



Is Digital Canning Safe?

Author: Diane Devereaux, The Canning Diva®

Published: 2-18-2024

The original version of the digital canner was the Carey Nesco.

It has been on the market for several years and is the first digital pressure canner with a PSI regulator. Starting as the National Enameling and Stamping Company back in 1931, it is now simply the [NESCO brand](#) owned by The Metal Ware Corporation and based in Two Rivers, Wisconsin.

The most recent digital canner is the Presto Precise Digital Pressure Canner created by [National Presto Industries, Inc.](#), a company which has stood the test of time for over a century. Founded in 1905 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, it is a recognized and respected leader in the housewares and small electric appliance industry.

So, with all this lineage, with all this heritage in making small appliances, how did they become a target for such scrutiny by individuals in social media groups and by popular YouTubers?

While the Internet is a valuable tool providing information at the click of our fingertips, it is also a platform for so much misleading information including unqualified assessments and clique-like popularity contests. One debate in particular...

Are digital canners safe?

While many cheer the praises of digital canners, myself included, others pretend to know more than the engineers who designed, tested, and built the digital canners. It is for this reason there is so much confusion in the market and why some canners have been convinced their safety is in jeopardy if they use a digital canner. How very sad. But let me put your mind at ease by providing you with real results and real information to rebuke these unfounded claims.

Because, the use of a digital canner is not only safe, digital canning [is the future of pressure canning](#) food in jars.

Let's start by debunking a couple unfounded statements floating around the internet. For starters, there is this ridiculous claim that the USDA certifies small appliances as being "safe for use". Okay people - that is not the case. The USDA does not have anything to do with certifying appliances whatsoever.

What does the USDA certify?

There are three primary types of USDA certifications for packaged goods: meat, poultry, egg manufacturing and organic labels.

First, there is USDA meat inspection labeling. The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) certifies meat sold commercially across state lines. Second, there is USDA shell egg grading, which is a voluntary service for which shell egg producers choose to pay. These labels certify that eggs have met sanitary and quality standards.

Third, and final, USDA certification indicates a product's organic status. Foods with a USDA organic certification must meet several requirements established by the USDA and must be produced according to federal guidelines.

As you can see, there is nothing about the USDA that regulates, or certifies, small appliances. It is safe to say the ridiculous claim digital canners are not safe because they are not approved by the USDA is debunked. The USDA merely recommends using a pressure canner to preserve low acid food in glass jars.

So how are small appliances tested and certified?

[UL Solutions](#) has been working with small appliance manufacturers for more than 100 years. Their goal is to simplify the safety certification process while still providing the highest level of engineering and technical expertise expected by their clients. The UL Certification Mark is one of the most widely recognized and trusted symbols of safety for consumers globally, giving UL Certified products a clear path to market acceptance.

[NSF, National Sanitation Foundation](#), is a non-profit organization founded in 1944, whose goal was to create standards for food safety and sanitation to promote public health. NSF accredited third-party certification provides all stakeholders – industry, regulators, users and the general public – assurance that a certified product, material, component or service complies with the technical requirements of the referenced standard.

And then there is ETL Intertek Listing...

The [ETL Mark](#) is proof of product compliance to North American safety standards. Authorities Having Jurisdiction (AHJs) and code officials across the US and Canada accept the ETL Listed Mark as proof of product compliance to published industry standards. A product that is ETL listed has been tested by ETL and verified as safe for consumer use. ETL is a member of OSHA's Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories, and as such, ETL's safety standards follow those set forth by the NRTL program.

And guess what... Both the Presto and Nesco digital canners have the ETL Mark proving they comply with nationally regarded safety standards. AND both digital canners follow the USDA recommendations for home canning and preserving food in glass jars.

Do I have to adjust the canning recipe when using a digital canner?

The second ridiculous claim that digital canning is not safe stems from the misguided notion pressure canning recipes must be modified to be processed digitally. The manufacturers themselves have debunked this mythical claim as have thousands of us canners who have used digital pressure canners since they hit the market.

The simple answer is "no" – you do not have to adjust the canning recipe when using a digital canner. Both digital pressure canners on the market do not require home canners to modify a canning recipe to process using a digital canner.

The NESCO digital canner permits you to choose between 10PSI and 15PSI when pressure canning. And the Presto Precise will automatically adjust the pressure in the vessel to maintain 240°F. So, rest assured no matter the recipe or cookbook used, you may process any canning recipe in a digital canner just as you would the stovetop version.

However, my advice when preserving spaghetti sauce, or any blended sauce, in a digital pressure canner is to give each jar an additional 1/4-inch of headspace. So, if a recipe calls for 1-inch headspace, give it 1 1/4-inch instead. This will help prevent syphoning when using a digital canner at a lower sea level.

Happy Canning!

xo

Diane, The Canning Diva®

Links and Sources:

<https://www.nesco.com/our-story/>

<https://www.gopresto.com/content/corporate-information/company-history>

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/1503682/11254239-digital-pressure-canning-the-future-of-pressure-canning>

<https://www.usda.gov/our-agency/about-usda#:~:text=We%20provide%20leadership%20on%20food,available%20science%2C%20and%20effective%20management.>

<https://www.ul.com/services/small-appliance-testing-and-certification>

<https://www.nsf.org/knowledge-library/what-is-nsf-certification>

<https://www.intertek.com/product-certification-marks/etl/guide/>

