

Preparation (chopping, peeling)	45–60 minutes
Cooking the salsa	30–40 minutes
Jar sterilization & heating	15–20 minutes (can overlap with cooking)
Filling jars	15–20 minutes
Water-bath processing	15 minutes (pints) / 10 minutes (half-pints)
Cooling & sealing check	12–24 hours
Total active time	About 2 to 2½ hours

Table of Contents

- ◆
 - [Instructions](#)
 - [Step 1: Prepare the Jars and Canner \(15–20 minutes, Medium Intensity\)](#)
 - [Step 2: Prepare the Tomatoes \(20–25 minutes, Medium Intensity\)](#)
 - [Step 3: Chop the Vegetables \(20–30 minutes, Medium Intensity\)](#)
 - [Step 4: Cook the Salsa \(30–40 minutes, Medium-High Intensity\)](#)
 - [Step 5: Add Cilantro and Adjust Seasoning \(2 minutes, Low Intensity\)](#)
 - [Step 6: Fill the Jars \(15–20 minutes, Medium Intensity\)](#)
 - [Step 7: Water-Bath Process \(15 minutes + time to boil, Medium Intensity\)](#)
 - [Step 8: Cool and Check Seals \(12–24 hours, Low Intensity\)](#)
 - [Yield and Storage](#)
 - [Nutrition Information \(per 2-tablespoon serving\)](#)

Instructions

Step 1: Prepare the Jars and Canner (15–20 minutes, Medium Intensity)

Begin by washing jars, lids, and bands in hot, soapy water. Rinse thoroughly. Keep jars hot in a 180°F (82°C) water bath or in a dishwasher on the sanitize cycle until ready to fill. Fill your

water-bath canner about halfway with water and bring it to a simmer (180°F) while you prepare the salsa. Place lids in a small saucepan of hot (not boiling) water to soften the sealing compound.

Timing note: Start this step first so the canner and jars are ready when the salsa finishes cooking.

Step 2: Prepare the Tomatoes (20-25 minutes, Medium Intensity)

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Score an “X” on the bottom of each tomato, then plunge them into boiling water for 30–60 seconds until skins begin to split. Transfer immediately to an ice bath. Once cool enough to handle, slip off the skins, core the tomatoes, and chop them coarsely. Reserve any juices. You should end up with about 10 cups of chopped tomatoes.

Step 3: Chop the Vegetables (20-30 minutes, Medium Intensity)

While tomatoes are cooling, chop the onions, bell peppers, and chili peppers. Mince the garlic. Wear gloves when handling hot chili peppers, and remember that seeding and deveining reduces heat. Keep the pieces relatively uniform — about ¼-inch dice — so the salsa has a pleasant texture. Chop the cilantro last and set it aside; it goes in at the very end to preserve its fresh flavor.

Step 4: Cook the Salsa (30-40 minutes, Medium-High Intensity)

In a large, heavy-bottomed stainless steel or enameled pot (avoid aluminum, which reacts with acid), combine the chopped tomatoes, onions, bell peppers, chili peppers, garlic, vinegar, lemon juice, salt, sugar, cumin, and oregano. Stir well and bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring frequently to prevent scorching. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 20–30 minutes, stirring often, until the salsa has thickened slightly and the vegetables are tender. If using tomato paste, stir it in during the last 10 minutes for a thicker consistency.

Intensity note: This stage requires attentive stirring — the sugars in the tomatoes can scorch if left unattended. Keep the heat moderate and stir every 2-3 minutes.

Step 5: Add Cilantro and Adjust Seasoning (2 minutes, Low Intensity)

Remove the pot from heat and stir in the fresh cilantro. Taste the salsa (carefully — it's hot!) and adjust salt or heat as desired. Remember that flavors will mellow slightly during processing and storage, so err on the side of slightly bolder seasoning.

Step 6: Fill the Jars (15-20 minutes, Medium Intensity)

Ladle hot salsa into hot jars using a funnel, leaving ½ inch of headspace. Use a bubble remover or thin spatula to remove air bubbles, then wipe jar rims with a clean, damp cloth. Apply lids and bands until fingertip-tight (not overly tight). Work quickly to keep the salsa hot.

Step 7: Water-Bath Process (15 minutes + time to boil, Medium Intensity)

Using a jar lifter, lower filled jars into the simmering canner, ensuring they're covered by at least 1 inch of water. Bring to a full rolling boil. Process pints for 15 minutes and half-pints for 10 minutes (adjust for altitude: add 5 minutes for 1,000-3,000 ft, 10 minutes for 3,001-6,000 ft, and 15 minutes above 6,000 ft). Start timing only once the water reaches a rolling boil.

Step 8: Cool and Check Seals (12-24 hours, Low Intensity)

Turn off heat, remove the canner lid, and let jars rest in the hot water for 5 minutes. Transfer jars to a towel-lined surface, spacing them 1 inch apart. Let cool undisturbed for 12-24 hours. Check seals by pressing the center of each lid — it should be concave and not flex. Any unsealed jars should be refrigerated and used within 2 weeks.

Yield and Storage

Yield: 6-8 pint jars (12-16 half-pints)

Storage: Label sealed jars and store in a cool, dark place for up to 12 months. For best flavor, enjoy within 6-8 months. Refrigerate after opening and consume within 2 weeks.

Nutrition Information (per 2-tablespoon serving)

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	10-15 kcal
Total Fat	0 g
Sodium	60-80 mg
Total Carbohydrates	2-3 g
Dietary Fiber	0.5-1 g
Sugars	1-2 g
Protein	0.5 g
Vitamin C	~6% DV
Vitamin A	~4% DV