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Safely Preserving Vegetables at Home
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UCCE Master Food Preserver of El Dorado County

There are two ways to safely preserve vegetables at home - pickling and pressure canning. Because vegetables are naturally low in acid they cannot be canned using a boiling water bath or steam canner unless they are acidified. Pickling your vegetables fulfills this requirement. If you want to can vegetables without that vinegar flavor, then you must pressure can them in order to prevent botulism or other foodborn illnesses.

There are two methods of acidifying vegetables to create a pickle. One way is to use vinegar and the other way is to ferment them. During the fermentation process lactic acid is formed in the brine. This takes many days to occur, but once the fermentation process is complete there is enough lactic acid to prevent botulism.

Pressure canning ensures a safe product if using a scientifically tested recipe from a reputable source. Never can vegetables or meats for which you do not have a research-tested processing time. Canning time is dependent upon many factors; the amount of starch, tightness of the packed food, microorganisms which contaminate and grow in that type of food, type and size of pieces packed in the container, and temperature at which the food is processed.

Two safe recipe sources can be found at the National Center for Home Food Preservation <http://nchfp.uga.edu> and from books by Ball and from the Ball website <http://www.freshpreserving.com/>. You might be interested to know that Ball just published a new recipe book with 350 new recipes!

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To learn more about pressure canning, attend the UCCE Master Food Preserver class "Contents Under Pressure" on Wednesday June 22, 2016 at the Cameron Park Community Center, 2502 Country Club Dr, Cameron Park, CA 95682. See live demonstrations on using a pressure canner and have an opportunity to ask your questions and talk to our volunteers about pressure canning and other aspects of safe home food preservation.

Download the 2016 UCCE Master Food Preserver of El Dorado County schedule of classes and workshops on our main website <http://ucanr.edu/edmfp>. We are offering 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 edmfp@ucanr.edu. For more information about our program and events, visit our website at <http://ucanr.edu/edmfp>. Sign up to receive our ENewsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews/>. Find us on Facebook, too (UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County)!