

Olives and Tapenade
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Anyone watching NFL football lately knows that Peyton Manning seems to have a fondness for tapenade. One really cannot blame the man. Tapenade, a delicious spread made from olives and other ingredients such as capers, olive oil and anchovies, spread on slices of fresh baguette or scooped up with chips or crackers, makes a great appetizer. Spread it on whole grain bread; add layers of veggies, such as tomatoes, lettuce, grilled mushrooms or eggplant and onions for an out-of-this-world treat. Use tapenade as an accompaniment to grilled fish or other meats or mix a little into rice or pasta.

Homemade tapenade made from home-cured olives takes this versatile spread from good to fantastic. Learn how to cure and preserve all types of olives at the free public education class being offered on October 16th at the County Ag building, 311 Fair Lane in Placerville, from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Bernie Ritscher, a veteran Master Food Preserver, leads the class and no one would want to miss the valuable information available from the years of experience Bernie brings to the class. From choosing the best olives to processing to avoiding “fish eye,” Bernie has olives covered. Bernie and his helpers demonstrate techniques and answer any questions one may have about olives.

The risk of botulism poisoning in canned olives or olive products prohibits some older methods of preserving olives. The free public education class instructors make sure to teach only tested and up-to-date methods for preserving olives safely at home. The volunteer MFPs lead the class step-by-step through the lye treatment process which debitters the olive, making it ready for further processing and preserving. The right equipment must be used to ensure safety while handling the lye and Bernie reveals what works best and what cannot be used. Always avoid aluminum or galvanized containers as the risk of metal poisoning exists with these types of containers.

Olives may be canned, but not all olive based products have been tested for home-preserving. Although easy to put together, homemade tapenade cannot be safely canned at home. Do not despair. Most tapenade recipes use similar ingredients and once mixed together tapenade can be packaged in freezer safe containers, and frozen. Remember to allow headspace for expansion of the product.

Enjoy tapenade at the next football get together knowing that the olives that form the base for the wonderful flavor of the spread have been lovingly and safely preserved at home.

For questions about safe home food preservation, or to schedule a speaker for organizations or clubs on the topics of food safety or food preservation, call the Master Food Preservers at (530) 621-5506. For more information, be sure to go to the Master Food Preserver website at http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master_Food_Preservers/. Sign up to receive our Master Food Preservers E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews/>.