



Easy Canning at Home

By Sue Mosbacher, UCCE Master Food Preserver

Does the warmth of spring make you look forward to tasting the juicy goodness of a fresh peach and a scrumptious strawberry? Why not learn how to preserve spring and summer fruits and enjoy that tasting pleasure all year?

The simple home canning method to try is with boiling water. If you have a deep pot and a stove, you're halfway there. Pick up some canning jars, rings and a jar lifter at a thrift store or garage sale, buy a box of new lids, and you're ready to start. You can even create a rack using extra canning rings for the bottom of the pot.

The process is pretty straightforward. Using a reputable boiling water canning recipe, put the product in hot jars; remove air bubbles; wipe the jar rims; place the lids and rings on the jars and immerse them in hot water; boil the water for the time listed in the recipe; turn off the heat; let the jars sit in the hot water for no more than five minutes; remove the jars and leave them alone for a day.

Curious about why this boiling water canning process keeps food safe?

- The heat from the boiling water destroys undesirable bacteria, yeasts, and molds.
- The food's acidity prevents bacteria spores from forming toxins. Most fruits have enough acidity; vegetables don't so you need to add lemon juice or vinegar to create an acidic environment if you want to preserve them in a boiling water canner. (Otherwise you need to get the temperature up to 240°F in a pressure canner to kill bacterial spores.)
- The heat also destroys enzymes that cause food to decay, so the quality lasts a long time.
- When the food in a jar heats, it expands and changes the internal pressure, forcing air out of the jar. When you lift a jar from the boiling water, the pressure outside the jar becomes greater than the pressure inside the jar, pulling the lid tightly on the jar rim and creating a vacuum. This tight seal keeps spoilage organisms out.

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Boiling water canning gives you the option to make a wide variety of delicious foods, including whole fruits, jams, tomatoes, sauces and pickles. This cherry pie filling from the National Center for Home Food Preservation (<http://nchfp.uga.edu/>) is a great seasonal place to start canning.

Cherry Pie Filling

Yield: 7 quarts

6 quarts fresh or thawed sour cherries

7 cups granulated sugar

1-3/4 cups Clear Jel®

9-1/3 cups cold water

1/2 cup bottled lemon juice

1 tsp cinnamon (optional)

2 tsp almond extract (optional)

Rinse and pit fresh cherries and hold in cold water. To prevent stem end browning, use ascorbic acid solution. Place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch 1 minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain but keep heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine sugar and Clear Jel® in a large saucepan and add water. If desired, add cinnamon and almond extract. Stir mixture and cook over medium high heat until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil 1 minute, stirring constantly. Fold in drained cherries immediately and fill jars with mixture without delay, leaving 1 inch headspace. Adjust lids and process immediately in a boiling water canner in either pints or quarts for 30 minutes at 0-1000', 35 minutes at 1,001-3,000', 40 minutes at 3,001 - 6,000', 45 minutes above 6,000'.

Want to try your hand at boiling water canning under the guidance of experienced UCCE Master Food Preserver volunteers? Sign up for our April 9th full-day canning workshop in Placerville. You'll preserve jelly, mustard, citrus, and a tangy sauce. For more information and to register, visit http://ucanr.edu/edmf_classes.

Download the 2016 UCCE Master Food Preserver of El Dorado County schedule of classes and workshops on our main website. We offer some new events this year! In addition to our free preserving classes in Placerville and Auburn, we now provide classes in Cameron Park at the Cameron Park Community Center and several all day, hands-on workshops in Placerville.

UCCE Master Food Preservers are available to answer home food preservation questions; leave a message at (530) 621-5506 or email us at edmf@ucanr.edu. For more information about our program and events, visit our website at <http://ucanr.edu/edmf>. Sign up to receive our E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews/>. Find us on Facebook too (UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County)!