

The canning process; How sardines are made.

Value addition is a form of improving on the quality of a product to fetch high prices. In the due course, fish processing improves on fish shelf life.

In the process of canning fish activities such as unloading of fish from the boat, sorting , grading , checking for quality, washing, removal of scales and entrails, sanitary handling, sterilising of cans, pre- cooking, decanting and others such as packaging, batching , labelling and storage are practised.

Fish processing

Fish is unloaded from carrier boat manually or using fish pump. The use of fish pump increases shelf life of raw fish and vastly. The catch is sorted according to size at grading machine facility and placed in insulated bins to protect fish from possibility of contamination by external environment . They keep fish fresh and preserved in ice as well as minimising histamine levels and ensuring overall health of the catch.

Similarly bins are transported to canning facilities with fish ready for processing and upon arrival fish is checked for quality . It is mechanically unloaded from Insulated bins and conveyed to washing system where fish is thoroughly cleaned in cold bubbling water to maintain freshness .

As scales are naturally removed due to agitation by water , fish goes through grading machine for further sorting according to size. Fish then goes through nobbling machine to remove fish entrails allowing thorough cleaning.

As sanitary handling ensures cleanness of product for consumers, cans are sterilised at 85 degrees centigrade and

then filled with pre-cut and pre sorted sardines which is then pre cooked in box for 12 minutes at 85 degrees centigrade.

Not only the above but also the process partially dehydrates fish and prevents unwanted release of fluids during retorting. After, fish undergo decanting process to remove excess natural oils that give off strong flavour. Sardines filled cans are lined up for sauce filling and after are hermetically sealed.

Additionally, sealed cans undergo thermal processing or retorting where sardines are cooked at 117 degrees centigrade to ensure commercial sterility, shelf life and safety for human consumption. Cans are cooled, labelled and batch codes are printed on them for traceability purposes.

Finally cans are placed in boxes which are stacked for storage awaiting delivery to stores.