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## Fresh Lemons vs. Bottled Lemon Juice for Canning



**Use bottled lemon juice in all canning for safest results.**

Photo: Canva.com

Whether adding lemon juice to tomatoes to acidify them safely or adding lemon juice to a jelly or jam, the best and safest choice is bottled lemon juice. Here's why.

Bottled lemon juice is standardized, or uniformly acidified, per FDA regulations. Therefore, it is consistent which provides a known level of safety for food preservation. The final acidity of a food product is critical to deter the growth of microorganisms that can cause spoilage or foodborne illness.

Fresh lemons, however, have an inconsistent acid, or pH, level. This can vary within the same variety of lemons, but also vary due to maturity, growing conditions, soil, fertilizer, rootstock, and storage conditions. While safe to eat fresh for a great meal, they are not the safe choice for food preservation.

As a reminder, when canning tomatoes, they must be acidified by using bottled lemon juice, citric acid, or vinegar with 5% acidity. Here are the choices and recommended usage levels:

- **Bottled Lemon Juice**  
1 tablespoon per pint  
2 tablespoons per quart
- **Citric acid**  
1/4 teaspoon per pint  
1/2 teaspoon per quart
- **Vinegar with 5% acidity**  
2 tablespoons per pint  
4 tablespoons per quart

Sources: [Iowa State University AnswerLine](http://Iowa State University AnswerLine) and [K-State Research and Extension](http://K-State Research and Extension)

## New Website for Kansas Local Foods

Building communities through local foods. That is the goal in growing local food businesses across Kansas.

A new website for **Kansas Local Foods** has been launched to help. There

are many resources, ways to get involved, find local foods, and grow your community.

Rebecca McMahon and Amanda Lindahl are the leaders of this program. You can learn more about

them and find their contact information at [www.k-state.edu/kansaslocalfoods/learn-more/staff.html](http://www.k-state.edu/kansaslocalfoods/learn-more/staff.html).

Sign up for the [mailing list](#) to get connected.

## Choosing Vinegar for Pickling and Canning

First step, read the label. Look for vinegar that is 5% acidity.

Today's recipes, including Extension and USDA food preservation recipes, use vinegar that has 5% acidity. Not all vinegars are the same. They range from 2.5% to more than 6%. Therefore it is important to read the label or ingredient statement to verify the acidity level.

The National Center for Home Food Preservation at the University of Georgia gives these recommendations if you have used a vinegar with less than 5% acidity.

- If your canned food has been preserved for **less than 24 hours** using 4% vinegar, it is advisable to store the jars in the refrigerator to

maintain the safety and quality of the product.

- If your canned food has been preserved for **more than 24 hours** using 4% vinegar, it is advisable to discard the product.



Photo: KSRE RRC



**The Wheat Expo is in different locations across Kansas every year. So come learn about a "new to you" Kansas location!**

## Kansas 4-H/FFA Wheat Expo Reminder

There's still time! Register now for the Kansas 4-H/FFA Wheat Expo. This annual event will be on August 8th in Pratt, KS.

What can you enter? A jar of cleaned wheat, yeast rolls, cookies, muf-

fins, photography, education posters and Cloverbuds can also participate. Exhibits must all use wheat.

There are educational activities and two tours of local agriculture oper-

ations. All ages are encouraged to attend!

Learn more and register at [www.kansas4-h.org/events-activities/conferences-events/wheat/index.html](http://www.kansas4-h.org/events-activities/conferences-events/wheat/index.html).

## Check Canning Lids for Defects

Canning lids are essential for canning food. When preparing lids to use, take a look at them to be sure they are in good condition to reduce problems after canning.

Always use new lids, never reuse canning lids as the rubber seal is already indented and the lid was likely bent when removing it from the jar.

Wash new lids in hot, soapy water. That's it! Do not boil them as that step is no longer required. Boiling the lids can lead to seal failures.

Look at the underside of the lid. Defects can happen, such as the irregular sealing compound on the lid in the picture. This can lead to seal failures. Contact the manufacturer to report the problem.



**Uneven sealing compound**  
Photo: courtesy Susan Stich

## Jam and Jelly Problems and Solutions

Sometimes jam and jelly recipes just don't turn out right. So here are some problems, causes, and prevention strategies.



Learn more about other problems and solutions for jam and jelly at [https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can\\_07/jellyproblems.html](https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_07/jellyproblems.html)

Source: NCHFP  
Photo: KSRE RRC



PROBLEM	CAUSE	PREVENTION
Too soft	Overcooking fruit to extract juice	Avoid overcooking as this lowers jelling capacity of pectin
	Used too much water to extract juice	Use recommended amount
	Incorrect amounts of sugar and juice	Measure correctly
	Undercooking jam or jelly mixture	Follow cooking times exactly
	Insufficient acid	Lemon juice may need to be added
	Making too large of a batch	Make only one recipe at a time
	Moving finished jars too soon	Allow finished jars to sit at least 12 hours
	Insufficient time before using	Some fruits take up to 2 weeks to set completely

## A Caution About Preserving White Peaches

It's almost peach season and many will be preserving this summer favorite in various tasty treats.

White fleshed peaches, however, cannot be canned like yellow

peaches. White peaches are low acid so traditional canning cannot be done, and that includes water bath canning and pressure canning. No research has been done for safe canning. This includes plain peaches,

jam, jelly, or any other mixture.

The best option is to freeze white peaches or eat them fresh.

Source: [University of Georgia](#)

**To preserve yellow peaches, see our [Preserve it Fresh](#), [Preserve it Safe](#): [Peaches](#) publication.**



Raw oysters  
Photo: Canva.com

## Climate Change and *Vibrio* Infection

Found in marine waters, *Vibrio* bacteria like warm waters of summer. Humans can become ill through foodborne routes such as raw or undercooked seafood or from contaminated water. The symptoms include vomiting, diarrhea, swimmer's ear, or skin infections. There are rare instances of sepsis, amputations and death.

Climate change is causing sea surface temperatures to rise which increases the prevalence of *Vibrio* bacteria. It is likely to intensify in the future. This will lead to increases costs of medical treatments, productivity losses, and premature death.

As summer vacations continue, a visit to the ocean may be on the agenda. Avoid consuming raw or undercooked shellfish. Wash your hands after handling shellfish. If you have open wounds, stay out of sea water or brackish water.

Sources: [USDA Economic Research Service, Amber Waves, June 26, 2023](#)  
[CDC Vibrio Species Causing Vibriosis](#)

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Ernie Minton, Director.

## Don't Flunk Food Safety!



**Have kids help plan school lunches!**  
Photo: USDA Flickr

School is about to get started again! Plan now if your kids are taking their lunch to school or eating the lunch provided. Here are some tips for packing a food safe lunch.

- Use an insulated container or lunch box to keep food safe until lunchtime. Use ice packs, frozen bottles of water or frozen juice boxes to help keep food cold.

- If packing hot foods, use a separate insulated container. Fill it with boiling water to get it heated before added hot food.
- Check with the school if a refrigerator is available to store cold lunches.
- Choose foods that are safe at room temperature such as whole or dried fruits, single serve fruit cups, baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, hard cheese like cheddar, whole grain crackers, peanut butter (be mindful of food allergies!), or dried meat jerky.
- Don't forget to wash your hands!

Learn more at [www.fsis.usda.gov/news-events/news-press-releases/dont-flunk-food-safety-school-year](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/news-events/news-press-releases/dont-flunk-food-safety-school-year)

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**Karen Blakeslee, M.S.**



On the Web at  
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## Preserving Melons

Melons are another summer treat! They are best eaten fresh, but there freezing them for later use is an option.



**Fresh cantaloupe**  
Photo: USDA ARS

Rinse with water and scrub the rind to remove dirt, then dry. Slice the melon into cubes or use a melon baller. Place pieces on a parchment-lined

baking sheet and freeze. Then place frozen melon pieces in a freezer container. Just know the texture may change during freezing.

Melons, by themselves are not suitable for canning. In fact, they are a low acid food. There are a couple options to make cantaloupe into pickles or a conserve at [www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/melons\\_\(e3250\).pdf](http://www.canr.msu.edu/uploads/resources/pdfs/melons_(e3250).pdf). Watermelon rind can be made into pickles also. See [https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can\\_06/watermelon\\_rind.html](https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_06/watermelon_rind.html).