



HOW TO CAN YOUR HARVEST

A step-by-step guide, including sample recipes

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The Our Food: Reconnecting Food and Community Project is a four year project made possible by the generous funding of the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC). The overarching goal of the Our Food Project is to strengthen communities' relationship to food by helping to build what we call 'positive food environments'. Positive food environments are the physical and social spaces that help to normalize healthy eating by making it easier to grow, sell, and eat good food. We work at the individual, community and systemic level to increase the availability of nutritious food as well as our access to it. In doing so, we actively involve people in the development of more localized food systems.

Learn more about the Our Food Project:

<https://ecologyaction.ca/issue-area/food-action>

Find this and other resources online at the Halifax Garden Network:

www.halifaxgardennetwork.com

Follow us on our blog, 'Adventures in Local Food':

<https://adventuresinlocalfood.wordpress.com/>

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HOME CANNING

Home canning is a great way to store away local vegetables and fruits for up to one year – saving freezer and fridge space. Imagine eating local peaches in January, garden salsa in February, or dilly beans in March. Each jar tells a season.

How it Works

- Intense heat is applied to jars of food interrupting the natural decaying process and killing the microorganisms that cause food to spoil.
- The process also forces the air out of the jars, forming a vacuum seal that prevents any air or microorganisms from entering the jar.
- This process allows the jars of food to be stored for up to one year, in a dark cool place (between 10 – 20 degrees celsius).

Boil Water Bath vs. Pressure Canning

The boiling water bath canning technique is safe for preserving high acid foods such as fruit, pickles, chutney, jam, and salsa. Many fruits or vegetables that are preserved using the boiling water canning technique require additional acidic ingredients to make them safe for long term storage (e.g., adding lemon juice to whole tomatoes or vinegars to salsas). Boiling water bath canning is a great place to start as a beginner canner.

Pressure canning brings jars to extremely high temperatures compared to boiling water bath canning. This safely preserves low acid foods, such as vegetables and meats. This resource will focus on boiling water bath canning.

Important!

It is critical to follow up-to-date canning directions and recipes. Canning recipes include acidity levels required for safe storage. Do not adjust recipes as this may alter acidity levels. This resource follows up to date canning processes as outlined by the National Center for Home Food Preservation (<http://nchfp.uga.edu/>).

CANNING TOOLS

Canning Pot & Rack

A pot that is at least three inches taller than your jars. The metal rack is necessary to prevent the jars from breaking while they are processing from direct contact with the pot bottom. You can also place jars on top of screw bands.

Magnetic Wand

To place the lids on jars without direct contact with your hands - preventing cross contamination.



Canning Jars & Lids

Jars and snap lids designed for canning. Jars have been tested to withstand extreme heat, and lids to create a strong, safe seal.



Jar Lifter

For moving hot jars in and out of the boiling water bath.



Funnel

For filling jars and preventing spills.



Bubble Remover & Head Space Tool

A non-metallic utensil used to remove air bubbles. This can also help measure the space between the top of the jar and its contents to help ensure a strong seal. A small spatula can also be used to remove air bubbles.



SAVE \$\$

Reuse jars from previous years, and screw bands that aren't rusted or warped. Don't reuse snap lids. You can purchase snap lids separate from canning jars at most grocery or houseware stores.

CANNING DIRECTIONS



1.

Sterilize Jars

Wash jars with hot, soapy water and rinse well. Place jars in the canner with enough water to cover them. Bring to a boil. Boil for 10 minutes, sterilizing the jars. Leave the jars in the canner until you are ready to fill them (to prevent the jars from breaking). Discard any that are cracked or chipped.



2.

Sterilize Lids and Canning Tools

Wash lids, the funnel, magnetic wand, and bubble remover with hot, soapy water and rinse well. Place in a small bowl or pot and pour very hot water over them. Allow them to sit a few minutes in the water, so the rubber around the lids soften and are ready to use.



3.

Prepare Canning Recipe

Following an up-to-date canning-specific recipe (and don't deviate!), prepare the ingredients using clean appliances and surfaces. Make sure to wash your hands for 20 seconds minimum.



4.

Fill Jars

Ladle the recipe in jars with the funnel. Follow your recipe regarding how much "headspace" to leave (the space between the food and top of the jar). The general rule is: $\frac{1}{4}$ inch for 125mL and 250mL jars and $\frac{1}{2}$ inch for 500mL and 1L jars.



5.

Remove Air Bubbles & Adjust Headspace

Remove any air bubbles in the jar by running a non-metallic utensil (or rubber spatula) along the inside wall of each jar. Adjust headspace as needed.



6.

Wipe Rim

Dip a clean cloth or paper towel into vinegar, and wipe the rim of the jar to remove any food spills. The vinegar helps ensure a clean surface.



7.

Place Lids

Place the snap lid on the jar using the magnetic wand. Do not handle the snap lid with your hands. Next place the screw band and tighten until finger tight. This ensures that air can escape and a vacuum seal created.



8.

Process Jars

Place the jars (boil jars) in the boiling water bath canner. Begin timing once the water is brought back to a boil. Use the processing time indicated in your recipe. Increase processing time by 5 minutes if you live between 1001-3000ft, or 10 minutes if you are between 3001-6000ft (Atlantic Canadian regions do not need to increase processing time). Ensure that the water covers the jars by a minimum of one inch. Turn heat off once processing time is complete and let jars stand for 5 minutes before removing. This prevents contents from vacuuming up and out around lids.



9.

Remove Jars

Remove the jars from the canner with the jar lifter without tilting the jars. Place them on a heat-protected surface in a draft free area. Do not tighten the screw bands or move the jars for 24 hours. You will likely hear a popping sound when the seal forms. You can test the seals by observing if the centre of the snap lid curves downward.



10.

Label and Store

Label the jars with the date, ingredients, and expiry date (canned goods store for up to one year). Remove screw bands to remove any excess moisture and prevent rusting. Jars can be stored without the screw band (see photo). Store jars in a cool, dark place. If the seal has 'popped', or there are signs of leaking, discard immediately.

CANNING RECIPE // SALSA

Small Batch: Makes 4 X 500ml jars

Ingredients:

- 6 lbs Roma Tomatoes (approx. 12)
- 2 large onions
- 2 average sized green peppers, chopped small
- 2 jalapeño peppers, without stems
- 3 cloves of garlic
- 120ml canned of tomato paste
- 3/4 cups white or apple cider vinegar
- .5 tsp. toasted and ground cumin seed
- 3/4 cups of cilantro, chopped (approx. 1 bunch)
- 1.6 TBS sugar or honey
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 lime, juiced

Directions

1. Prepare canner, jars and lids (sterilize)
2. Seed tomatoes: scrape out the insides, leaving only the meaty part attached to the skins and remove the tops, where the stem attaches. The seeds and the 'juicy' parts come out. Save the seeds and the heads for use in another recipe (like soup!)
3. Bring tomatoes, onions, sweet peppers, hot peppers, garlic, tomato paste and vinegar to a boil. Once the boil is rolling, turn the stove down. Keeping the element at full blast will burn tomato to the bottom of the pot and risk ruining the batch. Boil until consistency is "like salsa". Stir regularly.
4. When the salsa has cooked down and it is the consistency that looks about right, add in the cilantro, cumin, sugar, salt and lime juice.
5. Using a pitcher and the jar funnel, pour salsa into sterilized jars. Leave ½ inch of space at top of jar. Wipe the jar rim with paper towel and vinegar.
6. Place lids on immediately. Screw fingertip tight.
7. Process in boiling water bath for 20 minutes (for 500ml jars). Let jars sit for 5 minutes before removing from canner.

Large Batch: Makes 20 X 500ml jars

Ingredients:

- 30 lbs Tomatoes
- 10 large onions
- 10 average sized green peppers, chopped small
- 10 jalapeño peppers, without stems
- 15 cloves of garlic
- 2cans of tomato paste (300 ml sized cans)
- 4 cups white or apple cider vinegar
- 3 tsp. toasted and ground cumin seed
- 4 cups of cilantro, chopped (6 bunches or so)
- 1/2 cup sugar or honey
- 5 tsp. salt
- 4 limes, juiced



STEP BY STEP // SALSA



1. Sterilize jars in boiling water for 10 minutes. Keep jars hot until ready to use.



2. Remove seeds and juicy centers from tomatoes: Quarter tomatoes, and scoop seeds into bowl. Juice can be reserved for other use.



3. Add chopped tomatoes to pot on medium high heat.



4. Add chopped jalapeno and bell peppers to pot.



5. Add chopped onion and garlic to pot.



6. Add vinegar and tomato paste to pot.



7. Mix and cook over medium high heat until boiling. Then lower heat to medium, and cook for at least 20 minutes or until thick, stirring throughout cooking time.



8. When salsa is a good consistency, chop fresh cilantro.



9. Add lime to cilantro.



10. Add chopped cilantro, cumin, sugar, salt and lime juice to cooked salsa. Mix and turn off heat.



11. Soak lids in hot water for at least 5 minutes before using.



12. Use a measuring cup or ladle with a funnel to fill sterilized jar with salsa.



13. Use notched ruler to ensure correct head space as specified in the recipe.



14. Carefully use moistened cloth to clean the edge of the jar.



15. Use the magnetic wand to place lid on top of jar before securing with ring.



16. Place ring on jar and tighten with the tips of your fingers. (Not too tight!)



17. Use jar tongs to carefully place jars into canner, and boil (process) for 20 minutes for 500 ml jars.



18. Allow jars to cool completely before moving. Within a few moments, you'll start to hear the popping sounds of lids sealing and see that the lids are curved downward. Sealed jars should be stored in a dark, cool location and used within one year.

CANNING RECIPE // PEACHES

Small Batch: Makes 6 X 500ml jars

Ingredients:

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 4 cups water
- 2 cups liquid honey
- 8 lbs small peaches, peeled, halved, pitted and drained
- 6 cinnamon sticks (optional)
- ¾ tsp whole cloves (optional)

Large Batch: Makes 18 X 500ml jars

Ingredients:

- 3 cups granulated sugar
- 12 cups water
- 6 cups liquid honey
- 24 lbs small peaches, peeled, halved, pitted and drained
- 18 cinnamon sticks (optional)
- 2 tsp whole cloves (optional)

Note: You can preserve peaches in water only. No sugar is required for this recipe. Sugar will change the flavour (make them more sweet) and help maintain the original fruit coloring.

Directions (Adapted from the Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving)

1. Prepare canner, jars and lids (sterilize)
2. Remove pits and skins from peaches (see following pages)
3. Bring sugar, water and honey to a boil over medium-high heat. Once syrup is very hot and sugar has dissolved, add peaches. Peaches do not need to boil in the syrup, but they should get very hot.
4. Add 1 cinnamon stick and 2 cloves to each jar (optional).
5. Pack hot peaches into jars using a slotted spoon and funnel. Leave 3/4 inch space between the peaches and top of the jar.
6. Top up each jar with hot syrup, leaving ½ inch headspace.
7. Using a plastic utensil, gently move fruit to allow air to escape from the jars. Adjust headspace and wipe rim.
8. Center lid on jar and apply screw band (not too tight).
9. Process (boil) 500ml jars for 25 minutes. Let jars sit for 5 minutes before removing.



STEP BY STEP // PEACHES



1. Sterilize jars in boiling water for 10 minutes. Keep jars hot until ready to use.



2. Twist halves apart gently. Cut the peach half still containing the peach pit in two to easily remove the remaining pit.



3. Peel the skin off the peaches: Pour boiling water into bowl of pitted peaches.



4. After a minute or two, remove peaches to a bowl containing ice water.



5. After peaches have cooled down enough to touch, you can easily peel the skin off the peaches.



6. Start making honey syrup in large pot on the stove.



7. Once syrup is very hot and all sugar has dissolved, add peaches to liquid. Peaches need not boil in liquid, but they should get very hot.



8. Soak lids in hot water for at least 5 minutes before using.



9. Prepare your jars with desired spices: star aniseed, a combination of cinnamon sticks and cloves, or plain.



Using a slotted spoon and a funnel, fill sterilized jars with peaches.



Top up each jar with hot syrup up to the correct head space.



Use notched ruler or other plastic utensil to gently move fruit to allow air to escape.



Use notched ruler to ensure correct head space as specified in the recipe.



Carefully use moistened cloth to clean the edge of the jar.



Use the magnetic wand to place lid on top of jar before securing with ring.



Place ring on jar and tighten with the tips of your fingers. (Not too tight!)



Use jar tongs to carefully place jars into canner, and boil (process) for 25 minutes for 500 ml jars.



Allow jars to cool completely before moving. Within a few moments, you'll start to hear the popping sounds of lids sealing and see that the lids are curved downward. Sealed jars should be stored in a dark, cool location and used within one year.

CANNING RECIPES // BLUEBERRY JAM

Small Batch: Makes 6 X 250ml jars

Ingredients:

- 4 cups (1000 mL) crushed blueberries
- 2 TBS lime juice (approx. 1-2 limes)
- 4 cups (1000 mL) granulated sugar
- 3/4 pkg (of 57g) Original Fruit pectin

Large Batch: Makes 18 X 250ml jars

Ingredients:

- 12 cups (1000 mL) crushed blueberries
- 6 TBS lime juice (approx. 3-6 limes)
- 12 cups (1000 mL) granulated sugar
- 2 pkg (57 g) Original Fruit pectin

Directions Blueberry Lime Jam (Adapted from Bernardin)

1. Prepare canner, jars and lids (sterilize)
2. Crush blueberries.
4. Combine berries, lime juice and pectin and bring to a boil over high heat. Stir frequently.
6. Add sugar.
7. Bring contents to a full rolling boil. Stir constantly until it becomes thicker and more difficult to do so. Remove from heat. Test consistency using the freezer test (see following page).
8. Pour jam into sterilized jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace.
9. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace.
10. Wipe jar rim.
11. Centre snap lid on jar and apply screw band (not too tight!).
12. Process (boil) jars for 10 minutes.



STEP BY STEP // BLUEBERRY JAM

1.



You can make blueberry jam with fresh or frozen blueberries.

2.



Wild blueberries.

3.



Pectin. Make sure you use the same type of pectin that is specified in your recipe - they are not interchangeable.

4.



Sterilize jars in boiling water for 10 minutes. Keep jars hot until ready to use.

5.



Use a potato masher to smash the berries to release their juice.

6.



Add sugar according to the recipe specifications.

7.



Add pectin according to the recipe specifications.

8.



Allow jam to come to a full rolling boil.

9.



To ensure your jam has gelled, you can put a small amount on a chilled spoon and then place in the freezer for 3-4 minutes. If jam is good consistency you can stop cooking.

10.



Soak lids in hot water for at least 5 minutes before using.

11.



Pour jam into sterilized jars with the help of a funnel.

12.



Use notched ruler to ensure correct head space as specified in the recipe.

13.



Carefully use moistened cloth to clean the edge of the jar.

14.



Use the magnetic wand to place lid on top of jar before securing with ring.

15.



Place ring on jar and tighten with the tips of your fingers. (Not too tight!)

16.



Use jar tongs to carefully place full jars into canner.

17.



Boil (process) jars for 10 minutes for 250 ml jars.

18.



Allow jars to cool completely before moving. Within a few moments, you'll start to hear the popping sounds of lids sealing and see that the lids are curved downward. Sealed jars should be stored in a dark, cool location and used within one year.

CANNING RECIPES // DILLY BEANS

Small Batch: Makes 4 X 500ml jars

Ingredients:

- 2.5 lbs green beans
- 2 cups white vinegar
- 2 cups water
- 2 tbsp pickling salt
- 4 heads fresh dill heads or 4 tsp dill seeds (20mL)
- 4 small cloves garlic.

Large Batch: Makes 20 X 500ml jars

Ingredients:

- 12.5 lbs green beans
- 10 cups white vinegar
- 10 cups water
- 10 tbsp pickling salt
- 20 heads fresh dill heads or 4 tsp dill seeds (20mL)
- 20 small cloves garlic.

Directions

1. Prepare canner, jars and lids (sterilize)
2. Trim off the tops of the beans.
3. Meanwhile, combine vinegar, water and salt in a saucepan and bring to a boil.
4. Remove hot jars from canner.
5. Place 1 head fresh dill or 1 tsp (5mL) dill seeds and 1 clove garlic into each jar.
6. Pack in beans.
7. Pour boiling vinegar mixture over beans to within ½ inch (1cm) of rim (head space).
8. Process 10 minutes for pint (500mL) jars and 15 minutes for quart (1L) jars. Let jars sit for 5 minutes before removing from canner.



STEP BY STEP // DILLY BEANS



1. Sterilize jars in boiling water for 10 minutes. Keep jars hot until ready to use.



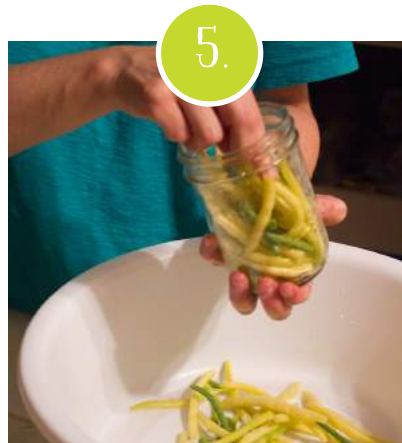
2. Ingredients for Dilly Beans: Pickling salt, White Vinegar...



3. ...And dill heads, garlic cloves, and yellow and green beans.



4. Preparing the beans by snapping off the stem end.



5. Stuffing the sterilized jars with cleaned beans.



6. Boil vinegar and water with salt until dissolved. Keep hot until ready to pour over beans.



7. Beans ready for vinegar brine.



8. After pouring in the brine, it is important to measure the head space to ensure proper seal.



9. Soak lids in hot water for at least 5 minutes before using.



10. Use the magnetic wand to place lid on top of jar before securing with ring.



11. Place ring on jar and tighten with the tips of your fingers. (Not too tight!)



12. Boil (process) filled jars for amount of time specified in the recipe for the size of jar you're using.



13. Carefully remove the processed jar out of the canner.



14. Allow jars to cool completely before moving. Within a few moments, you'll start to hear the popping sounds of lids sealing and see that the lids are curved downward. Sealed jars should be stored in a dark, cool location and used within one year.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Websites:

National Center for Home Preservation: <http://nchfp.uga.edu/>

Bernardin Home Canning: www.bernardin.ca

Adventures in Local Food (Blog): <https://adventuresinlocalfood.wordpress.com/>

Food in Jars (Blog): www.foodinjars.com

Books:

Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving.
Edited by Judi Kingry and Lauren Devine

Blue Ribbon Preserves: Secrets to Award-Winning Jams, Jellies, Marmalades, and More.
Author: Linda Amendt

Canning for a New Generation: Bold, Fresh Flavors for the Modern Pantry.
Author: Liana Krissoff.

Foods of Spry's Field: Cooking and Preserving Then and Now.
Author: Laura Elliott

You Can Too! Canning, Pickling, and Preserving the Maritime Harvest.
Author: Elizabeth Peirce