

# Some Like It Hot, Some Like It Cold But Salsa Satisfies Everyone's Tastes

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Lancaster Farming Staff  
LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.)  
— Fruit salsa, Salsa Cruda, Tomatillo Green Salsa, and more were included in the salsa workshop taught on Tuesday by Nancy Wiker, family living agent for Lancaster County Extension.

Participants in the workshop had the opportunity to taste-test four different salsa varieties and even take home a jar of canned salsa made during the session held at the Farm and Home Center, Lancaster.

Salsa, a Mexican word for sauce meaning cooked or fresh mixtures, is making inroads in the tastes of American people. While many associate salsa with spicy hot tomato mixtures on which to dip tortilla chips, participants learned that salsa does not necessarily include tomatoes and hot peppers.

Fruit salsa is colorful, and has just a slight touch of tang. Do not can fruit salsas because it changes the flavor and texture.

Although salsa is most often used as a dip, it is gaining in popularity as an accompaniment to grilled chicken, seafood, pork, beef, hamburgers, and even baked potatoes and pastas.

Salsa cruda refers to uncooked or fresh salsa. But salsa may be canned following kitchen-tested recipes.

Although both fresh and canned salsa are available at supermarkets, many people prefer to make their own. The taste can vary from mild to searing hot depending upon the ingredients used. When making fresh salsa, ingredients can be substituted, left out, or increased, but when canning salsa, follow a kitchen-tested recipe to ensure it contains enough acide to be processed safely in a boiling water canner.

Choose fresh ingredients in peak-season quality. Fruits and vegetables should be ripe but firm. Aim for a balance of flavor, color, and texture.

When used as dip, the salsa should not be too juicy. If you want thicker salsa, merely drain off the juice when ready to serve.

Serve fresh salsa within a few hours of preparation. If it sits too long, the acidic ingredients will "cook" the salsa and ruin its texture. Also raw ingredients such as raw garlic, onion, and chiles will oxidize making their flavors sharp. Allow to stand for 15-20 minutes before serving for flavors to mingle. Serve at room temperature or slightly chilled.

"Salsas are generally low in calories and fat and high in vitamins," Wiker said.

For those who are not familiar with some of the ingredients traditionally used in salsa recipes, here are some tips Wiker shared.

• Chile peppers — more than 7,000 varieties of peppers exist, which range from hot to mild in taste. Chiles contain a chemical known as capsaicin, which gives them heat. To reduce the heat of a chile pepper, remove the seeds and the ribs before adding to a dish.

"Generally the smaller the peppers are, the hotter they are," Wiker said.

The oils that give the chili peppers their fiery taste will burn your skin. Always wear gloves when handling peppers. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.

"Because your eyes tear when chopping chili peppers, a common

reaction is to brush your eyes with your hand," Wiker said. "Don't do that."

• Cilantro — Often called Chinese parsley or coriander leaf, this herb has a slightly citrus flavor. It provides a compliment to the chiles and garlic found in many salsa recipes.

• Tomatillos — These green fruits are the base for green salsa. They have a paper outer shell with a fruit that resembles a green tomato. Select fruits that are firm, dry, with clean, close fitting husks that show no sign of blackness or mold.

• Tomatoes — Select firm, ripe, unblemished tomatoes. Paste tomatoes, such as Roma, have a firmer flesh and produce thicker salsa.

• Onions — Red or white onions work well in salsa. To bring out its sweetness, chill for an hour before slicing. The tops of green onions can be used, which add color as well as nutrition to the mixture.

Here are some kitchen-tested recipes Wiker shared at the workshop.

## TOMATILLO GREEN SALSA

5 cups chopped tomatillos or green tomatoes

1½ cups seeded, finely chopped jalapeno peppers

4 cups chopped onions

1 cup bottled lemon juice

6 cloves garlic, finely chopped

1 tablespoon ground cumin

3 tablespoons oregano leaves

1 tablespoon salt

1 teaspoon black pepper

Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan and stir frequently over high heat until mixture begins to boil, then reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Ladle hot into pint jars, leaving ½ -inch headspace. Adjust lids and process in a boiling water canner: 15 minutes. Yield: 5 pints.

## PEACH-GINGER SALSA

1 cup cubed peeled peaches

1 cup cubed seeded tomato

¼ cup sliced green onions

2 teaspoons sugar

2 teaspoons cider vinegar

1 teaspoon minced peeled fresh ginger or ¼ teaspoon ground ginger

¼ teaspoon salt

Dash freshly ground pepper

Combine all ingredients, stir well. Chill to combine flavors. Makes 2 cups.

## FRUIT SALSA

2 tart green apples

1 cup strawberries, sliced

1 kiwi

1 orange

2 tablespoons brown sugar

2 teaspoons apple jelly

Dice all fruit. Mix with brown sugar. Add apple jelly last. Use as dip with cinnamon tortilla chips, made by slicing a soft tortilla in wedges. Sprinkle with water, cinnamon, and sugar. Bake about 5 minutes in 350 degree oven until slightly browned.



Nancy Wiker teaches a salsa workshop offered by the Lancaster Extension Penn State Cooperative Extension. In addition to traditional tomato salsas, participants learned how to make fruit salsa.

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## Detweiler Artifacts Bring Top Prices

GAIL STROCK

Mifflin Co. Correspondent  
ALLENSVILLE (Mifflin Co.)

— In 1798, Christian Detweiler owned 378 acres in Mifflin County, a large 30x80-foot barn, and a 27x31-foot house with 13 windows. We know this because of federal "Window Tax" documents for that year. The Window Tax measured wealth according to how many glass window panes a home had.

But what do we know of Christian Detweiler's daily life? What were his tools like? How did he light his way to the barn on dark winter mornings?

Few families have preserved artifacts from the 1700s, but the Detweiler collection comes close. Thriftiness, taking good care of what you have, and foresight all played a role in the preservation of Detweiler belongings and collections over four generations. It was an incredible collection. Was . . . because it was all dispersed at auction on July 11.

Samuel Detweiler, a descendent of Christian, is in his 90s. A week before the sale, Samuel talked about some of the items, like the wooden flax breaker his grandfather used in the 1870s.

"Look at the ox shoes," Samuel pointed toward an ox yoke hanging from the basement rafters (it later sold for \$2,700). The ox shoes had been mounted onto the yoke long ago. "There're two of



Auctioneer Mark Glick of Reedsville shows off a tomahawk, which was only one of thousands of Indian artifacts auctioned near Allensville, Mifflin County.

them for the split hoof. Here are my father's snow shoes."

Samuel reached toward a shelf for the first light his family ever had. An eight-inch high metal stand with a small swinging cup at the top. At the sale, it sold for \$450. The little tin cup was filled with lard and would right itself if

tilted. During his tour, he pointed out fine and coarse wool cards, one dated 1801, his grandfather's old lantern, a glass bent-necked baby bottle, a "fishing gig" and three of his grandfather's hay forks.

Auctioneer Mark Glick had the

daunting task of where to start the bid for items such as sheepskin deeds from the 1790s; the diaries of Samuel's grandfather, Levi Detweiler, written from 1856 on in English; books such as the Reverend David Brainerd's

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