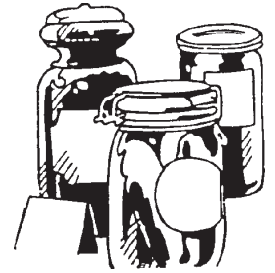


## Preserve the Season and Enjoy Garden Produce All Year



**Question:** We were part of a community garden this year, and we will have a bumper crop of vegetables, including tomatoes, peppers, onions, corn and green beans. We also grew watermelon and strawberries. We've been sharing with our friends and family, but we will have plenty left. Do you have any suggestions about how to preserve our produce safely?

First, think about your available storage.

If you have a freezer with plenty of room, consider

freezing the food. Freezing is an easy method to preserve your foods. Many foods require blanching (heat treatment) prior to freezing, and be sure to use freezer containers or freezer bags for best quality.



**If you would like to preserve food in jars for shelf storage, follow these recommendations for a safe product:**

- Since you have grown most of the ingredients for salsa, consider canning salsa. Always use research-tested salsa recipes available from your Extension Service office. For safety, do not alter ingredient proportions. If you create your own salsa and want to preserve it, freezing is the safest option.
- If you plan to can your tomatoes for use in soup, spaghetti sauce or other recipes, be sure to acidify tomatoes with the recommended amount of lemon juice or citric acid prior to canning. Add 1 tablespoon of bottled lemon juice (or ¼ teaspoon of citric acid) per pint of tomatoes or 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice (or ½ teaspoon of citric acid) per quart.
- Pressure canning is required for safety when canning low-acid foods such as corn, beans, meat and many mixtures of foods. Do not can these in a boiling-water-bath canner. Use a pressure canner and current U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines. Be sure to read the instructions that came with your canner. Have the pressure gauge tested every year to be sure it is accurate.
- Be sure to seal jams and jellies with a regular canning lid (not wax) and process them in a boiling-water-bath for five to 10 minutes, depending on altitude.

Enjoy your preserves at their best quality. Store canned goods in a cool, dark place. For best quality, use home-canned goods within one year.

For more information, contact your county Extension Service office or visit the NDSU Extension Service website for food preservation information, including canning, pickling and freezing guides for most foods:

[www.ag.ndsu.edu/ndsuaq/food](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/ndsuaq/food)

This program is funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716.

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## My children ask for watermelon all the time. Is it nutritious?

Naturally sweet and juicy watermelon contains about 80 calories per 2-cup serving, so it makes a tasty, nutritious snack. Watermelon provides vitamin A, which promotes eye health. Watermelon provides vitamin C and potassium. Vitamin C helps keep your immune system strong, and potassium plays a role in maintaining normal blood pressure.

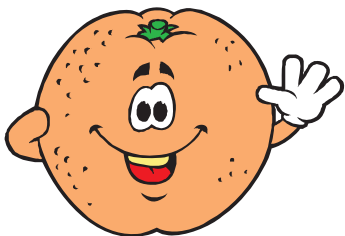
Watermelon has more lycopene than any other food, even tomatoes. Lycopene is the natural pigment that gives watermelon its red color. According to studies by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, watermelon can help promote heart health.

## We spend a lot of time outside, and the weather has been very hot lately. How do you know if you are dehydrated? How much water should we be drinking?

Some of the first signs of dehydration are fatigue and headache, then your body temperature and pulse may increase. While drinking plenty of water quenches thirst, remember that the water in all types of foods counts toward your fluid needs.

Take regular beverage breaks, especially when you are working outside or in a warm environment. Enjoy more hydrating, summertime seasonal produce, such as watermelon, cantaloupe, strawberries and other fruits and vegetables. Many fruits and vegetables are 85 percent water by weight. You'll get a nutrition boost when you eat more fruits and vegetables.

Don't forget: Besides keeping your body hydrated, remember to wear sunglasses and sunscreen to protect your eyes and skin.



### Just for Fun

Why did the orange stop  
in the middle of the road?  
Because it ran out of juice!

## July is National Watermelon Month.

Try this new twist on salsa.

You can use home-grown corn, onions, peppers and watermelon.

This recipe is courtesy of the National Watermelon Promotion Board.



# Watermelon, Black Bean and Corn Salsa

- 1 can corn kernels, rinsed and drained\*
- 1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
- ½ medium purple or white onion, coarsely chopped
- ½ to 1 jalapeno pepper, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 2 Tbsp. salad oil (such as canola or olive oil)
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1½ c. chopped watermelon (with seeds removed)

Mix all ingredients, except for watermelon. Gently fold in watermelon. Chill. Serve with baked chips or as a side dish with grilled meat, poultry or fish.

\* To use home-grown corn, try using "planned-overs": cook three extra cobs of corn and carefully slice corn from cob. Keep refrigerated in a closed container until needed.

*Makes six servings.*

*Each serving has 170 calories, 6 grams (g) of fat, 23 g of carbohydrate, 5 g of fiber and 430 milligrams of sodium.*

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Contact the local office of the  
NDSU Extension Service  
for more information  
on food and nutrition or  
managing your food dollar.

