

Table 1. 2014 Quick Guide to Recommended Canned Foods Judging Specifications*

Canned Fruits, Tomatoes, and Other Tomato Products (not including tomato juice or juice blend)	
Label with processing method, pressure, where appropriate, time, and date of preservation	Clearly written on label with appropriate method recorded. May be water bath or pressure canned.
Container	Clear, glass, Mason-type jar, clean, metal lid with ring, vacuum sealed, check recipes for acceptable size of container – quart, pint or smaller
Pack – headspace, liquid	½ inch canned fruit, whole, halved or crushed tomatoes, salsas, BBQ sauce; headspace varies from 1/8 to 1 inch for other tomato products, check recipe; liquid should cover product, color of liquid will vary depending on product, no floating pieces, no liquid for products like catsup and BBQ sauce
Appearance – texture, uniformity, produce quality	Varies but overall check for even size and shape of produce, no fancy pack except for canned fruit halves, firm texture, fresh natural color, no bubbles, sauces should have smooth even consistency and color
Canned Vegetables	
Label with processing method, pressure, where appropriate, time, and date of preservation	Clearly written on label with appropriate method recorded. Pressure canned only.
Container	Clear, glass, Mason-type jar, clean, metal lid with ring, vacuum sealed, check recipes for acceptable size of container – quart, pint or smaller
Pack – headspace, liquid	1 inch for most vegetables. For shelled beans and peas, check recipe, ranges from 1 inch to 1 ½ inches depending on size of jar and hot or cold pack; liquid should cover product, color of liquid will vary depending on product, no floating pieces
Appearance – texture, uniformity, produce quality	Varies but overall check for even size and shape of product, no fancy pack, firm texture, fresh natural color, no bubbles
Canned Juices including Tomato	
Label with processing method, pressure, where appropriate, time, and	Clearly written on label with appropriate method recorded.

date of preservation	May be water bath or pressure canned.
Container	Clear, glass, Mason-type jar, clean, metal lid with ring, vacuum sealed, check recipes for acceptable size of container – typically quart or pint, half-gallon is ok for juices except tomato
Pack – headspace	½ inch tomato juice or juice blends, ¼ inch for fruit juices, color of liquid will vary depending on product
Appearance – clarity, consistency, color	Varies but bright with no crystals, natural color, not concentrated, with no separation or layering
Jellies**	
Label with processing method, pressure, where appropriate, time, and date of preservation	Clearly written on label with appropriate method recorded. Water bath only.
Container	Clear, glass, Mason-type jar, clean, metal lid with ring, vacuum sealed, check recipes for acceptable size of container – typically pint or smaller
Pack – headspace	¼ inch
Appearance – clarity, consistency, color	Varies but overall check for natural and uniform color with no crystals, bubbles or foreign matter, should be firm enough to hold shape with no separation of layering
Jams and Conserves**	
Label with processing method, pressure, where appropriate, time, and date of preservation	Clearly written on label with appropriate method recorded. Water bath only.
Container	Clear, glass, Mason-type jar, clean, metal lid with ring, vacuum sealed, check recipes for acceptable size of container – typically pint or smaller
Pack – headspace	¼ inch
Appearance – clarity, consistency, color	Varies but overall check for natural and uniform color with no crystals, bubbles, fruit pieces uniform in shape and evenly distributed throughout jar, not runny or overly thick
Preserves and Marmalades**	
Label with processing method, pressure, where appropriate, time, and date of preservation	Clearly written on label with appropriate method recorded. Water bath only.
Container	Clear, glass, Mason-type jar, clean, metal lid with ring, vacuum sealed, check recipes for acceptable size of container – typically pint or smaller
Pack – headspace	¼ inch

Appearance – clarity, consistency, color	Varies but overall check for natural and uniform color with no crystals, bubbles, fruit pieces uniform in shape and evenly distributed throughout jar, syrup or jellied juice is clear and bright and looks thick like honey
Pickles and Fermented Foods including Relishes and Chutneys	
Label with processing method, pressure, where appropriate, time, and date of preservation	Clearly written on label with appropriate method recorded. Water bath only.
Container	Clear, glass, Mason-type jar, clean, metal lid with ring, vacuum sealed, check recipes for correct size of container – typically quart, pint or smaller is acceptable
Pack – headspace, liquid	½ inch, liquid covers all solids, no floating pieces
Appearance – texture, uniformity, produce quality	Varies but overall check for even size and shape of product, firm texture except for relish and chutney, with an even natural color with a few exceptions where coloring is allowed, no separation and bubbles
Canned Meats, Poultry and Seafood	
Label with processing method, pressure, where appropriate, time, and date of preservation	Clearly written on label with appropriate method recorded. Pressure canned only.
Container	Clear, glass, Mason-type jar, clean, metal lid with ring, vacuum sealed, check recipes for correct size of container – typically quart, pint or smaller is acceptable
Pack – headspace, liquid	1 inch meat and seafood and 1 ¼ inch poultry, squirrel, and rabbit. Ideally liquid should cover meat, color of liquid will vary depending on product, liquid used will vary with product, and some fish do not need liquid, check recipes for appropriate liquid specifications.
Appearance – texture, uniformity, produce quality	Varies but overall check for even size and shape of meat pieces, free from fat or gristle, fresh natural color, no floured or fried meats

* Refer to the following references for recipes, recipes may also be provided from other Extension publications (all recipes used must be updated or new post 1995 if not entry is disqualified) and for additional detailed fair judging specifications:

1. *Fair Judging Manual Food Preservation Section 2014, update.* University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.

2. Judging Home Preserved Foods, 2003. National Center for Home Food Preservation and University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.
3. *So Easy to Preserve, 1999 and 2004, 4th and 5th editions*. University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.
4. *USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning, 2009 revision*. United States Department of Agriculture and National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

**Definitions

1. Jelly is a semi-solid mixture of fruit juice and sugar that is clear and firm enough to hold its shape.
2. Jams are made from chopped, crushed or ground fruit with the shape of the fruit pieces not retained during preparation.
3. Conserves are a combination of fruits, usually citrus fruits and nuts, and sometimes raisins or coconut that has a consistency like jam.
4. Fruit preserves consist of small, whole fruits or uniformly sized pieces of larger fruits in a very thick sugar syrup or slightly jellied juice.
5. Marmalades consist of pieces of fruit cut in small pieces or slices, and usually include citrus but a mixture of fruits may be used. The pieces of fruit or citrus peel are suspended in a clear, translucent jelly.

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