

Introduction to

**HOMIE
CANNING**





Introduction to

Home Canning





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INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your decision to make the journey into home canning and preservation. You are probably already imagining everything you can do with all those fruits and vegetables from your own garden or from the farmer's market. Making the decision to learn how to can and preserve at home is certainly a wise decision because it means that you can enjoy the benefits of fresh fruit and vegetables throughout the year.

No experience with canning? Concerned that you won't be able to properly can and preserve food because the process seems complicated or because you do not have any experience? Do not worry. This guide is going to walk you through every step of the process.

Curious about how the canning process works? Does it seem confusing to you? It's actually very simple. In fact, it is much simpler than you might think. When food is canned, it is important for it to be heated to a certain temperature. At the correct temperature, any germs that might cause the food to be spoiled will be killed. In addition, heat forces air to vacate the jar. As the jar begins to cool, it will automatically seal. Once the jar is sealed it prevents bacteria from entering the jar. As a result, your canned food will keep for many years to come.

The types of foods that you are able to can and preserve are almost limitless. Not only are you able to can fresh fruits and vegetables so that they can be enjoyed later, but once you learn the basics of canning and preserving you will also be able to make delicious jams and jellies, pickles and much more.

Are you ready to learn how to preserve savory fruits and vegetables?

Let's get started!





CHAPTER 1

The Basics of Canning and Preserving

One of the most important aspects you will need to understand about the basics of canning and preserving is the equipment you will need. Making certain you have the appropriate equipment is imperative to achieving excellent results with your canning and preserving endeavors.

Necessary Equipment

- Boiling Water Canner
- Pressure Canner
- Canning Jar
- Lids and Bands
- Canning Salt

Keep in mind that there is a difference between canning salt and table salt. To achieve the correct results it is necessary to use canning salt.

Boiling Water Canner

A boiling water canner is really just a very large pot. The pot must be large enough so that you can completely cover each canning jar with water. A boiling water canner is primarily used for canning pickles and fruits. Of course, historically, when a pressure canner was not available, vegetables were also canned using this method. Canning vegetables with a boiling water canner is not as safe as canning them with the use of a pressure canner. This is because temperatures are not able to get hot enough in order to kill all of the bacteria on the inside of the job. It doesn't matter how long you cook it, all of the bacteria will not be destroyed. It is acceptable to can fruits using a boiling water canner because natural acids are contained in fruits that will prevent bacteria from growing inside the jar.

Pressure Canner

A pressure canner is primarily used for canning vegetables. The lid locks down tightly in order to prevent steam from escaping. It is possible to achieve extremely high temperatures with this method. By obtaining the correct temperature you will be certain that all of the bacteria in the food has been killed. This is done through dials, weights or both.

There are often horror stories about pressure canners exploding when the pressure inside became too high. The fear of this has actually prevented many people from trying to can and preserve their own food using a pressure canner. There is no reason to be concerned. Modern canners include a safety valve that will pop off and release pressure because too much pressure can build up and cause it to explode. With that said, it is still important to be cautious, particularly if you are canning around small children.

If a pressure canner is opened before all of the pressure has been release of if it gets knocked off the stove,





serious injuries can occur. It is imperative that you make sure you read all of the instructions for your pressure canner before you begin.

Canning Jars

Canning jars are special jars that can be fitted with a lid and a band. The mouth of the jar must fit the lid and band perfectly in order to allow the jar to seal. The threads on the jar rim must fit the band perfectly. Canning jars are sold by the dozen and come in a variety of sizes. It is important to make sure you use actual canning jars and not any other type of jar. This is because canning jars are made with thicker glass to prevent them from breaking inside the canner. Jars made of thinner glass simply are not able to withstand the heat. Many people are often curious about canning using the older type of canning jars. These types feature zinc lids, wire clamps and jar rubbers. You will need to use new jar rubbers and they are not easy to find, although they can be purchased through mail-order. It should be further kept in mind that it is really not safe to use these types of jars because you can never know if the jar has actually sealed.

Lids and Bands

Lids and bands are essential for canning. Lids should never be re-used because they might not seal the second time. Bands can be re-used. Bands are also sometimes known as rings. Simply wash the ring using hot, soapy water and it is okay to re-use it.

Canning Salt

Canning salt is often used in vegetables to improve the taste. Keep in mind that canning salt is not the same thing as table salt. If you use table salt, it will make your vegetables soggy.

Before Starting

There are a few essentials you should know before you get started canning. First, it is important to make sure you leave an appropriate amount of headspace at the top of each jar before sealing it. This amount of empty space will allow enough room for the food to expand inside the jar while it was cooking.

You should always wipe the jar rim prior to sealing it. This is important because salt or food debris that is left behind can prevent the jar rim from sealing.

Always heat the jar lids before they are placed on the jar. Simply bring them to a simmer and then turn off the heat. If you boil the lids it can damage the rubber seal and keep it from sealing. Make sure you keep the lids in hot water until you are ready to use them. The heat from the processing will kill any bacteria that might be left behind.

You will also need to remove air bubbles from the food jar before it is sealed. You can do this by taking a nonmetallic spatula and slipping it between the jar and the food. You should be able to see air bubbles released when you do this. If you fail to release the air bubbles they will be released during the processing and this can





result in the loss of liquid from the jar. As a result, some of the food will be left without adequate liquid coverage. This won't actually hurt the food, but it won't be as appealing. You should never use a metal spatula because it can scratch the jar and cause it to break later.

Check the jar rims to be sure they do not contain any cracks or nicks. Jar lids will not seal if there is a nick in the jar rim. Also, check the gauge on the pressure canner to be sure it is properly working. Your local agricultural extension office may be willing to check the gauge on your canner and ensure it is reading properly.

You should also check the rubber gasket on your pressure canner to make certain it is not too loose or cracked. If it is damaged, it can cause steam to escape from under the lid. This can cause the canner to not pressurize properly. Replacement rubber gaskets can be purchased at most places where you can also buy pressure canners.

Finally, make sure you are familiar with your pressure canner. Be sure to read all of the operating instructions before you use it.

