

Great Gift Ideas for the Home Food Preserver
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What to get, what to get. Dad needs a tie. Check. Daughter needs a new bike. Check. Son needs some skates. Check. How about a new car for Mom? Check. But what should be on the list for the home food preserver? Well, for those who do not know the difference between a thermometer and a pressure canner, here are some great ideas for holiday gifts that the home food preserver will love.

Actually, a good quality thermometer would be welcome in any kitchen. A quick-read dial thermometer or a digital instant read type gives the temperature of the food in ten to twenty seconds but cannot remain in the food while it is cooking. A fork thermometer also gives a fast read, and is handy while barbequing. Oven-safe liquid filled thermometers stay in thick foods while cooking. For advanced cooks and preservationists, the candy thermometer measures from 100° to 400° and can be used for candy or jelly making and for frying foods in hot oil. There are also special thermometers which ensure that the oven and refrigerator attain the proper temperatures.

Big ticket items for the home food preservationist include pressure canners, automatic sausage fillers, electric water-bath canners, electric dehydrators and slicing machines. These items make preserving easier, although the price tag may be a bit high.

For stocking stuffers and small gifts, nothing beats new lids and rings! Home canning lids cannot be safely reused, so new ones will always be welcome. While browsing the store aisle for new lids, check out the small tools that can be so useful. A jar lifter helps prevent burns when moving hot jars and a magnetic lid lifter will get those lids and rings out of the hot water while keeping fingers dry and safe. A bubble remover tool cleverly combines a de-bubbler with a head-space measurer for two gadgets in one, and a special funnel for filling jars helps keep the food off the counter and in the jar.

A great gift to help the home food preserver stay safe, the latest revision of the Complete Guide to Home Canning and Preserving, from the USDA, explains how to safely preserve all types of food at home. This invaluable resource should be in every kitchen and it contains many tested recipes for home food preserving.

For questions about safe home food preservation, or to schedule a speaker for organizations or clubs on the topics of food safety or food preservation, call the Master Food Preservers at (530) 621-5506. For more information, be sure to go to the Master Food Preserver website at http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master_Food_Preservers/. Sign up to receive our new Master Food Preservers E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpenews/>.