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How to Make Home and Can Tomato-Vegetable Juice Blend at Home - Easily!

Making and canning your own tomato -vegetable juice (much like the "V8") is also quite easy. And imagine how much better it will taste in the winter, with the flavor of home grown tomatoes and vegetables! Just scroll down this page to see how to do it, in easy steps and completely illustrated. I like it with the basil, but you can also make plain tomato juice, too. The only special equipment you need is a pressure canner and canning jars with new lids. **Caution:** Do not add other vegetables or thickening agents to home canned tomato juice.)

Ingredients

- **Tomatoes** (any quantity - see step one)
- **Vegetables** - Up to 1 cup of any combination of finely chopped celery, onions, carrots, and peppers per 7 lbs of tomatoes.
- **Lemon Juice** (less than a cup)
- **Salt** - optional

Equipment

- **Jar funnel** (\$2 at Target, other big box stores, and often grocery stores; and available online - see this page) or order it as part of the kit with the jar grabber.
- **Jar grabber** (to pick up the hot jars)- Big box stores and grocery stores sometimes carry them; and it is available online - see this page. It's a tremendously useful to put jars in the canner and take the hot jars out (without scalding yourself!). The kit sold below has everything you need, and at a pretty good price:
- **At least 1 large pot** ; I prefer 16 to 20 quart Teflon lined pots for easy cleanup.
- **Large spoons and ladles**
- **1 Water Bath or Pressure Canner** - [see this page for more information](#)).
- **Canning jars** (Grocery stores, like Publix, Kroger, Safeway carry them, as do some big box stores - about \$7 per dozen 8 ounce jars including the lids and rings)
- **Lids** - thin, flat, round metal lids with a gum binder that seals them against the top of the jar. They may only be used once.
- **Rings** - metal bands that secure the lids to the jars. They may be reused many times.

Optional stuff:

- **Lid lifter** (has a magnet to pick the lids out of the boiling water where you sanitize them. (\$2 at big box stores or it comes in the kit at left)

Directions

Step 1 - Selecting the tomatoes

It's fun to go pick your own and you can obviously get better quality tomatoes!

Wash, remove stems, and trim off bruised or discolored portions of the tomatoes.

Quantity: An average of 22 pounds of tomatoes is needed per canner load of 7 quarts. Not more than 3 cups of other vegetables may be added for each 22 pounds of tomatoes.

A bushel of tomatoes weighs about 53 pounds and yields 15 to 18 quarts of juice - an average of 3 1/4 pounds per quart.

At right is a picture of tomatoes from my garden - they are so much better than anything from the grocery store. And if you don't have enough, a pick-your-own farm is the place to go! At right are 4 common varieties that will work:



Top left: Top right: Lemon

Beefsteak Boy, yellow

Bottom left: Roma, Bottom right:

paste-type Better Boy

Also, you don't want mushy, bruised or rotten tomatoes!

Caution: Do not can tomatoes from dead or frost-killed vines. Green tomatoes are more acidic than ripened fruit and can be canned safely, also.

Step 2 - Wash the jars and lids

Now's a good time to get the jars ready, so you won't be rushed later. The dishwasher is fine for the jars; especially if it has a "sanitize" cycle, the water bath processing will sanitize them as well as the contents! If you don't have a dishwasher with a sanitize cycle, you can wash the containers in hot, soapy water and rinse, then sanitize the jars by boiling them 10 minutes, and keep the jars in hot water until they are used.

NOTE: If a canning recipe calls for 10 minutes or more of process time in the canner, then the jars do not need to be "sanitized" before filling them. But really, sanitizing them first is just good hygiene and common sense! [See this page for more detail about cleaning and sanitizing jars and lids](#) .



Put the lids into a pan of hot, but not quite boiling water (that's what the manufacturer's recommend) for 10 minutes, and use the magnetic "lid lifter wand" to pull them out. Leave the jars in the dishwasher on "heated dry" until you are ready to use them. Keeping them hot will prevent the jars from breaking when you fill them with the hot jam.

Lids: put the lids into a pan of hot water for at least several minutes; to soften up the gummed surface and clean the lids.

Step 3 - Cut up the tomatoes and quickly put into the pot

To prevent the juice from separating, quickly cut about 1 pound of tomatoes at a time into quarters and put

Juicers? Can you use a juicer? There is no official guidance on the use of juicers from any reputable source (Ball Blue Book., NCFHFP, Mrs. Wages Corp, etc.) I've heard informal discussion about entrained air bubbles and specks of tomato seeds, but it seems to be that these are natural parts of the fruit and process and would become uniformly dispersed and sanitized in the cooking and canning, so until I see official, credible research to the contrary, I'm doing... and to no ill effect!



A juicer would eliminate step 6 and 7 later on, but, of course, you will need to simmer for 5 minutes (step 5). The one potential downside to using a juicer is that the juice may later separate (clarify) into a top and bottom portion, due to exposure to air.

Step 4 - Heat to boiling and keep adding tomatoes

Heat immediately to boiling while crushing (I use a potato masher). Continue to slowly add and crush freshly cut tomato quarters to the boiling mixture; repeating steps 4 and 5. Make sure the mixture boils constantly and vigorously while you add the remaining tomatoes.



Step 5 -Add the vegetables

Add no more than 1 cup of any combination of finely chopped celery, onions, carrots, and peppers for each 7 pounds of tomatoes.

Step 5 - Continue cooking

Simmer the mixture for 20 minutes.

Step 6 - Sieve

Press hot cooked tomatoes and vegetables through a sieve or food mill to remove skins and seeds. I use the Foley food mill, shown at right

There is also a VERY nice, versatile strainer pictured at below! Click on the links there or see the bottom of this page for more information and to order! The VillaWare model can handle higher volumes than a Foley food mill (without giving you cramps!) And yes, you can use your juicer, if it can handle boiling hot liquids!



To see a greater variety of [strainers in other types, sizes, and prices, click here!](#)

Step 7 - Heat the strained tomato juice again

Heat the juice again to boiling.

Step 8 - Add lemon juice and seasoning TO EACH STILL EMPTY JAR

Add bottled lemon juice or citric acid to jars, as described in the next paragraph, to acidify the contents. This helps avoid spoilage and increase safety.

Acidification: To ensure safe acidity in whole, crushed, or juiced tomatoes, add two tablespoons of bottled lemon juice or 1/2 teaspoon of citric acid (such as "Fruit Fresh") per quart of tomatoes. For pints, use one tablespoon bottled lemon juice or 1/4 teaspoon citric acid. Acid can be added directly to the jars before filling with product. Add 1 tablespoon of sugar to offset acid taste, if desired. Four tablespoons of a 5 percent acidity vinegar per quart may be used instead of lemon juice or citric acid. However, vinegar may cause undesirable flavor changes, compared with lemon juice or citric acid.

Seasoning: Add 1 teaspoon of salt per quart to the jars, if desired. I also add 1 teaspoon of ground basil.

Step 9 - Fill the jars and put the lid and rings on

Fill jars with hot tomato juice, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process following to the instructions in the tables below according to the type of canner you have. (Acidification is still required for the pressure canning options; follow all steps in the Procedures above for any of the processing options.)

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



Water Bath Canner:

Table 1. Recommended process time for Tomato Juice in a boiling-water canner. (shown at left)

Hot pack		Process Time at Altitudes of			
Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 3,000 ft	3,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft	
Pints	35 min	40	45	50	
Quarts	40	45	50	55	

Pressure canners:

Table 2. Recommended process time for Tomato Juice in a dial-gauge pressure canner. (not shown)

Hot pack		Canner Gauge 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 or Quarts	20 min	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	9 lb
	15	11	12	13	14

Table 3. Recommended process time for Tomato Juice in a weighted-gauge pressure canner (not shown).

Hot pack		Canner Gauge Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes	
Jar Size	Process Time	0 - 1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Pints or Quarts	20 min	5 lb	10 lb
	15	10	15
	10	15	Not Recommended

Step 10 - 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 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!



Once cooled, they're ready to store. I find they last up to 12 months. But after about 6 to 8 months, they get darker in color and start to get runny. They still are safe to eat, but the flavor and texture aren't as good. So eat them in the first 6 months after you prepare them!

Summary - Typical Cost of Making Homemade Tomato "V8" Juice				
Item	Quantity	Cost in	Source	Subtotal
Tomatoes	1 gallon	free from your garden	your garden or neighbor	
Canning jars (quart size), includes lids and rings	12 jars	\$9.00/dozen quart jars	Grocery stores, like Public, Kroger, Safeway and sometimes, Big Lots, local hardware stores and big box stores	\$9.00
Lemon juice	1 cup	\$1.00	Grocery stores, like Public, Kroger, Safeway and sometimes, Big Lots, local hardware stores and big box stores	\$1.00
Veggies (finely chopped celery, onions, carrots, and peppers)	1 cup	Free if they are from your garden, otherwise, \$1.00	Hopefully from your garden	\$1.00
Total				\$11.00 total or about \$0.91 per quart jar
* - This assumes you already have the pots, pans, ladles, and reusable equipment. Note that you can reuse the jars and reduce the cost further; just buy new lids (the rings are reusable, but the flat lids are not)!				