

HOME CANNING

At Home with Rebecka uses “old time” water-bathed methods for the majority of canning recipes published on this site, unless otherwise noted. It is our recommendation that everyone follow USDA guidelines for safety, their guidelines are easy to follow and are tested for safety. At Home with Rebecka shares recipes that are made with high acidic foods, and we follow tested [National Center for Food Safety Guidelines](#), when preparing and sharing recipes on the site. Pressure canning methods are used for low acidic foods such as corn, beans, and proteins, and foods that can be deemed unsafe when water-bath canned; pressure canned recipes are annotated.

It is our sincerest desire to share recipes that are safe to eat however, if strict canning guidelines and procedures are not followed, bacteria can grow and cause botulism spores.

There IS a difference between tested and not tested...the difference being

Tested means the recipe/procedure was tested in a lab with specific ingredients for specific times and specific processes. I have heard that botulism spores are also added at the beginning of processing and cultured to see if the processing time was appropriate to kill the spores or hinder them with acid so they don't grow to produce toxins. This isn't a quick or inexpensive process. It must be repeated and rechecked until they come up with consistent results that guarantee a safe product if all procedures are followed accurately.

Untested means the product MAY not be safe. There is no research done so there is no way to make sure the product is safe except for someone to say they have done it “forever” and no one has gotten sick from it. As others have said, botulism is very rare but as we have seen it does happen.

There are also older methods of preserving that used by today's rushed society can be unsafe. As most of us know, these preserving methods didn't eradicate the botulism spores as today's tested procedures do because they just preserved the food. A very needed step came when using the end product, and that was a mandatory boil of at least 10 mins to render the food safe to eat and safe from botulism. This wasn't a problem with product that would normally be heated, but some foods aren't heated before eating, such as high acid foods. While it is unlikely they would contain botulism, it IS POSSIBLE if tested times and procedures aren't followed (however unlikely). Today's methods of heating foods (microwave, and just quickly heating on the stove instead of a boil) and even eating foods cold out of a jar can harbor a unsafe threat.

This is also a problem if a untested procedure or a older preserving method is given as a “gift”. The recipient may have NO knowledge of home canning or home canning safety AT ALL and not know the precautions that need to be taken for a untested or old preserving method and consume the toxins. How many people hand someone a lovely gift basket and tell them to

make sure they boil the food enclosed for at least 10 mins to render it safe? Not many I'm sure. Or how many hand over a jar of salsa that was hot water-bathed that contains corn and black beans and tell the recipient that it SHOULD have been pressure canned, but my family has eaten it water bathed for years and we all lived? Not many I'm sure. That is why some canners are so outspoken against untested and old preserving methods. If YOU choose to do this for yourself, that is YOUR choice. It probably isn't fair to your spouse or children if they don't know the risks though. BUT is definitely not fair to take a gift recipients CHOICE away by not disclosing how the food was processed.

So this is why PRO CURRENT RECOMMENDATION and PRO CHOICE home canners have so many disputes here, they both feel their home canned foods are safe. The ones who use their own recipes and old styles of canning probably have the knowledge to carry it off, maybe someone new to canning or someone with no canning experience would not. But people who follow current recommended styles want to make sure that EVERY person is AWARE of the possible dangers.