

More than Jack-O-Lanterns

Summer Brasuel, El Dorado County Master Food Preserver

October is the month for Jack-O-Lanterns and Halloween. But there's far more to do with pumpkins in the kitchen than carving them up.

Pressure Canning Pumpkin Chunks

The only process recommended for home canning pumpkin is to pressure can pumpkin chunks. Canning pureed pumpkin or other winter squash has not been recommended since 1994. Winter squashes are a low acid food and have much less moisture than other vegetables. When pureed, the product can be too thick to safely process at home. For more information from the National Center for Home Food Preservation about why it does not recommend canning pureed pumpkin, to go http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/uga/pumpkin_butter.html.



Pressure canning your pumpkin in chunks or cubes allows you to store your pumpkin to use later in a variety of recipes throughout the year. You can mash or puree your processed pumpkin cubes for soups, pie filling, pumpkin bread, cheese cakes, etc. This is true for other types of winter squash, too. For more information from the National Center for Home Food Preservation on the recommended process for pressure canning pumpkins in cubes go to: http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_04/pumpkin_winter_squash.html.

Freezing Pureed Pumpkin

Freezing is the only safe method for preserving pumpkin purees, butters and preserves.

- Select full-colored mature pumpkins with fine texture.
- Wash, cut into cooking-size sections, and remove seeds.
- Cook pumpkin until soft in boiling water, in steam, in a pressure cooker, or in an oven.
- When soft, remove pulp from rind and mash.
- To cool, place pan containing pumpkin in cold water and stir occasionally. Pack into rigid containers leaving ½-inch headspace, and freeze.



Freeze these items for up to one year. Frozen pumpkin or squash is great to use in pies, desserts and as a vegetable. Thaw pumpkin and squash in the refrigerator - not on the counter - before using.

Puree that is in contact with the air may turn dark. This does not affect the quality or flavor of the puree. Mixing lemon juice in with the puree may control its tendency to darken. Once your puree is in the freezer container you can cover it with plastic wrap, pressing the plastic wrap down such that it is in contact with the puree and air is not in contact with the puree.

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

Preserving Pumpkins	1
Curious Canner	2
Myth vs. Fact	2
Veggie of the Month	3
Homemade Gifts?	4
Inversion Method	4
HACCP Class	5
Storing Herbs in Oil	5
Pumpkin Recipes	6
Zucchini Pineapple	7
Oct MFP Classes	7
Become a MFP?	7
MFP Facebook	8
MG & MFP Info	8

Got a Food Preservation Question?

Amador/Calaveras County
209-223-6857
acmfp@ucdavis.edu

El Dorado County
530-621-5506
edmfp@ucdavis.edu

Sacramento County
916-875-6913

UCCE Central Sierra MFP
Webste:
<http://ucanr.org/mfpcs>

More than Jack-O-Lanterns *(Continued from page 1)*

Dehydrating Pumpkin

If you enjoy dehydrating foods, here is a method for dehydrating pumpkin and other winter squashes:

- Wash, peel, and remove fibers and seeds from pumpkin or squash flesh.
- Cut into small, thin strips, no more than 1 inch wide by 1/8-inch thick.
- Blanch strips over steam for 3 minutes. Drain and pat dry.
- Dry the strips in a dehydrator until brittle.
- To reconstitute, use one cup of dried food to two cups of water. Pre-soak for one hour and then boil until tender.

One cup of dried pumpkin or squash is enough for one pie. Pumpkin recipes are on [page 7](#).



The Curious Canner

Question: I like to make my own baby food for my daughter and want to know if it's ok to puree vegetables before canning them.

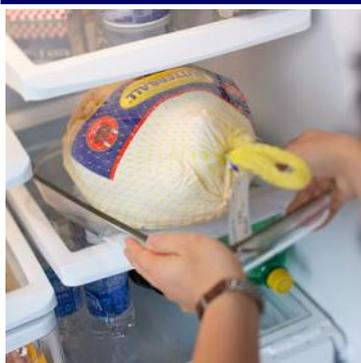
Answer: No, do not attempt to can pureed vegetables, red meats or poultry meats, because proper processing times for pureed foods have not been determined for home canning. The heat penetration of pureed or strained products is poor. Instead, can and store these foods using the standard processing procedures and then puree or blend them at serving time. Heat the blended foods to boiling, simmer for 10 minutes, cool, and serve. Store unused portions in the refrigerator and use within 2 days for best quality.



Question: Why do I get crystals in my grape jelly?

Answer: The crystals are formed from the tartaric acid naturally occurring in grapes. To minimize crystal formation, let the freshly extracted grape juice stand in the refrigerator overnight. Then strain the juice again through a jelly bag, two thicknesses of damp cheesecloth or a coffee filter before making your jelly.

Myth vs Fact



Myth: I can't re-freeze foods after I have thawed them; I have to cook them or throw them away.

Fact: If raw foods such as meat, poultry, egg products and seafood have been properly thawed in the refrigerator, then they may be safely re-frozen without cooking for later use. Never thaw raw foods by letting them sit on the kitchen counter. If raw foods are thawed outside of the refrigerator, for example in the microwave or in cool water, they should be cooked immediately. Never re-freeze raw or not fully cooked foods that have been thawed outside of the refrigerator.

Vegetable of the Month from the CDC

This month the "Fruit and Veggies: More Matters" program from the CDC gives us great info on the Delicata Squash. Read on for interesting facts and a fun recipe.

Delicata squash is a winter squash also referred to as the peanut squash and Bohemian squash. Delicata squash hold their shape well when cooked, making them a good choice for stuffing with whole grains, lean meats or cheeses, fruits and vegetables or baking with your favorite seasonings.

How to Select Delicata Squash

Select a squash that is firm, heavy for its size and has an even cream color. A ripe delicata squash will be yellow with green striations on its rind. Unripe delicata squashes are light green. Avoid squashes that have soft spots, dull and wrinkled skin or that are extremely light for their size.

How to Store Delicata Squash

Store squashes in a cool dry place for up to 3 months.

Nutrition Benefits of Delicata Squash

Fat free, saturated fat free, cholesterol free, sodium free, an excellent source of vitamin A and a good source of vitamin C.



Recipe: Spicy Carrots and Squash

- 2 cups carrots, cut into 2-inch sticks
- 2 cups Delicata squash, cut into 2-inch sticks
- 1 tsp vinegar
- 2 Tbsp vegetable broth, low-sodium
- 1 tsp brown sugar
- 1 ½ tsp Dijon or spicy mustard

Wash, peel and cut carrots. Wash and cut squash. Combine carrots and broth in saucepan. [Adding pumpkin seeds is optional.] Cover and cook over medium heat about 5 minutes. Add squash and cook 5 more minutes or until vegetables are just tender. Add more broth if necessary to keep from burning. Stir vinegar, brown sugar and mustard into vegetables. Cook for a few minutes over medium heat until most of the liquid cooks off. Serve.

Prepare Safe Homemade Gifts

Pauline Arndt, Sacramento County Master Food Preserver

When preparing homemade products for gifting, we want to be sure the food we give is safe to eat. While it is not possible to guarantee safety with anyone's homemade gift, by following the steps below you can be assured you have followed the proper procedures to make a safe product.

Use recipes – and procedures – from sources that can be trusted to know the science behind canning. These are sources that also know what kind of testing should have taken place to develop a canning recommendation in the case of some recipes. Tested or scientifically evaluated processes can be found in the USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning (2009 is the latest version), the University of Georgia's So Easy to Preserve book (the current version is the 5th edition), the National Center for Home Food Preservation web site, or books from major equipment and ingredient manufacturers, among others.

Because of their higher acidity, lower-risk foods include fruit jams, jellies and preserves, and whole fruits like peaches, cherries, plums, or cranberries. The high sugar content of fruit jams, jellies and preserves adds an extra measure of safety, by lowering the risk of spoilage.



Low-acid vegetables and vegetable mixes are higher risk foods because if improperly processed, these could cause botulism. Botulism is a potentially deadly food poisoning. Improperly canned vegetables have caused botulism in just the past few years, as well as historically. Therefore, it is extremely important to follow properly tested canning processes and procedures for preparing canned vegetables or soup mixes, as well as for operating the pressure canner.

There are no properly tested home canning processes to recommend for canning pestos, **thickened** stews or soups, creamed soups, and pumpkin or other vegetable butters.

Mixtures of acid and low-acid ingredients, such as tomato-vegetable salsas, other vegetable salsas, and some pickled foods, are a potential risk for botulism as well. If processed in boiling water, then the ratio or proportion of acid to low-acid ingredients is very important. In addition, the proportion of mixture, size of food pieces, and preparation steps can influence what the process time should be. It is best to use properly tested recipes and to not try to make up a canning process for your own recipe, or to trust recipes posted by individuals on the internet.

Be sure you store your product in a cool, dark, dry place. If the product you are giving needs refrigeration be sure the recipient is made aware of this. Also, be sure to include storage instructions with any homemade food item you give.

Inversion Method not Recommended by UCCE or USDA

Kathy Pearson, El Dorado County Master Food Preserver

A question came up recently about the Inversion Method of canning, in which hot foods are ladled into jars, sealed and then turned upside down. Since there is no processing time involved, this method of canning is considered unsafe by the USDA and UCCE.



Individual variations in practicing this method or unexpected interruptions can result in delays between filling jars, getting lids screwed on, and inverting jars. If by chance the product cools down too much, the temperature of the product can become too low to be effective in sealing jars or preventing spoilage. Leakage of the hot product from the jar when it is turned over can occur if the lid wasn't put on just right. If hot enough, a burn could result. Even if a burn doesn't occur, leakage means the product is lost. The cost of ingredients is enough of an expense to make any preventable loss unacceptable. And most importantly, this method does not prevent all risk of spoilage. Only water bath and pressure canning are the UCCE and USDA recommended canning methods.

HACCP Class Offered by UC Davis Extension

So, you want to start selling your world-famous (all right, neighborhood-famous) canned goods at the local farmers market next summer. Just grab a few jars and the old card table and get a spot, right? Well, not exactly. Just as food retailers in grocery stores have to adhere to rules and regulations, so do those who sell at farmers markets.

To get started, learn about safe food handling practices and the rules and regulations that pertain to your area. A great beginning would be to take a class about HACCP (Hard Analysis and Critical Control Points) such as the one offered by UC Davis Extension which runs **October 22-24**. This class will help you “Gain an in-depth understanding of the components of a food safety system including prerequisite programs, the five preliminary steps, the seven principles of HACCP and how to develop and maintain a HACCP plan.” (UCDE)



Find registration information at http://ucfoodsafety.ucdavis.edu/Food_Processing/HACCP_Information/.

Storing Herbs and Vegetables In Oil

Christmas is just around the corner, and many folks are beginning to think about making home-preserved products for holiday gifts. Are there any safe methods for preparation, processing, and storage of vegetables and herbs in oil?

According to the National Center for Home Food Preservation, herbs and oils are both low-acid and together could support the growth of the disease-causing *Clostridium botulinum* bacteria. Oils may be flavored with herbs if they are made up for **fresh use, stored in the refrigerator and used within 2 to 3 days**. Fresh herbs must be washed well and dried completely before storing in the oil. The very best sanitation and personal hygiene practices must be used.

Note that pesto is an uncooked seasoning mixture of herbs, usually including fresh basil, and some oil. It may be frozen for long term storage; there are no home canning recommendations.

The Penn State Extension issued the following recommendations based on the risk *Clostridium botulinum* growth and formation of deadly botulism toxin:

For canning vegetables marinated in oil, use only the three recipes in [Section 6 of the USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning](#).

- 1) marinated whole mushrooms (page 6-18)
- 2) marinated peppers (page 6-20)
- 3) pickled three-bean salad (page 6-14)

There are recipes for canned garlic, tomatoes, or other vegetables or herbs that have been tested for safety.

Un-processed vegetables and herbs stored in oil should be stored in the refrigerator for no more than 4 days.

Freezing is a better option since microbial growth cannot occur and the product can be stored indefinitely.



Pumpkin Recipes

Freezer Pumpkin Butter

Ingredients

- 2 pints pumpkin puree
- ¾ cup apple juice
- 2 tsp ground ginger
- ½ tsp ground cloves
- 1 ½ cups white sugar
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground nutmeg

Note: you can play with the spices to suit your own taste.

Directions

Combine pumpkin, apple juice, spices, and sugar in a large saucepan; stir well. Bring mixture to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer for 30 minutes or to desired thickness. Stir frequently.

Transfer to sterile ½ pint freezer containers. Leave ½ inch headspace and store in the freezer up to 1 year. Yield: about 5 half-pint freezer containers.

There are many ways to use your pumpkin butter: on toast or muffins, in a cheesecake, cookies, pancakes, and ... bread pudding.



Pumpkin Butter Bread Pudding

Ingredients

- 10 slices bread, stale and torn into pieces
- 4 large eggs
- 2 cups milk (whole or low fat)
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ⅓ cup pumpkin butter
- ½ cup sugar (white or brown)

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F. Place bread pieces into an 8x8 greased pan (preferably glass). Mix together remaining ingredients. Pour over bread. Allow mixture to be absorbed by the bread pieces for 10 minutes. Bake for 30 minutes or until golden and set. Serve with vanilla ice cream and another dollop of homemade pumpkin butter, of course!



Zucchini, Zucchini, and Even More Zucchini!

If you have planted any zucchini this year, you probably have more than enough! Try this interesting recipe for an unusual combination treat from the USDA [Complete Guide to Home Canning](#).

Zucchini-Pineapple

- 4 qts cubed or shredded zucchini
- 46 oz canned unsweetened pineapple juice
- 1½ cups bottled lemon juice
- 3 cups sugar

Peel zucchini and either cut into ½-inch cubes or shred. Mix zucchini with other ingredients in a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Simmer 20 minutes. Fill jars with hot mixture and cooking liquid, leaving ½-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process in a boiling water bath canner according to table below. Yield: About 8 to 9 pints



Style of Packing	Size of Jars	Processing Times at Altitudes of ...		
		0-1,000 ft	1,001-6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Half-pints or pints	15 minutes	20 minutes	25 minutes



October Master Food Preserver Classes

In the Central Sierra and Sacramento Counties



El Dorado County

The El Dorado County Master Food Preservers lead their final classes for the 2012 during October. All classes in during October are taught at the Marshall Grange in Garden Valley.

[Click here to download the full class schedule.](#) No rsvp needed.

October

Tuesdays, 10-Noon, Marshall Grange, Garden Valley



2: Apples, Pears & More

9: Cranberries, Winter Squash & Turkey

16: [Olives](#)

23: [Persimmons, Kiwi & Nuts](#)

Amador/Calaveras County

No reservations required.

October 20, 10-Noon

GSA Building, 12200-B Airport Rd, Jackson
[Condiments, Vinegars & Pickled Peppers](#)

The holidays are on our doorstep and vinegars, condiments and pickled foods are wonderful on our holiday tables. They also make great gifts! Learn to make flavored vinegars, mustards and pickled peppers as well as many other fun recipes.



Sacramento County

Saturday, October 13, 10-Noon, Free

[The Pressure's On - Master Food Preserver Demonstration](#)

Wednesday, October 17, 6:30- 8:30pm, \$3.00

[A is for Apple, O is for Olive](#)

All Sacramento MFP classes are taught at the Sacramento County UCCE Office at 4145 Branch Center Road, Sacramento. Reservations are not necessary. [Download the 2012 class schedule.](#)



Interested in Becoming a Master Food Preserver?

You may have seen them at the County Fair or attended one of their classes. Master Food Preservers are agents of the University of California and work through the UC Cooperative Extension to educate their community on the safe practices of food preservation, including pickling, making cheeses, sausages, preserves, dried foods and much more. Our volunteers donate their community service hours in their program's home county of Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, or Sacramento.

Interested in learning more about joining this volunteer organization and being notified about the next training class?

If you live in Amador, Calaveras, or El Dorado county, visit our [Becoming a MFP](#) website to fill out the interest survey. If you live in Sacramento County, call 916-875-6913 to speak with Joan.

Do you live outside of Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, or Sacramento County?

You can still contact one of the counties nearest to you, but first priority for accepting trainees is for local residents. Our volunteer hours are primarily completed in our home county.

But all is not lost! The National Center for Home Food Preservation has a free, self-paced, online home canning and preservation course for those who do not live near a county offering the UCCE Master Food Preserver program. To sign up for this online class, go to <http://nchfp.uga.edu>.

Master Food Preservers are on Facebook!

Check out the [El Dorado County Master Food Preservers Facebook](#) page! Just search for "El Dorado County Master Food Preservers facebook" to find our site. Be sure to "Like" it so you can see our posts on a regular basis. Please share the page with your friends even if they don't live in our community. Food preserving information has no geographical boundaries. Enjoy!



Free Pressure Canner Testing

With all the vegetables ripening, the pressure canner is sure to be needed soon.

Pressure canners should be tested for accuracy once a year, so call the UCCE Office at (530) 621-5506 to schedule a time to bring in your pressure canner for a FREE test!



Master Food Preserver Services

- Free public classes
- Food preservation hotline
- Free pressure canner testing
- Speakers for custom training for your organization
- Regular articles in local newspapers

To get information about our program, visit our website at http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master_Food_Preservers/.

Preserving Times is published by the Central Sierra Master Food Preservers.

Editor: Ora Emmerich, edmfpm@ucdavis.edu

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

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

October MG Classes/Events

Join our fellow educators at Master Gardener classes and events. [Click here](#) for full class descriptions and directions.

Amador County

13: [Fall in the Garden](#)



Sacramento County

13: [Composting Workshop & Worm Composting](#)

El Dorado County

6: Succulents

13: [Propagation II](#)

20: [Composting](#)

27: [African Violets](#)



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.



Should you need assistance or require special accommodations for any of our educational programs, please contact us at 530-621-5502.

The University of California, working in cooperation with County Government and the United States Department of Agriculture.