover is securely locked in place according to your pressure canner directions.*
- *NEVER try to raise the pressure until all the air has been driven out of the cooker by the steam escaping through the petcock.*
- *NEVER let pressure fluctuate during processing of food any more than can possibly be avoided. Abrupt changes in pressure may burst the seams in the retort bag.*
- *NEVER open petcock during the processing period while canning.*
- *NEVER open petcock before the pressure falls to zero-- at that point, petcock must be open slowly.*
- *NEVER lay wet cloths on cover or place Cooker in water to attempt to speed cooling of cooker. This reduces pressure in cooker more rapidly than pressure in retorts bags and will cause them to burst.*
- *NEVER force cover off cooker. Be sure petcock is completely open and there is no pressure in cooker.*
- *NEVER, NEVER, NEVER!! Process food that has been standing too long, or has become warm at room temperature or more! Use the shortest period from vacuum sealing to canner possible. To extend the time place all vacuum sealed products in refrigerator and keep very cold until placing directly into canner for processing.*
- *NEVER begin to count processing time until required pressure is reached.*
- *NEVER forget to read and follow directions closely as how to use your canner.*
- *NEVER reuse retort pouches.*
- *NEVER pack food too tightly in retort pouches do not over fill capacity.*
- *NEVER eat food from a retort that has inflated with air.*
- *Check all seams and seals on each bag. Any open bags should be refrigerated and used within 24 hours. After storage check all seals and seams do not use open bags.*

Basic Guide to Retort Pressure Canning and Cooking.

Processing Times for Pare Cooked Meats

Meat Pare Cooked	Canner Pressure in Pounds	1/2 Pint Food 2 - 4oz Retort	1 Pint food 8oz Retort	1 Quart food 16oz Retort
Product:				
Beef Loaf	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Beef Roll	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Chili Con Carne	15 lbs.	70 minutes	70 minutes	90 minutes
Corned Beef	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Beef, Pork, lamb or veal	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Bologna	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Chopped Meat	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Goulash	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Heart	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Liver (All types-Plain or Fried)	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Meat Balls	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Meat Loaf	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Roast Meat (All Types)	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Stew (All Meats)	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Hot Tamales	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Boiled Tongue	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Spiced Tongue	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Jellied Pigs Feet	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Pork Sausage	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Spareribs	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Pork Tenderloin	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Chicken-With Bones	10 lbs.	55 minutes	65 minutes	75 minutes
Chicken-Without Bones	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Wild Duck, Quail and All Game Birds	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Venison	10 lbs.	65 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes

Raw pack meats and Seafood (Recommend only for small packages)				
Meat Raw Packed	Canner Pressure in Pounds	1/2 Pint Food 2 - 4oz Retort	1 Pint food 8oz Retort	N/A
Product:				
Head Cheese	15 lbs.	75 minutes	75 minutes	N/A
Clams and Oysters	10 lbs.	70 minutes	70 minutes	N/A
Crab Meat	10 lbs.	80 minutes	80 minutes	N/A
Fish -General	10 lbs.	80 minutes	80 minutes	N/A
Lobster	10 lbs.	90 minutes	90 minutes	N/A
Salmon	10 lbs.	100 minutes	100 minutes	N/A
Shrimp-wet pack	10 lbs.	45 minutes	45 minutes	N/A
Shrimp-Dry Pack	10 lbs.	90 minutes	90 minutes	N/A
Tuna	10 lbs.	100 minutes	100 minutes	N/A

Processing Time Table for Vegetables				
Meat Raw Packed	Canner Pressure in Pounds	1/2 Pint Food 2 - 4oz Retort	1 Pint food 8oz Retort	1 Quart food 16oz Retort
Product:				
Asparagus	10lbs.	20 minutes	25 minutes	55 minutes
Beans, Baked	10lbs.	75 minutes	85 minutes	90 minutes
Beans, Lima	10lbs.	40 minutes	45 minutes	60 minutes
Beans, Snap or Wax	10lbs.	25 minutes	30 minutes	35 minutes
Beets, Baby (whole or sliced)	10lbs.	30 minutes	35 minutes	55 minutes
Carrots, Young	10lbs.	20 minutes	25 minutes	30 minutes
Corn, Whole Kernel	10lbs.	60 minutes	65 minutes	85 minutes
Corn on Cob	10lbs.	60 minutes	65 minutes	75 minutes
Eggplant	10lbs.	35 minutes	40 minutes	45 minutes
Greens, All Kinds	10lbs.	60 minutes	60 minutes	70 minutes
Kohlrabi	10lbs.	30 minutes	35 minutes	40 minutes
Mushrooms	10lbs.	25 minutes	35 minutes	40 minutes
Okra	10lbs.	25 minutes	30 minutes	45 minutes
Okra Tomatoes	10lbs.	25 minutes	30 minutes	40 minutes

Processing Time Table for Vegetables (continued)				
Meat Raw Packed	Canner Pressure in Pounds	1/2 Pint Food 2 - 4oz Retort	1 Pint food 8oz Retort	1 Quart food 16oz Retort
Product:				
Okra, Tomatoes, Corn	10lbs.	60 minutes	65 minutes	85 minutes
Parsnips	10lbs.	30 minutes	30 minutes	35 minutes
Peas, Green	10lbs.	30 minutes	30 minutes	-----
Peas, Black-eyed	10lbs.	30 minutes	30 minutes	-----
Peppers, Pimento	10lbs.	10 minutes	10 minutes	-----
Pumpkin, Mashed	10lbs.	75 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Rutabagas, Sliced or Diced	10lbs.	30 minutes	35 minutes	35 minutes
Squash, Summer Crookneck, and Zucchini	10lbs.	20 minutes	35 minutes	40 minutes
Squash, Winter Hubbard Banana, Cubed	10lbs.	50 minutes	55 minutes	90 minutes
Succotash	10lbs.	60 minutes	75 minutes	90 minutes
Sweet Potatoes	10lbs.	75 minutes	90 minutes	90 minutes
Tomatoes	10lbs.	10 minutes	10 minutes	10 minutes
Turnips	10lbs.	30 minutes	35 minutes	35 minutes

Processing Time for Raw Fruits				
Raw Fruits	Canner Pressure in Pounds	Time		
Processing Time Table for Fruits				
Apples	5lbs.	10 minutes	-----	-----
Apples Sauce	5lbs.	8 minutes	-----	-----
Crab apples	5lbs.	10 minutes	-----	-----
Apricots	5lbs.	10 minutes	-----	-----
Berries (Except Strawberries)	5lbs.	10 minutes	-----	-----
Cherries	5lbs.	10 minutes	-----	-----
Cranberries	5lbs.	10 minutes	-----	-----
Figs	5lbs.	10 minutes	-----	-----
Grapes	5lbs.	10 minutes	-----	-----

Processing Time for Raw Fruits (continued)				
Raw Fruits	Canner Pressure in Pounds	Time		
Processing Time Table for Fruits				
Peaches	5lbs.	10 minutes	-----	-----
Pears	5lbs.	10 minutes	-----	-----
Persimmons	5lbs.	10 minutes	-----	-----
Plums	5lbs.	10 minutes	-----	-----
Prunes	5lbs.	10 minutes	-----	-----
Quinces	5lbs.	15 minutes	-----	-----
Red Raspberries	5lbs.	8 minutes	-----	-----
Rhubarb	5lbs.	5 minutes	-----	-----
Strawberries	5lbs.	5 minutes	-----	-----