

Preserving Summer in Your Kitchen



There has recently been an enthusiastic return to the age-old art of preserving food by canning at home. People are interested in home canning for a number of reasons. Storing nutritious garden produce in a safe manner is one motivating factor, and so is finding satisfaction in being self-sufficient and giving one's creative side a chance to develop. It is also a wonderful way to start a new tradition in your family; you can work together to create very tasty food and lovely gifts.

You can benefit from learning how to store food by using safe, modern methods of food preservation. You can preserve high acid foods such as fruit, tomatoes (with added acid), and fermented foods (such as sauerkraut and pickles with added vinegar), in a hot water bath. Foods like meat, poultry, vegetables and fish are low acid foods. They must be processed using a pressure canner. (www.bernardin.ca)

Proven methods of canning food at home have been developed to prevent food spoilage by molds, yeast and bacteria, as well as enzymes in food. You can safely store food by using the freshest ripe food possible, reliable recipes developed by canning experts, clean glass jars, new sealing lids, and either a hot water bath canner or pressure canner with the correct processing time to create a vacuum seal. Creating a secure vacuum seal on the jar will keep the liquid in and air and microorganisms out.

Outdated canning methods such as the hot pack method (with no hot water bath), sealing with paraffin wax, heating jars in a hot oven) are not recommended. The main reason they are not regarded as safe is that harmful microorganisms will grow without adequate heat processing and vacuum sealing. Botulism is a serious and possibly fatal illness you can get from eating improperly prepared, canned food. Botulism is caused by a toxin produced by the bacterial microorganism called *Clostridium botulinum* (*C. botulinum*). Botulism bacteria grow in a moist, oxygen-free environment so improper home canning can provide ideal conditions for it to multiply and produce the toxin. (<http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/safety-salubrite/food-canning-conserve-aliment-eng.php>)

There are safe canning recipes for those concerned with using less sugar or salt in their diets. Sugar and salt are not required to seal a glass jar, but work to enhance the texture, flavor or color of home canned foods. An artificial sweetener can be used to contribute sweetness at the time of canning, or at the time of opening the jar. Reduced

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salt recipes should be from a reliable source. A useful link is:

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/09302.html>

If you are interested in home canning, and want to learn in a hands-on environment, consider enrolling in one of our classes offered in the IERHA:

- Thursday, September 3, 2015 4:30pm at Lac du Bonnet Youth Recreation Centre
or
 - Tuesday, September 8, 2015 5:30 pm at Garson Community Centre
- or refer to any of the listed links.



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