



Happy canning and preserving to all!

We will resume our free public classes in July 2012. To get information throughout the year, visit our website at <http://ucanr.org/edmf>.

Until then, we'll share seasonal information to help keep your food safe as short-term leftovers, long-term treasures, or gifts of your time and talent for friends and family.

## Disguising Leftovers

Naomi Johnson, El Dorado County Master Food Preserver

Leftovers are the uneaten edible remains of a meal. There's a commercial on TV saying that Americans throw away almost 40% of their food budget because they don't properly store their leftovers and suggests they could save money by using their storage materials.

However, an increasingly common reason Americans throw out more food than other cultures is because many families will not eat "leftovers". A young woman was complaining to a friend in the grocery store that her family absolutely refused to eat "leftovers", calling it "recycled food". But with food prices rising rapidly and cash flows dwindling, necessity is forcing many families to rethink "leftovers".

On the other hand, my family is willing to eat "leftovers". One reason is that I disguise them as new meals. For instance, Teriyaki chicken tonight becomes the basis for stir-fried veggies with chunks of chicken or Chicken A-la-King the next night. Baked ham one night becomes Chinese fried rice or quiche or Hawaiian pizza the next night.



Most every culture has recipes for using foods that are already cooked. Many of these recipes were created in the days before refrigeration and reliable airtight containers existed. Besides capturing nutrition from otherwise inedible bones, stocks and broths make an excellent base for adding leftover morsels too small to be a meal in and of themselves. Here are just a few ideas for disguising "leftovers".

Mashed potatoes become a tasty dessert of Norwegian Lefse by adding some butter and flour to the mashed potatoes and rolling them out like a potato tortilla. Heat them up on a griddle until they look like tortillas (little bubbles that brown). Top with butter and either jam or sprinkle with sugar & cinnamon; roll, eat. YUM!



Or take those mashed potatoes and use pre-cooked ground beef or lamb to create a Shepherd's Pie. Shepherd's Pie is an English dish, traditionally made with

lamb or mutton. Americans typically make Shepherd's Pie with beef. The English (and Australians and New Zealanders) call the beef dish a Cottage Pie. No matter what you call it, Shepherd's Pie is essentially a baked casserole of cooked meat and vegetables



(Continued on page 2)

### Inside this issue:

<i>Disguising Leftovers</i>	1
<i>New MFP Publication: Contents Under Pressure</i>	2
<i>The Curious Canner</i>	3
<i>Fruit of the Month: Star Fruit</i>	4
<i>The Science Behind Salad Safety</i>	5
<i>Master Gardener Classes</i>	6
<i>MFP Winter Services</i>	6
<i>Holiday Closures for UCCE Offices</i>	6

### Got a Food Preservation Question?

**Phone:**  
530-621-5506

**Email:**  
[edmf@ucdavis.edu](mailto:edmf@ucdavis.edu)

**Website:**  
<http://ucanr.org/edmf>

El Dorado County Master  
Food Preservers  
311 Fair Lane  
Placerville, CA 95667

## Disguising Leftovers *(Continued from page 1)*

topped with mashed potatoes.

Turn cooked chicken, steak or pork (especially carnitas) into Mexican Fajitas—especially if the meat was cooked in a crock pot or pressure cooker! Or convert that meat into soup! Basically, any recipe that calls for you to cook or brown your meat ahead of time can be converted into a recipe using leftover meat.



Home-cooked meats such as tuna, salmon, chicken or pork can easily be used as the basis for any of these “makeover” recipes: tuna noodle casserole, salmon loaf, chicken pot pies or pork chow mein. Leftover seafood can easily become part of a fish soup or paella. The possibilities become endless with a little creativity and a good recipe book or search engine.

However, it is vitally important that you store those leftovers properly so they can be used safely! Remind everyone to wash his or her hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food. Transfer the food as soon as possible after the meal is over into airtight bags or shallow containers and then refrigerate. Try to keep the refrigerator door closed as much as possible to keep it safely at 40°F or below.

If you don't plan to use the food within one to four days, pop it into the freezer, making sure you label the container properly with the contents and three important dates:

1. Date cooked
2. Date stored
3. “Use before” date

Foods stored longer than 4 days in the refrigerator may become unsafe to eat and cause food-borne illness. Do not taste old leftovers that appear to be safe; bacteria that cause illness do not affect the taste, smell, or appearance of food. Cooking does not always kill all the bacteria that may be growing. The [USDA](#) recommends that you reheat foods and meats (especially poultry, like turkey) thoroughly to a temperature of 165°F or until hot and steaming.

The Partnership for Food Safety Education has many resources for learning about food safety. The Partnership has a variety of fact sheets, including Food Safety In All Seasons, on their website: <http://www.fightbac.org/>. Their campaign is called Fight BAC!™. Offerings change seasonally, and there are lots of fun activities for kids.



So, enjoy being creative in the kitchen and save money as well by disguising those leftovers as entirely new meals! Just remember to handle and store all foods safely.

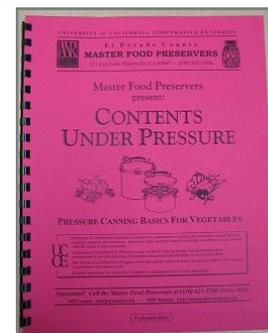
\*

## New MFP Publication: Contents Under Pressure

If you've been to one of the El Dorado County Master Food Preserver classes you've seen our wonderful assortment of publications on a wide variety of safe home food preservation topics. We are proud to announce our latest publication, *Contents Under Pressure*.

UCCE recommends that home canners use either a water bath or pressure canning method to safely process foods in glass jars for long term storage. Heating foods to a sufficient temperature and for a specific length of time kills any microorganisms that can cause food poisoning or food spoilage, and also creates a vacuum seal. The time and temperatures needed have been determined by extensive laboratory testing.

In addition to microorganisms, all foods contain enzymes which can cause undesirable changes



*(Continued on page 3)*

## Contents Under Pressure *(Continued from page 2)*

in color, flavor and texture and will eventually lead to spoilage. The heat processing of these foods stops enzymatic actions.

Heat processing is done in a boiling water canner for high acid foods or a pressure canner for low acid foods. High acid foods contain sufficient acid to prohibit or deter the growth of food poisoning bacteria. Low acid foods do not contain enough natural acid to prohibit or deter the growth of food poisoning bacteria; therefore, they must be processed at a very high heat. The only way to obtain this heat level is by using a pressure canner.

*Contents Under Pressure* is a 26 page booklet that describes the pressure canning process, safety reminders, and processing times for 23 vegetables. You can buy *Contents Under Pressure* for \$4 at the El Dorado County UCCE Office.

For \$30 you can purchase our entire set of 9 books: *All about Nuts*; *All Things Pickled*; *Condiments*; *Contents Under Pressure*; *Freezing & Dehydrating the Harvest*; *Fruit for All Seasons*; *Making Jams, Jellies & More*; *Sausage, Meat & Fish*; and *Tomato Basics*. If you don't live near our office, we can ship them to you.

Did you know the Master Food Preservers offer a free pressure canner testing service? Call the UCCE office at **530-621-5502** to arrange a time to bring in your pressure canner for it's annual checkup.



\*

## The Curious Canner

**Question:** I enjoy sprouts on a deli sandwich but I rarely see them offered anymore.

**Answer:** This is an excellent food safety question. Since 1995 raw sprouts have been a significant source of foodborne illness in the US. Alfalfa, clover and mung bean sprouts have been involved most frequently but all raw sprouts may pose a risk. These illnesses have involved the pathogen bacteria Salmonella and E. Coli O157:H7. The source of contamination appears to have been the seed, for most outbreaks. The best conditions for sprouting seeds are also ideal for multiplication of pathogen bacteria, if they happen to be present on the seeds. Because illnesses from these organisms can range from mild to extremely unpleasant and even to very severe in susceptible persons, the US Food and Drug Administration and the California Department of Health Services have issued warnings to consumers.



For additional information and warnings please refer to these websites:

- <http://www.fda.gov/food/resourcesforyou/consumers/ucm114299>
- <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/pdf/8151.pdf>

**Question:** I have several jars of canned products that have been in my pantry for some time now. How long may I store canned foods?

**Answer:** This is another excellent food safety question. First you want to check the lids on your jars to make sure they are still properly sealed and there has been no leakage from the jars. The storage time recommended for home-canned food is one year. However, a period of two to three years is considered a reasonable storage time. With longer storage, the eating quality and nutrient content of the food will drop. Always remember to label jars with the name of the product and the date they were canned. We also recommend that you state on the label what method of preservation was used, i.e. water bath canned or pressure canned. When you have the date the jars were canned and the name of the product inside, you'll have no doubt about how long they've been stored and what's in the jars. As far as labeling the jars with the method of preservation, you'll also have no question whether or not they were safely processed.



\*

## CDC's Fruit of the Month: Star Fruit

This month, the [CDC website](#) highlights the star fruit. Here is a copy of the information from the "Fruits and Veggies Matter" program:

The star fruit, or carambola, is a tropical fruit that is gaining popularity in the United States. This fruit acquired its name from the five pointed star shape you get when you cut across the middle of the fruit. It has a waxy, golden yellow to green color skin with a complicated flavor combination that includes plums, pineapples, and lemons.



Originally from Sri Lanka and the Moluccas, and cultivated in Southeast Asia and Malaysia for several hundred years, this fruit also goes by many other names including: bilimbi, belimbing, Chinese star fruit, five-angled fruit and the star apple. Today, star fruit flourishes in south Florida and Hawaii because the fruit thrives in a warm environment. Two types of star fruit are grown, tart and sweet. Tart varieties typically have narrowly spaced ribs, while sweet varieties tend to have thick, fleshy ribs. The tastes between the two are hardly distinguishable, as the tart variety still has some sweetness. This tropical fruit is readily available July through February.

Star fruits are an excellent source of vitamin C, are low fat, and naturally sodium and cholesterol free. A small whole star fruit will provide approximately 2/3 cup sliced.

### Selection



Select firm, shiny skinned, even colored fruit. Star fruits will ripen at room temperature and have lightly brown edges on the ribs when ripe. Avoid purchasing star fruit with brown, shriveled ribs. This delicious fruit is also available dried.



### Storage

Non-ripe star fruits should be turned often, until they are yellow in color and ripe with light brown ribs. Store ripe star fruits at room temperature for two to three days or unwashed, and refrigerated, in a plastic bag for up to one week.

### Preparation

Star fruits are great to eat out of hand as these tropical delights do not need to be peeled or seeded before eating. Simply wash the fruit, remove any blemished areas, cut crosswise to get the star shape, and eat!

### Star Fruit Salad

Makes 4 servings. Each serving equals 1 cup of fruit.

Source: Produce for Better Health

#### Ingredients

2 star fruit  
2 kiwis  
2 bananas  
1 cup mango fruit nectar  
1 cup low fat vanilla yogurt

Peel kiwi and banana, cut into medium size pieces. Slice star fruit into ¼-inch thickness. Combine all fruits in bowl. Add nectar over mixture. Refrigerate for 3 hours. Top with vanilla yogurt. Variations: Add or substitute your favorite fruits!



Nutritional analysis per serving: Calories 201, Protein 5g, Fat 2g, Calories From Fat 7%, Cholesterol 3mg, Carbohydrates 46g, Fiber 6g, Sodium 46mg.

## The Science Behind Salad Safety

Jeanette E. Warnert, UCCE Public Information Representative

The following food blog excerpt, from the University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources division, clears up some questions about the reason for concern when consuming fresh greens.

"Nutritionists recommend eating a cup of leafy green vegetables every day, but some reports about the safety of fresh greens may have some wondering whether it could do more harm than good. Consumers Union, the publishers of Consumer Reports magazine, analyzed store-bought prewashed and packaged leafy greens and published the results..."

"Currently, the FDA has no set guidelines for the presence of bacteria in leafy greens. Consumers Report said several industry consultants suggest that an unacceptable level would be 10,000 or more colony forming units per gram. The Consumers Report study found that 39 percent of their 208 samples ... exceeded this level for total coliform, and 23 percent for *Enterococcus*."

"Although these 'indicator' bacteria generally do not make healthy people sick, the tests show not enough is being done to assure the safety or cleanliness of leafy greens," said Dr. Michael Hansen, senior scientist at Consumers Union, the nonprofit publisher of *Consumer Reports*.

UC Davis Cooperative Extension specialist Trevor Suslow wrote a lengthy and detailed reaction to the study for Farm Safety News. He said it is unfair to consumers to raise a specter of fear well beyond what is supported by available science and our everyday shared experiences.



"What I rely on for my personal confidence in regularly consuming lettuces, spring mix, and spinach salads is that there are billions and billions of servings of these items consumed every year in the U.S. alone and the predominant experience we have is of safe consumption," Suslow wrote.

Suslow offered these common sense guidelines for purchasing and eating leafy greens:

- Check the display temperature by hand to confirm the display is cool and the bags are very cool to the touch.
- Look at and heed the "Best if Consumed By" date.
- Take notice of the display case arrangement. Bags should be vertical in a row, not laid one on top of one another in stacks. Clamshell containers can be displayed in various stacking or slanted row patterns that allow generous space for airflow.
- Prewashed greens do not need to be rewashed at home. In fact, studies have found that home washing doesn't provide any benefit and could make the vegetables susceptible to cross-contamination in the kitchen.

Food blog: <http://ucanr.org/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=2317>

\*

*Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you what you are.*

*~Anthelme Brillat-Savarin*

## Master Gardener Classes: February and March

Join our fellow educators at a free Master Gardener class. Unless otherwise noted, all El Dorado classes are at the Veterans Memorial Building in Placerville and all Amador classes are at the GS Building in Jackson. For full class descriptions and directions, visit [http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master\\_Gardeners](http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master_Gardeners).



### El Dorado County

#### February

- 4: Citrus in the Foothills
- 11: Weather and Climate  
*Location: Bethell-Delfino Ag Building*
- 25: Spring and Summer Vegetables

#### March

- 3: Propagation I- Start from Seed
- 10: Organic Gardening I
- 17: Organic Gardening II
- 24: Backyard Chickens
- 31: Soils and Fertilizers

### Amador County

#### February

- 11: Fruit Tree Grafting Clinic  
*Bring scions to share and trade*

- 25: Beekeeping

#### March

- 24: Soils & Not Your Ordinary Vegetables  
*Two classes!*

\*

### Master Food Preserver Winter Services:

During the winter, Master Food Preservers provide the following services for our community:

- Food preservation hotline
- Free pressure canner testing
- Speakers for custom training for your organization
- Weekly articles in the Mt. Democrat newspaper

To get information throughout the year, visit our website at: [http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master\\_Food\\_Preservers/](http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master_Food_Preservers/).

Preserving Times is published by the El Dorado County Master Food Preservers.

Editor: Ora Emmerich, [edmpf@ucdavis.edu](mailto:edmpf@ucdavis.edu)

*Know someone who would like to receive our newsletters and notifications on classes and events?*

Sign up at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews>.

### Holiday Closures for UCCE Offices

The UCCE offices will be closed the following days during February and March.

**Monday, February 20**  
Presidents Day

**Friday, March 30**  
Cesar Chavez Day



\*



The University of California Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR) prohibits discrimination against or harassment of any person participating in any of ANR's programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy (which includes pregnancy, childbirth, and medical conditions related to pregnancy or childbirth), physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), genetic information (including family medical history), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (as defined by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994: *service in the uniformed services* includes membership, application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation for service in the uniformed services) or any person in any of its programs or activities. University policy also prohibits retaliation against any employee or person participating in any of ANR's programs or activities for bringing a complaint of discrimination or harassment pursuant to this policy. This policy is intended to be consistent with the provisions of applicable State and Federal laws. Inquiries regarding the University's equal employment opportunity policies may be directed to Linda Marie Manton, Affirmative Action Contact, University of California, Davis, Agriculture and Natural Resources, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616, (530) 752-0495.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES DEPT OF AGRICULTURE  
AND CENTRAL SIERRA COUNTIES COOPERATING