



Onion

Onions are prized for their versatility in cooking and pungent taste flavor, sometimes sweet, sometimes sharp. Onions are a member of the allium family, and many are grown here in Skagit - chives, scallions, shallots, leeks, and red, yellow and white bulb onions. Red onions have a strong slightly sweet flavor; white onions, a sharp medium tangy flavor; and yellow onions, a sharp taste that is spicy and bold, unless cooked down to a caramelized sweetness.

Nutrition

Onions are a good source of vitamin C, are high in potassium, calcium, and phosphorus, and are a rich source of antioxidants for cell and tissue health. One medium onion has 45 calories, with no fat or cholesterol and very, very low sodium.

Selection

Choose firm onions with shiny skin and a tight neck. Avoid onions with soft spots, discoloration or overly dry onions.

To wash an onion before processing, cut off the two stems and remove all the outer skin, rinse with cool running water and wipe away any obvious debris. Pat dry with a paper towel.

Storage

Sweet onions have a shorter shelf life and are best stored in the crisper drawer of the refrigerator, wrapped individually in a paper towel. Storage onions are well suited to cool (40-50 degrees), dark, and dry conditions with good ventilation. Onions will begin to sprout and degrade with too much light or moisture.

Measurements



Size



Weight



Volume

Freezing

- Select fully mature onions.
 - Peel, trim and clean thoroughly.
 - Dice (about 1/4-inch pieces).
 - Blanching is not necessary.
- Pack into moisture-vapor proof freezer containers or freezer weight plastic bags leaving 1/2 inch of headspace.
 - Label, seal and freeze .
 - For onion rings or slices, freeze first on a tray, then pack into moisture-vapor proof freezer containers or freezer-weight plastic bags. Label, seal and freeze.



Drying

Preparation: Remove outer discolored layers. Cut uniform slices 1/8" to 1/4" thick, or chop.

Pretreatment: None

Drying Procedure:

- Spread thinly on trays.
- Dry at 140°F for 3-9 hours. Dry until brittle and light colored; feels like paper.
- For onion powder, crush slices after drying.
- Cool thoroughly. Package in moisture/vapor proof containers. Label. Store in a cool, dark, dry place.



Tip: Dried onions do not need to be reconstituted before use, unless so specified. Add them directly to the recipe you are preparing.

Boiling Water Canning



Onions are a low acid food. Canning is not recommended and there are no processing times available from USDA.



Pickling

Pickled onion products may be safely preserved using the boiling water canning method. Because onions are a low-acid food, the proportion of vinegar to water in a pickling recipe is critical. Use only tested, approved pickling recipes and follow instructions for preparation of onion.

Pickled Pepper-Onion Relish

Yield: 9 half-pints

Ingredients

- 6 cups finely chopped onions
- 3 cups finely chopped sweet red peppers
- 3 cups finely chopped green peppers
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 6 cups vinegar (5% acidity), preferably white distilled
- 2 tbsp canning or pickling salt

Wash and chop vegetables. Combine all ingredients and boil gently until mixture thickens and volume is reduced by one-half (about 30 minutes). Sterilize jars.

Fill jars with hot relish, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids. Process in a Boiling Water Canner according to directions below .

Once processing is complete, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes before removing jars. Let cool at room temperature, undisturbed, for 12 to 24 hours and check for seals. Wipe jars, remove rings, label, and store in a cool, dry place.

Processing Directions:

Style of pack	Jar Size	1–1,000 ft	1,001 to 6,000 ft
Hot	Half Pints or Pints	5 minutes	10 minutes

Boiling Water Canning



Pickled Pearl Onions

8 cups peeled white pearl onions (four 10-ounce bags unpeeled pearl onions as purchased)
5½ cups white distilled vinegar (5%)
1 cup water
2 teaspoons canning salt
2 cups sugar
8 teaspoons mustard seed
4 teaspoons celery seed
Yield: About 3 to 4 pint jars

To peel onions, place a few at a time in a wire-mesh basket or strainer, dip in boiling water for 30 seconds, then remove and place in cold water for 30 seconds. Cut a 1/16th-inch slice from the root end, and then remove the peel and 1/16th inch from the other end of the onion.

Combine vinegar, water, salt and sugar in an 8-quart Dutch oven or stockpot. Bring to a boil and boil gently 3 minutes. Add peeled onions and bring back to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and heat until the onions are half-cooked (about 5 minutes).

Meanwhile, place 2 teaspoons mustard seed and 1 teaspoon celery seed in the bottom of each clean, hot pint jar. Fill hot jars with the hot onions, leaving 1-inch headspace. Cover with hot pickling liquid, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened, clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids. Process in a Boiling Water Canner according to directions below .

Once processing is complete, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes before removing jars. Let cool at room temperature, undisturbed, for 12 to 24 hours and check for seals. Wipe jars, remove rings, label, and store in a cool, dry place.



Allow pickled onions to sit in processed jars for 3 to 5 days before consuming for best flavor development.

Processing Directions:

Style of pack	Jar Size	1–1,000 ft	1,001–6,000 ft
Hot	Pints	10 minutes	15 minutes

Onion Relish

8 cups peeled, thinly sliced onions (about 3 pounds)
2 cups of white vinegar (5%)
2 cups sugar
2 tsp. salt
1 tsp mustard seed

Drop onion slices into boiling water and cook 4 minutes. Drain. Combine vinegar, sugar, salt and mustard seed in a large saucepan. Bring mixture to boil. Add onions and simmer 4 minutes.

Pack onions into hot jars, leaving ½ - inch headspace. Fill jar ½ inch from top with boiling hot cooking liquid (be sure onions are totally immersed in vinegar solution).

Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened, clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids. Process in a Boiling Water Canner according to directions below .

Once processing is complete, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes before removing jars. Let cool at room temperature, undisturbed, for 12 to 24 hours and check for seals. Wipe jars, remove rings, label, and store in a cool, dry place.



Tip: Use red onions for a beautiful pink color!

Processing Directions:

Style of pack	Jar Size	1–1,000 ft	1,001–6,000 ft
Hot	Pints	10 minutes	15 minutes



Preserve Skagit Crop Sheets describe three food preservation techniques—freezing, drying, and water bath canning—consistent with USDA Food Preservation and Food Safety recommendations. Pressure canning for low acid foods such as meats and vegetables is not included. Additional resources and recipes, as well as information on Pressure Canning, can be found on the WSU Skagit Food Preservation Website <https://extension.wsu.edu/skagit/fam/food-preservation/> or the National Center for Home Food Preservation <https://nchfp.uga.edu/index.html>.

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