



CANNING TOMATOES

Ingredients

Fresh tomatoes straight from the garden if possible

Method

Canning my tomatoes is my favourite way to preserve them. Their fresh sunshine taste is preserved for the whole year in only their own juice and there is nothing better than breaking the seal on a jar and using them in place of tinned tomatoes for spaghetti sauces, chillis and other yummy dishes (Aubergine Parmigiana being one of them).

1. First fill your canning jar with water, place your jars and lids inside and bring to a simmer (don't boil)
2. I do this while I am out in the garden picking. Turn off the heat once you are back but leave the jars in the water until you come to fill them, you want the jars to stay as warm as possible so they don't get shocked when returning them to the warm water after filling.
3. Wash all the tomatoes.
4. If they are the small cherry type of tomato (and I grow a fantastic one "Sungold" every year, the sweetest, juiciest cherry tomato I have ever tried) I tend to just cut them in half and stuff into the sterilised jars, the skins are so thin you just don't notice them when you come to cook with the fruit. If they are large they will benefit from being skinned before roughly quartering and stuffing into jars.
5. Do not add water or anything else, just ripe, juicy tomatoes. When you get to the top place the lids on, screw up hand tight and place back into the hot water. Keep on doing this until all your jars are filled.
6. Check that the lids are all screwed on properly. Fill the water bath so that the water just floods the top of the lids and bring back up to the boil.
7. Boil for 20 minutes.
8. Turn off the heat, using your lift out basket or individual jar lifter take out the jars and place them on a level surface to cool. You will hear the jar lid seals popping as they cool and a vacuum is created.
9. Check the following day, make sure all the tops have clicked down with the vacuum, if they have not then discard and start again. Give the lids another quick tighten, label and store for a year.
10. Once opened the jar of tomatoes can keep in the fridge for around 3-4 days.

Notes

I find the 1 litre Ball and Mason jars or Kilner jars are the very best, they can be used again and again and you can easily buy replacement lids and seals if necessary.