

FOOD

Canning for Beginners

For beginners, it is better to start out with a boiling water canning method. This is the most inexpensive way to learn how to can and you will be proud of your efforts after it is finished. You will need some canning jars, and lids, both pints and quarts, which are very good for canning tomatoes, pickles, and other such fruit. Small 8oz jars are good for preserving things such as relish and jellies. They come 12 to a box and have lids for each one. These jars are tempered for canning and therefore it is unwise to use any jar, such as a mayonnaise jar, or a jar that has previously had jelly or jam in it.

You will also need a very large pot with a lid that is deep enough to cover the jars to be canned by at least one inch, and two inches would be even better. You should also have a rack to place the jars in to keep them off the bottom. If you didn't get a rack with your pot, you may simply place a rack in the bottom of the pot to keep the jars from touching the bottom. Another instrument that you will need is plastic knife or spatula to stir the filled jars and release any trapped air. And a large mouth plastic funnel, and a set of strong, long handled jar pullers for taking the hot jars out of the water. You will need a dish towel to dry any water off of the jars as you take them out of the pot.

Always use the freshest fruits possible, and wash and peel the fruits before you begin the cooking process. There's a product called Fresh Fruit that is recommended

to prevent fruit from discoloration. Read the directions to get the recipe for a sugar water syrup that's either light, medium or heavy, experiment to see which you like best. Pour this syrup over the fruit. While you are preparing your food for cooking, you should put some jars into water and let it come to a boil for a few minutes. Then place the food into the hot jars filling about 1/2 inch from the top. Run your wood spoon or spatula through the food jars releasing any trapped air. Remove any other food from the outside of the jars, put your lids on and tighten them down. Place the jars back into the pot and fill with warm or hot water and place back on the stove. Be sure to cover the jars about an inch over the lids.

Once they have come to a boil, put the lid on the pot. After the water has been boiling vigorously for a few minutes, take the lid off the pot, and let it continue to boil for the time limit in your recipe, usually 10 minutes is good for pickles, and 25 to 30 minutes for fruits, and 35 to 40 minutes for tomatoes.

When they have been cooking for the allotted time, turn the pot off and place the jars on a towel to drip dry and allow to cool, preferably overnight. Before leaving the jars to cool check each jar to make sure there are no lids popped up in the middle. If this has happened, the jars of food are no good because they didn't seal. These can be refrigerated and used immediately so as not to waste the fruit. Or they can possibly be re-cooked to try again, but first use a different lid and wipe the lip of the jar before tightening down new lids.

There is no better feeling than the feeling you get once you learn to preserve food. It is beneficial for anyone that like to learn how things were done by our grandparents, it is one way to work in the past.



CANNING RECIPES

Habanero Jalapeno Pepper Jelly

Ingredients

- 5 habanero peppers, stems removed
- 5 jalapeno peppers, stems removed
- 5 cups seeded cubed zucchini
- 1 1/2 cups vinegar
- 7 cups sugar
- 6 fluid ounces certo liquid pectin

Directions

1. Place habaneros, jalapenos, zucchini and vinegar in food processor and process until smooth.
2. Combine pepper and zucchini mixture in heavy bottom pot with sugar. Bring to a boil and simmer for 25 minutes.
3. Add pectin and bring to a full rolling boil for 1 minute.
4. Remove from heat and ladle into sterile jars and process in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes.

Apple Pie Jam

Ingredients

- 4 1/2 cups granulated sugar
- 1 cup light brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1 lb tart green apple, such as Granny Smith
- 1 cup water
- 1/3 cup lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 (1 3/4 ounce) box dry pectin

Directions

1. Wash 5 or 6 half-pint jars and fill with hot water until needed. Prepare lids as manufacturer directs.
2. Measure sugars into a medium bowl and set aside.
3. Peel, core and finely chop enough apples to measure 2 cups. Place in large saucepan with water, lemon juice, cinnamon and nutmeg. Stir in pectin.
4. Place pan over high heat and stir until it comes to a full boil. Boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and immediately stir in sugars.
5. Return to full rolling boil and boil hard for 1 minute more, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Skim foam from surface and stir jam for about 5 minutes to prevent fruit from floating.
6. Ladle hot jam into 1 hot jar at a time, leaving 1/4-inch head space. Wipe jar rim with a clean, damp cloth. Attach lid. Fill and close remaining jars. Process in a boiling-water canner for 10 minutes (15 minutes at 1,000 to 6,000 feet; 20 minutes above 6,000 feet).

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