Preparing and Canning: Fish[1]

United States Department of Agriculture, Extension Service[2]

Blue, Mackerel, Salmon, Steelhead, Trout, and Other Fatty Fish Except Tuna

Caution: Eviscerate fish within 2 hours after they are caught. Keep cleaned fish on ice until ready to can.

Note: Glass-like crystals of magnesium ammonium phosphate sometimes form in canned salmon. There is no way for the home canner to prevent these crystals from forming, but they usually dissolve when heated and are safe to eat.

Procedure: Remove head, tail, fins, and scales. Wash and remove all blood. Split fish lengthwise, if desired. Cut cleaned fish into 3-1/2 inch lengths. Fill pint jars, skin side next to glass, leaving 1-inch headspace. Add 1 teaspoon of salt per pint, if desired. Do not add liquids.

Adjust lids and process following the recommendations in Table 1 or Table 2 according to the canning method used.

Table 1. Recommended process time for fish in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

			Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of			
Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time	0 - 2,000 ft	2,001 - 4,000 ft	4,001 - 6,000 ft	6,001 - 8,000 ft
Raw	Pints	100 min	11 lb	12 lb	13 lb	14 lb
*After the canner is completely depressurized, remove the weight from the vent port or open the petcock. Wait 10 minutes; then unfasten the lid and remove it carefully. Lift the lid with the underside away from you so that the steam coming out of the canner does not burn your face.						

Table 2. Recommended process time for fish in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.

			Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of	
Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time	0 - 1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Raw	Pints	100 min	10 lb	15 lb
*After the canner is completely depressurized, remove the weight from the vent port or open the petcock. Wait 10 minutes; then unfasten the lid and remove it carefully. Lift the lid with the underside away from you so that the steam coming out of the canner does not burn your face.				

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