

Spring Has Sprung

By Joyce Moser, UCCE Master Food Preserver

In Northern California we know Spring has arrived when the local strawberry stands open. With annual rainfall currently ranking in the Top 10 in recorded history for parts of our state, strawberries have been slow to come this year. But, these juicy, heart-shaped delights have finally arrived marking the change of seasons. Although strawberries are grown in every state in the U.S., California produces 80% of the nation's strawberries, almost a year-round supply beginning in January in Southern California and moving North with the warming springtime temperatures. Volumes normally peak in April and May when the state's production overlaps. At this time, weekly volume is just over 9 million pounds a day.

High in fiber and low in calories, one cup of strawberries is only 54 calories. They are considered one of the healthiest fruits, packed with antioxidants, essential vitamins and minerals. There are over 600 varieties of strawberries that differ in flavor, size and texture. Interestingly, strawberries are the only fruit with seeds on the outside rather than the inside. Botanically speaking, they are not classified as a berry, defined as "a fleshy fruit produced from a single ovary." Strawberries, as well as blackberries and raspberries, are kinds of aggregate fruit that contain seeds from different ovaries of a single flower.

According to the USDA, strawberry jam is ranked only second in popularity to grape jelly. However, as a UCCE Master Food Preserver educated on the nuances of soft spreads, I know there is a big difference between a jam and a jelly and rarely are they considered the same thing. Just to be clear, a jam is made using crushed or chopped fruit(s), while a jelly is made from strained fruit juice. Both delicious, but a big difference in texture. Back to ranking the #1 most popular *jam* of all times – hands down, it's strawberry! Get started making jam this Spring with a simple recipe that offers complex flavors, [Strawberry Kiwi Freezer Jam](#) or variations with ginger, lime zest and tequila, or bananas.

For the strawberries that make it from the garden or roadside stand to your kitchen, eat or preserve them as soon as possible. Once picked, they do not ripen further and keeping them in the refrigerator a few days will not improve their quality. Only wash strawberries when ready to consume. To wash, place them in a colander and gently rinse under running cold water (do not soak them). Do not remove their caps until after you've washed the berries.



For longer term storage, the easiest option is to freeze the strawberries using one of four methods: dry pack, sugar pack, syrup pack, or puree,

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

FEATURED ARTICLES:

- ⇒ [Spring Has Sprung](#)
- ⇒ [Baking in Canning Jars](#)
- ⇒ [Homemade Yogurt](#)
- ⇒ [Mirro Pressure Canner](#)

SUPPORTING ARTICLES:

- ⇒ [Use of Thickeners in Home Canning](#)
- ⇒ [Keep It Safe: Proper Food Storage \(Refrigerator/Freezer\)](#)

RECIPES:

- ⇒ [Strawberry-Kiwi Freezer Jam](#)
- ⇒ [Rhubarb Strawberry Pie Filling](#)
- ⇒ [Blueberry Pie Filling with ClearJel®](#)
- ⇒ [Asparagus Risotto](#)
- ⇒ [Pickled Asparagus](#)
- ⇒ [Berry Overnight Oats with Yogurt](#)
- ⇒ [Upcoming Classes & Events](#)

Got a Food Preservation Question?

Amador and Calaveras Counties

209-223-6857
acmfp@ucdavis.edu

El Dorado County

530-621-5506
edmfp@ucdavis.edu

UCCE Central Sierra Website:

<http://ucanr.edu/mfpcs>

discussed further in **Freezing Strawberries**, below. Use the frozen berries in cooking or to make soft spreads (preserves) with consideration given to any sugar that has been added to the fruit. Some home canners prefer using berries that have been frozen and then thawed for jelly because the process causes juices and the natural fruit color to be released from the cells. My personal experience using frozen/thawed strawberries for jam has been favorable as the collapsed fruit cells are less buoyant than the cells in fresh fruit and less apt to rise to the surface as the jam sets, a canning problem commonly referred to as fruit float.

Freezing Strawberries (Source: *Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving*, 2013)

Select fully-ripe strawberries with a deep-red color. Discard immature and defective fruit. Wash strawberries, drain. Remove caps. Prepare using one of the following methods:

- **Dry Pack:** Pack berries into plastic freezer bags, plastic freezer jars or plastic freezer containers. Seal, label and freeze.
- **Sugar Pack:** Slice berries lengthwise in halves or thirds. Mix 1 part sugar to 6 parts strawberries. Allow to stand until sugar is dissolved, about 10 minutes. Gently stir. Pack strawberries and syrup into plastic freezer jars or plastic freezer containers, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.
- **Syrup pack:** Prepare a heavy syrup (50% sugar to water). Leave strawberries whole or slice. Pack strawberries into plastic freezer jars or plastic freezer containers. Ladle syrup over berries, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.
- **Puree:** combine 1 pint strawberries, 4 tablespoons sugar and 1 teaspoon lemon juice in food processor and puree. Pack puree into plastic freezer jars or plastic freezer containers, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

For those of you who enjoy pie, consider getting a jump on the effort by canning your pie filling. Having an assortment of canned pie fillings available in your pantry takes much of the work out of making pies. If an 8 – or 9-inch pie is too much pie for you and your family (Is that really possible?), consider making galettes (rustic or free-formed pies) that are half the size of a traditional pie or, smaller yet, hand pies. Start with our recipes for [Rhubarb-Strawberry Pie Filling](#) or [Blueberry Pie Filling with ClearJel®](#).

Another sign that spring has arrived is the availability of fresh asparagus. Unlike strawberries, consider yourself lucky if you find it at a roadside stand, farmers market, or from your CSA (community support agriculture) as California -grown asparagus is getting more difficult to find as cheaper asparagus from Mexico and Central America have flooded the market, making it difficult for local farmers to compete. Wherever those stalky vegetables originated be sure to check for freshness. The asparagus spears should be straight and firm to the touch, not bendable. The tips should be closed tightly and the ends should be moist and plump, not dry, cracked or woody. The size of the spears does not affect the tenderness.



To freeze asparagus, wash thoroughly and trim the stalks by removing scales with a sharp knife. Cut into even lengths to fit containers. Water blanch small spears 2 minutes, medium spears 3 minutes and large spears 4 minutes. Cool promptly, drain and package, leaving no headspace. Seal and freeze. My favorite way to preserve and use asparagus is to freeze in 1-inch pieces, ready to add to risotto along with fresh peas, fava beans, or other spring veggies. If you haven't made risotto, set aside your fears – it's easy. Use your fresh or (thawed) frozen asparagus to make [Asparagus Risotto](#). Any leftover risotto can be used to make risotto cakes (patties) and reheated in the oven or in a little olive oil on the stove top.

Pickling is another popular way to preserve asparagus. Ball's tall slender 12- and 24-ounce jars are particularly well-suited for the spears, but word has it the 24-ounce jars may soon be discontinued. If you are unable to find them, wide-mouth pint jars can also be used for our [Pickled Asparagus](#) recipe. Just be sure to shorten the stalks so that the tips are completely submerged in brine. Don't discard the asparagus scraps, just freeze and use them to make a stock for cream of asparagus soup.

Strawberry-Kiwi Freezer Jam

Making freezer jam is extremely easy. You just chop or crush the fruit and stir in sugar and freezer jam pectin. You can serve the delicious result immediately or freeze it for future use. Better yet, since most freezer jams require no cooking, they retain the beautiful color and flavor of just-picked fruit. There's only one risk — you may get addicted!

Most powdered and liquid pectin products include recipes for single-fruit, no-cook freezer spreads. Unfortunately, many of those recipes require relatively high proportions of sugar to fruit. The following recipe uses special powdered freezer jam pectin (made by Ball), sold in pouches where food and home canning supplies are stocked, that requires a limited amount of added sweetener — just enough to enhance the fruit's natural sweet flavor without overpowering it.

If you prefer, an equal amount of Splenda No Calorie Sweetener® may be substituted for the granulated sugar. Other artificial sweeteners are not suitable substitutes.

Ingredients:

1-1/2 cups granulated sugar
1 pouch freezer jam pectin
2 cups crushed hulled strawberries
2 cups diced peeled kiwifruit



Variations:

Gingered Strawberry Kiwi Freezer Jam: Add 3/4 teaspoon minced crystallized ginger to fruit mixture before stirring.

Margarita-Style Strawberry Kiwi Freezer Jam: Increase strawberries to 3 cups and decrease kiwifruit to 1 cup. Add the grated zest of 1 small lime and 2 tablespoons tequila with the fruit mixture before stirring.

Strawberry Banana Freezer Jam: Substitute 2 cups mashed bananas for the kiwifruit. Makes about five 8-ounce jars.

Rhubarb Strawberry Pie Filling

Ingredients:

3 large apples, peeled and finely chopped
1 tablespoon grated orange zest
1/4 cup freshly squeezed orange juice
7 cups sliced rhubarb (1-inch slices)
2 cups granulated sugar
4 cups halved hulled strawberries

Directions:

1. Prepare canner, jars and lids.
2. In a large stainless steel saucepan, combine apples and orange zest and juice. Stir to coat apples thoroughly. Stir in rhubarb and sugar. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and boil gently, stirring frequently, until rhubarb is tender, about 12 minutes. Add strawberries and return to a boil. Remove from heat.
3. Ladle hot pie filling into hot jars, leaving 1 inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace, if necessary, by adding hot filling. Wipe rim. Center lid on jar. Screw band down until resistance is met, then increase to fingertip-tight.
4. Process 15 minutes in a boiling water canner or atmospheric steam canner for altitudes under 1,000 feet, 20 minutes for 1,000-3,000 feet, 25 minutes for 3,001-6,000 feet, and 30 minutes above 6000 feet.



TIPS: to ensure they maintain their shape and texture, select a variety of apples suitable for cooking, such as Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Jonagold, Lady or Rome Beauty. If using fresh strawberries, wash and drain thoroughly. If using frozen strawberries, measure whole berries, thaw, drain and reserve liquid. Measure liquid and substitute for an equal quantity of the liquid called for in the recipe.

Source: Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving, 2012



Keep It Safe: Use of Thickeners in Home Canning

As a general rule, using flour, corn starch, or other thickeners in home canning is not recommended as these thickeners “prevent the heat from penetrating to the center of the jar, interfering with safe processing to destroy the bacterial spores that cause botulism.” In recent years, Penn State Extension has gone on to say, “The only exception to this rule is when a scientifically research tested recipe calls for ClearJel® as in pie fillings or small amounts of thickener in a few relish recipes. It is not safe to just add starch to any recipe or to create your own recipe.”

ClearJel® (regular cook-type, not instant) is a modified cornstarch derivative tested and approved by the USDA and the National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP) for use in thickening certain canned pie fillings (apple, blueberry, blackberry, cherry, and peach) and a few relish recipes. It has not been approved by the USDA or NCHFP for any other canning applications. Regular cornstarch breaks down when re-heated, and may cause the product to be runny. Clear-Jel causes a product to remain thick after being re-heated. ClearJel® is not readily available in local grocery stores, but can be found on the Internet for prices ranging from \$4 to \$8 per pound.

Blueberry Pie Filling with ClearJel®

Ingredients:

- 7 cups blueberries
- 1-2/3 cups granulated sugar
- 2/3 cups ClearJel®
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest (optional)
- 12 drops blue food coloring (optional)
- 4 drops red food coloring (optional)

Procedure:

1. Prepare canner, jars and lids.
2. Fill a large stainless steel saucepan halfway with water and bring to a full rolling boil over high heat. Add blueberries and blanch for 1 minute. Drain well and return to pot. Cover and keep warm.
3. In a large stainless steel saucepan, combine sugar and ClearJel®. Whisk in 2 cups water. Add blue and red food coloring, if using. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat and boil gently, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Stir in lemon juice and lemon zest, if using, and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Fold in heated blueberries.
4. Ladle hot pie filling into hot jars, leaving slightly more than 1-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace, if necessary, by adding hot filling. Wipe rim. Center lid on jar. Screw band down until resistance is met, then increase to fingertip-tight.
5. Process 30 minutes in a boiling water canner or atmospheric steam canner for altitudes under 1,000 feet, 35 minutes for 1,000-3,000 feet, 40 minutes for 3,001-6,000 feet and 45 minutes above 6000 feet. Makes about four pint jars.



TIP: The food coloring enhances the color of this filling because blueberries tend to have a dull blue color that does not color the gel as well. The addition of food coloring enlivens the overall color of the pie filling, making it more appetizing.

Source: *Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving*, 2012

FUN FACT

Blueberries are one of the few fruits native to North America. In the U.S., they rank second to strawberries in popularity of berries. In the U.S. diet, they have one of the highest antioxidant capacities among all fruits, vegetables, spices and seasonings.

Asparagus Risotto

Ingredients:

1 pound asparagus, trimmed, cut into 1-inch lengths
5 cups canned low-salt chicken broth
2 tablespoons olive oil
1/2 cup chopped onion
1-1/2 cups Arborio rice or medium-grain white rice
1/2 cup dry white wine
6 tablespoons (3/4 stick) butter
3/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese (about 3 ounces)



Directions:

Blanch fresh asparagus pieces in a large pot of boiling, salted water 2 minutes. Drain. Rinse asparagus under cold water. Drain asparagus well. Thawed (frozen) asparagus pieces may be substituted for fresh. Bring chicken broth to simmer in small saucepan. Reduce heat to low and keep broth warm.

Heat olive oil in heavy large saucepan over medium heat. Add chopped onion and sauté until translucent, about 4 minutes. Add rice and stir 3 minutes. Add dry white wine and cook until liquid evaporates. Continue cooking until rice is tender but still slightly firm in center and mixture is creamy, adding chicken broth 1 cup at a time and stirring almost constantly, about 20 minutes. Add blanched asparagus pieces and stir until heated through, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Add 6 tablespoons butter and stir until incorporated. Stir in grated parmesan cheese. Season risotto to taste with salt and pepper.

Source: *Epicurious.com*

Pickled Asparagus

Ingredients:

For 6 wide-mouth pint jars

10 pounds asparagus
6 large garlic cloves
4-1/2 cups water
4-1/2 cups white distilled vinegar (5%)
6 small hot peppers (optional)
1/2 cup canning salt
3 teaspoons dill seed

For 7 12-ounce jars

7 pounds asparagus
7 large garlic cloves
3 cups water
3 cups white distilled vinegar (5%)
7 small hot peppers (optional)
1/3 cup canning salt
2 teaspoons dill seed

Directions:

Wash asparagus well, but gently, under running water. Cut stems from the bottom to leave spears with tips that fit into the canning jar, leaving a little more than 1/2-inch headspace. Peel and wash garlic cloves. Place a garlic clove at the bottom of each jar, and tightly pack asparagus into hot jars with the blunt ends down.

In an 8-quart saucepot, combine water, vinegar, hot peppers (optional), salt and dill seed. Bring to a boil. Place one hot pepper (if used) in each jar over asparagus spears. Pour boiling hot pickling brine over spears, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel. Adjust lids. Process 10 minutes in a boiling water canner or atmospheric steam canner for altitudes under 1,000 feet, 15 minutes for 1,000-6,000 feet, and 20 minutes above 6,000 feet.

Source: *So Easy to Preserve, Cooperative Extension The University of Georgia, 2014*



Baking in Canning Jars: The Recurring “Thing” That Shouldn’t be a Thing

By Laura Crowley, UCCE Master Food Preserver

They seem to be all the rage lately. You may have seen them at your local farmers market or in a bakery’s display case. Little pies, heavenly smelling zucchini breads, scrumptious cakes baked in small mason jars that besides looking delicious look *so cute!*

Or you may have seen that recently published book about baking in jars, or that article in a swanky baking magazine complete with a gorgeously styled photo depicting a cake baked in a jar, or one of the many recipes on the Internet that say “Yes! Yes you can bake in canning jars! And you can even seal the jars and then store them in the pantry!”

But can you? Surely if there are people selling these items, publishing books and articles about this practice, posting YouTube™ videos even – then you can do it too, right?

No, you can’t. Or at least you shouldn’t. Here’s why.

First, canning jars (aka mason jars) are not designed for oven use. Canning jar glass (made from lime, soda, and other materials) is annealed, and annealed glass is not as strong as tempered glass. Oven heat, which differs from the heat produced in a water bath or pressure canner, can create stress on the jar, causing it to break into sharp pieces. (And no, putting a pan of water in the oven along with the jars does **not** replicate the environment of a water bath canner.) Canning jar manufacturers, such as Ball/Kerr, *specifically recommend against* using their jars in the oven (and in the microwave as well). Knowing that jars have the potential to shatter, why risk your time, money, or even potential injury? Keep your canning jars out of the oven, and use an appropriate oven-safe vessel for all of your baking needs.

Second, and most important, is that canning breads and cakes in mason jars and storing them at room temperature is unsafe. Cake and quick bread recipes are usually low in acid and high in moisture, and together with the process of creating a vacuum seal by putting a lid on a hot jar (thus removing most oxygen), a perfect environment is created for many microorganisms to grow – including *C. botulinum*, the organism responsible for forming the toxin that causes botulism, a potentially fatal disease.

Putting a lid on a jar of baked goods after it comes out of the oven is not a true canning process, and while a vacuum seal may be formed as the contents cool, it may not be a good seal and not all of the oxygen may be removed. Any remaining oxygen in the jar would be would allow oxygen-dependent microorganisms – such as mold – to grow. This also goes for the process of putting a lid on the jar *after* the contents have cooled: air gets trapped in the jar, allowing microorganisms to grow.

Much research has been done at various universities to determine if canning cakes and breads can be done safely at home. To date, researchers have been unable to formulate a recipe for a palatable, safe product for home use. If you’ve seen commercial cakes or breads in jars available for sale and wonder why you can’t replicate this at home, it’s because reputable companies who make these products conduct safety tests for each specific recipe, have processing controls not available to home consumers, and often use additives and preservatives to keep the product safe.

So, please, no home canning of breads and cakes in jars! Use oven-safe bakeware, and refrigerate or freeze for longer storage. Do not eat any home-canned baked products that are given to you, nor purchase home-canned breads or cakes unless they contain anti-microbial additives and have been labelled in accordance with commercial food requirements.

Be food safe, not sorry.



Homemade Yogurt

By Joyce Moser, UCCE Master Food Preserver

Yogurt is simply fermented (cultured) milk. Its thick creamy texture and slightly sour taste are a result of an increase in acidity from the fermentation process. Yogurt isn't new. It is thought to have been discovered centuries ago by nomads of Central Asia who transported milk in goatskin sacks, which served as warm incubators in which the fermentation process first occurred. This simple food, popular with the 1970s commune-culture, has in more recent years experienced such economic success that it monopolizes the dairy aisle in most grocery stores. Yogurt sales in the U.S. are projected to top \$7 billion in 2018. Yogurt's rise in popularity is due in part to its delicious taste and versatility (it can be eaten plain or used in both sweet and savory recipes), but more importantly, it is packed with nutrients and probiotics (live bacteria and yeasts that are good for your health). Yogurt is easy to make at home, requiring only a few ingredients and no special tools or equipment.

Ingredients:

- 1-quart pasteurized milk (cream, whole, low fat, or skim) – In general the higher the milk fat level in the yogurt the creamier and smoother it will taste. Do not use ultra-pasteurized milk.
- Nonfat dry milk powder – Use 1/3-cup powder when using whole or low fat milk, or use 2/3-cup powder when using skim milk.
- Commercial, unflavored, cultured yogurt containing live (active) culture – Use 1/4 cup.

Processing:

- Combine ingredients and heat to 200°F in a double boiler or a heavy-bottomed sauce pan, stirring gently and holding heat for 10 minutes for thinner yogurt or 20 minutes for thicker yogurt. Do not boil and stir often to avoid scorching.
- Cool milk to 112-115°F and blend with the yogurt starter culture.
- Pour into clean, warm containers and incubate* for 4-7 hours at 110°F ±5°F
- Refrigerate for up to 10-21 days.



**Incubator: a yogurt-maker, oven, crock pot, heating pad, electric dehydrator, or warm spot in your kitchen. To use your oven or a crock pot, place yogurt containers into deep pans of 110°F water. Water should come at least halfway up the sides of the containers. Set oven/crock pot temperature at lowest point to maintain water temperature at 110°F. Monitor temperature throughout incubation making adjustments as necessary.*

Greek-Style Yogurt or Labneh, Yogurt Cheese

To make a thickened Greek-style yogurt or Labneh, a soft yogurt cheese, line a large strainer or colander with cheesecloth. Place this over a bowl and then pour in the yogurt. Cover with plastic wrap and let drain for a few hours for a slightly thicker yogurt, what is known as Greek-style yogurt (or strained yogurt) or let it drain overnight for the first step in making Labneh. The following morning, tightly secure the cheesecloth with a double knot or use kitchen string and hang it to allow further draining. Alternatively, return the yogurt, which has been tightly secured in the cheesecloth, to the strainer covering an empty bowl. Place a heavy weight (a gallon freezer bag filled with water or a quart or gallon sized milk bottle filled with water) on top of the thickened yogurt and let it stand for another 8 hours after which it is ready to use. The flavor will be similar to sour cream and the texture will resemble cream cheese.

The liquid that is drained from the yogurt is known as whey, just like the nursery rhyme: "Little Miss Muffet sat on a tuffet eating her curds and *whey*" (I'll stop there for those readers suffering from arachnophobia). Take note, Little Miss Muffet didn't throw away this protein rich by-product, nor should you. It will stay fresh in your refrigerator for up to two weeks and can be used in place of traditional yogurt in baked goods, added to smoothies or milkshakes, soups or stews. As a last resort (or first, depending on your perspective) feed it to your animals.

Rather than using commercial yogurt to inoculate your homemade yogurt, heirloom and single-use starter cultures, including a Greek heirloom-style culture, are available online and at some health food stores.

For more information, see [National Center for Home Food Preservation, Fermenting Yogurt at Home, October 2002](#).

Berry Overnight Oats (with Yogurt)

Ingredients:

1/2 cup Quaker® Oats, uncooked
1/2 cup non-fat milk
1/2 cup non-fat plain Greek yogurt
1 teaspoon chia seeds (optional)
1 cup fresh mixed berries and fruit
Optional: Drizzle with maple syrup or honey for added flavor
Optional: Top with sliced almonds or granola

Directions:

Add Quaker® Oats to your container of choice and pour in milk. Layer yogurt, chia seeds and mixed fruit and berries. Refrigerate overnight. In the morning top with sliced almonds or granola, if desired, and enjoy!

Source: Adapted from quakeroats.com/OvernightOats

FUN FACT

Chia seeds are one of the highest sources of plant-based omega-3s. They pack plenty of antioxidants, plus fiber and protein, too. Chia seeds come in black and white and expand in water.



Keep It Safe: Proper Food Storage (Refrigerator/Freezer)

Proper food storage preserves food quality, including nutrients, flavor and texture; makes the most of your food dollar by preventing spoilage; and prevents foodborne illness caused by harmful bacteria. To store food properly, you need to know not only how to store foods, but also how long they will be safe and of high quality. Here are some general guidelines for property food storage in your refrigerator/freezer.

Refrigerator:

- Maintain the refrigerator temperature at 40°F or below. Use an appliance thermometer at various points in the refrigerator to monitor temperatures. Always store the most perishable items including meats, poultry, fish, eggs and dairy products, in the coldest sections of the refrigerator.
- Do not overload the refrigerator, which can reduce the temperature inside.
- Clean up spills and spoiled foods—they provide a medium for bacteria growth and possibly contaminate other foods.
- Store food in airtight wraps or containers. Avoid using plastic bags or containers not made for storage. Do not reuse plastic bags that originally contained raw meats, poultry or fish.
- Store raw meats, poultry and fish so that juices do not drip onto and contaminate other foods. Wrap them securely.

Freezer:

- Maintain a freezer temperature of 0°F or below. Food quality deteriorates at temperatures above 0°F. Monitor the temperature with an appliance thermometer. A good rule of thumb is that if the freezer can't keep ice cream brick-solid, the temperature is not cold enough.
- Remember: Freezer temperatures stop or prevent bacteria from growing, but do not kill them. Thus, as foods thaw, they can become unsafe because bacteria that cause foodborne illness may be able to grow. Therefore, it's best to thaw foods in the refrigerator.
- Package items for the freezer in moisture- and vapor-proof wraps or containers. Use only freezer-grade foil, plastic wrap or bags, or use freezer paper or freezer containers. If necessary, use freezer tape to make sure the package is airtight. If the packaging is torn or develops holes, freezer burn may result.
- Label all freezer foods with the date, type of food and weight or number of servings.
- Partially thawed food may be refrozen as long as it still has ice crystals. Refreezing, however, may lower the quality. Do not refreeze combination dishes such as stews, soups and casseroles.



Source and for more information on this topic, including Food Storage Timetable, visit [Safe Home Food Storage.org](http://SafeHomeFoodStorage.org).

Mirro Pressure Canner

by Sue Mosbacher, UCCE Master Food Preserver

UCCE Master Food Preserver, Vivian Patterson, recently purchased a new Mirro 22-quart pressure canner for the Inyo/Mono County program. The group already had an older style Mirro weighted gauge canner, but needed a newer version to demonstrate current products at their classes.



Older style of Mirro Pressure Canner

Vivian reviewed the instruction manual for the new canner to see if there were any changes. There were. Having used the older style Mirro pressure canner, Vivian knew that the single piece weighted gauge needed to rock or jiggle about 3-4 time per minute when processing. The newer model has three separate selective control weights, one for 5, 10 and 15 psi. The instructions for the newest model say to set the stove temperature to allow the pressure control to gently rock or jiggle continuously while processing.

After 30 minutes of unsuccessfully trying to bring the canner to pressure so the control would rock continuously, Vivian called Mirro's customer service and learned that the 22-quart size had been recently redesigned to hiss once every 15-20 seconds instead of rocking continuously. They

did not, however, update the Instruction Manual for the redesign. They put the old manual in the box with the newly designed canner. *(They get calls every day about this topic!)*

Vivian spent a lot of time with the Mirro rep and identified several differences between the manual and how the canner actually operates.

The most important difference concerns when to start the processing time. If you have a new Mirro pressure canner, use the following replacements for steps 15 and 16 in the Mirro instruction manual. *(Please hand write the changes in your instruction manual for future use.)* Test your confidence with the updated instructions by canning jars of water.

15. When control starts hissing vigorously, reduce heat so that it only hisses once every 15-20 seconds or so.

16. Process according to time given in charts. Count processing time from the time the control starts to hiss vigorously.

Other differences include the amount of water to use, the length of time to depressurize the canner, and how to tell when the canner is ready to open. You can download the updated instructions for canning processing steps at <http://ucanr.edu/mirro>.



Current style of Mirro Pressure Canner

UCCE Master Food Preserver Services

- Public classes
- Food preservation helpline
- Free pressure canner testing
- Speakers for custom presentations
- Regular articles in local newspapers



Amador County



El Dorado County

To get information about our program, visit our website at <http://ucanr.edu/mfpcs>.

Free Pressure Canner Testing

Test your Presto pressure canner gauge for accuracy once a year. Multiple UCCE offices in Central Sierra offer this free service. Contact the office nearest you to schedule a time to bring in your pressure canner.

UCCE Amador
209-223-6482
UCCE Calaveras
209-754-6477
UCCE El Dorado
530-621-5502
UCCE Tuolumne
209-533-5695





Upcoming UCCE Master Food Preserver Classes & Events

Central Sierra

Click on any class title to schedule an email reminder for the class.



Amador County

May 13: [Spring Fruits](#)

9:00-Noon \$5 entry fee payable at the door

How will you preserve the bounty of fruit this year? How about pie fillings, freezer jams and for a special treat, a truly decadent chocolate sundae sauce? Watch detailed demonstrations using spring fruits to create pie fillings, quick and easy freezer jams and delectable sauces.

Save a seat: <http://ucanr.edu/2017-ac-sat-mfp-class>

Location: Amador County GSA Building, 12200-B Airport Road, Jackson

June 10: [Dehydrating: Camping & Survival Foods](#)

9:00-Noon \$5 entry fee payable at the door

Learn the basics of dehydrating your favorite fruits and vegetables. Then take your dehydrated foods to the next level with vegetable powders, fruit and vegetable leathers, and soups in jars. Herbs, including seasoning mixes, are part of the class as well as jerky using a variety of flavorings with non-game meat.

Save a seat: <http://ucanr.edu/2017-ac-sat-mfp-class>

Location: Amador County GSA Building, 12200-B Airport Road, Jackson



Calaveras County

May 17: [Pressure Canning Basics](#)

6:30-8:30 pm Free

Does the thought of using a pressure canner scare you? It shouldn't! Learn how pressure canners work and the multiple safety features included on every modern canner.

Save a seat: <http://ucanr.edu/2017-cc-wed-mfp-class>

Location: Calaveras Senior Center, 956 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas

June 21: [Dehydrating Basics](#)

6:30-8:30 pm Free

Learn how dehydrating food works and what makes it a safe preservation technique. Explore different styles of dehydrators and see several other drying techniques that require minimal effort and supplies.

Save a seat: <http://ucanr.edu/2017-cc-wed-mfp-class>

Location: Calaveras Senior Center, 956 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas

El Dorado County

May 20: [Berries in May](#)

9:00-Noon Free

Berry season is upon us! With this year's rain we are sure to have a bountiful harvest. Join us as we explore the juicy, tasty world of berries - and sample some new ways to incorporate them into your cooking.

Save a seat: <http://ucanr.edu/2017-edc-mfp-class-reg>

Location: Bethell-Delfino Ag Building, 311 Fair Lane, Placerville

Know someone who would like to receive our newsletter? Sign up at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews>.

The University of California, Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) prohibits discrimination against or harassment of any person in any of its programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, gender expression, 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, status as a protected veteran or service in the uniformed services (as defined by the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act of 1994 [USERRA]), as well as state military and naval service. UC ANR policy prohibits retaliation against any employee or person in any of its programs or activities for bringing a complaint of discrimination or harassment. UC ANR policy also prohibits retaliation against a person who assists someone with a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or participates in any manner in an investigation or resolution of a complaint of discrimination or harassment. Retaliation includes threats, intimidation, reprisals, and/or adverse actions related to any of its programs or activities. UC ANR is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment and/or participation in any of its programs or activities without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age or protected veteran status. University 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: John I. Sims, Affirmative Action Compliance Officer and Title IX Officer, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2801 Second Street, Davis, CA 95618, (530) 750-1397. Email: jsims@ucanr.edu. Website: http://ucanr.edu/sites/anrstaff/Diversity/Affirmative_Action/.



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 USDA.

No endorsement of any product/company is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products/companies that are not included.