

January 11, 2017



Joy in a Jar: Home Canned Soup

By Sue Mosbacher, UCCE Master Food Preserver

The other night I came home late from work. The house was cold, I was tired, and I just wanted a bowl of hot soup to warm me up from the inside. I looked in my pantry to check out my selections: Vegetable, Beef Stew, Cuban Black Bean, Split Pea, Navy Bean & Bacon, plus Kale, Potato, Bean & Chorizo. I chose the plain vegetable soup. (I'm still paying for several nights of gluttony over the holidays.)

I'd canned all of these beautiful quart and pint jars of soup. I love looking at them – food looks so good and makes me happy with anticipation. They taste so good.

I've been trying to eat food with ingredients I can pronounce and would normally buy at the grocery store. Some of the ingredients in commercial soups surprise me. For example, some vegetable soups include small amounts of sugar, caramel color, corn syrup, hydrolyzed wheat gluten, and Monosodium Glutamate (MSG). When I have vegetable soup, I want to eat just vegetables. This is one of the reasons I can my own soups. (Another reasons is not having to wait for a frozen container of soup to thaw; I'm impatient when I'm hungry and cold!)

Soup is one of the few canning processes where you have an incredible amount of flexibility. You can use any ingredients as long as you follow these guidelines.

- Use a pressure canner; you're canning low-acid vegetables and meats.
- Don't include thickeners; add them when you're ready to serve. Thickeners include dairy, rice, pasta and flour as well as pureeing the soup before canning.
- Use rehydrated beans.
- Pre-cook meat until tender.
- Fill the jars with half of the solid soup mixture and half of the soup liquid, leaving a 1-inch headspace.
- Process pints for 60 minutes and quarts for 75 minutes. If the soup contains seafood, process all jars for 100 minutes.

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The full instructions, including the pressure needed at different altitudes, is at http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_04/soups.html.

Once a year I go on a soup making binge. I chop onions for multiple recipes, soak several kinds of beans, prep the rest of veggies and meats, and spend an entire day pressure canning about 30 jars of soup I will enjoy throughout the year. I prep the soups on a portable burner. I borrow a couple of pressure canners and stick a piece of blue painter tape on the counter next to each pressure canner and write down when the canning process will be done. It's a long day, but it's worth it on those cold winter nights when I want soup five minutes after I get home from work.

If you'd like to learn how to use a pressure canner, come to the UCCE Master Food Preserver *Stocks and Broth* class on Saturday, January 21 at the Bethel-Delfino Ag Building at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville from 9:00-Noon. You'll learn how to pressure can and how to preserve the liquid gold of homemade broth. Want to try pressure canning in a hands-on workshop? Register for the February 25th hands-on pressure canning workshop at <http://ucanr.edu/pcworkshop>.

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 E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews/>. Find us on Facebook too (UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County)!