

Soup Season

Sue Mosbacher, El Dorado County Master Food Preserver



It's the season for soups! To keep my family warm on the inside as our old house gets cold in the evenings, I like to keep a variety of jars of soup in the pantry that I can pull out at a moment's notice. I either heat and serve the soup as is, or enhance it with rice, noodles, or some other thickener.

A key ingredient in my soups is homemade broth. I prefer canned broth over frozen broth to save freezer space and defrosting time. My cupboard has about 20 jars of pressure canned broth made from the remains of a large turkey.

I use a pressure canner for broth instead of a water bath canner because broth is a low-acid food, and it's the acid in foods that prevents the botulism spores (*Clostridium Botulinum*) from growing and releasing their deadly toxin. If there are any lingering botulism spores in my low-acid home-canned food, a pressure canner is the only way to get the temperature high enough to kill them. Water boils at 212°F at sea level. No higher. The temperature must reach 240-250°F for 20 to 100 minutes to kill botulism spores. To reach this temperature, I must use a pressure canner.

Although many foods qualify for pressure canning, Master Food Preservers recommend that you never can vegetables or meats for which you do not have a research-tested processing time. Canning time is determined by many factors: the amount of starch, tightness of the packed food, microorganisms which contaminate and grow in that type of food, type and size of pieces packed in the container, and the temperature at which the food is processed.

Learn how to use a pressure canner properly at a **free** class this weekend offered by the Master Food Preservers. No reservations are needed.

Contents Under Pressure

Saturday, February 9
Calaveras County Senior Center in San Andreas
10:00 a.m. to noon

MFP volunteers will demonstrate how to use a pressure canner while making a soup and a stew. Detailed written instructions on the use of pressure canners will be available, along with processing times for a variety of vegetables and meats, and general canner maintenance tips.

If you are considering purchasing a pressure canner, several examples of the three primary models will be on display for you to examine and discuss.



Inside this issue:

Soup Season	1
Why Can Soup?	2
Last Call for EDC MFP Training	2
The Curious Canner	3
New MFP Program in San Joaquin Valley	3
Kale, the Other Chip	4
How to Can App	5
Get Ready for Canning Season	5
MFP Classes	6
Power Outages	6
MFP Facebook	7
MFP Info	7
MG Classes	7

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 Website:
<http://ucanr.org/mfpcs>

Why Can Soup?

Sue Mosbacher, El Dorado County Master Food Preserver

Pressure canning foods isn't a quick project. When I make beef stew, it takes about three hours from start to finish. Granted, most of that time I'm just hanging out in the kitchen doing other projects while I monitor the pressure canner, but it's still a lot longer process than buying a can of soup at the grocery store. So why do I can my own soup? Because I can control (and pronounce) the ingredients in my soup. As an example, the ingredient list below is for a fairly healthy commercial soup that has a lot of great ingredients. But I like the fact that the beef stew I can at home has just ten ingredients, and it smells so much better than the canned product when I heat it up to eat.

Store-bought Light Beef Pot Roast Soup

Ingredients: Beef Broth, Water, Cooked Seasoned Beef and Modified Foods Starch Product (beef, beef broth, hydrolyzed soy protein, modified food starch, salt, sodium phosphates, natural flavor, maltodextrin), carrots, tomatoes, potatoes, celery, green beans, peas, tomato paste, sugar, corn and soy proteins, (hydrolyzed), potassium chloride, xanthan gum, salt, yeast extract, natural flavor, maltodextrin, garlic powder, toasted onion powder, caramel color, beef fat, beef extract, spice, parsley, soybean oil, calcium chloride, citric acid, soy sauce (soybeans, wheat, salt), onion powder, sodium phosphate.

My Canned Beef Stew

Ingredients: beef stew meat, oil, potatoes, carrots, celery, onions, water, salt, thyme, pepper,



Last Call for El Dorado County Master Food Preserver Training

The 2013 El Dorado MFP training was previously scheduled only for Saturdays, beginning March 2. Due to the high interest level, we've recently expanded the training to a second class, offered on Tuesdays, beginning March 12. (*Tuesday trainees will also attend the Saturday Food Safety class on March 9.*) Classes will continue consecutively for 10 weeks, with the graduation ceremony on Saturday, May 11, 2013.

The cost of the training is \$75. Once training is completed, the new volunteers will be certified Master Food Preservers and agents of the UCCE. Their mission will be to teach our local community how to safely preserve food. As agents of the UCCE, El Dorado County MFPs are required to volunteer at least 35 hours annually in our community; therefore highest priority for applicants is given to local residents.

Space is limited. Complete the online application at <http://ucanr.org/edmfpl> by **Wednesday, February 20, 2013**. Interviews will be conducted on Saturday, February 23.

For more information, contact Robin Cleveland at 530-621-5528.

Do you live outside of El Dorado County?

You can still apply, 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. Sign up for this online class at <http://nchfp.uga.edu>.



The Curious Canner

Question: I have a vacuum sealer that will seal jars with the two piece canning lids. Does this vacuum sealing process keep me from having to process the jars any other way?

Answer: This process may extend the storage time of **dried foods, refrigerated foods and frozen foods.** However, the vacuum sealing process does **NOT** substitute for the process of the home canning methods, either in a water bath or pressure canner. Perishable foods which are vacuum sealed in jars must be refrigerated or frozen and cannot be safely stored at room temperature. The removal of most of the oxygen does not inhibit all growth of bacteria. Some bacteria that grow in a low-oxygen environment can cause food spoilage. A few bacteria that can grow in a low-oxygen, low acid environment cause serious illness or death in humans. Never substitute vacuum sealing jars for the proper method of home canning food.



Question: Does the calorie content of food change during drying?

Answer: The calorie content of foods does not change; it simply is concentrated into a small mass as moisture is removed during drying. So on a per pound basis, dried foods contain considerably more calories than do the same foods in their fresh state.

Question: What would cause my jar that was sealed during processing to become unsealed after a few days?

Answer: The jar(s) were probably under-processed. However, there may have been some food on the sealing surface of the jar which allowed you to get a temporary seal or your jar may have a hairline crack that you're unable to see. Whatever the reason, a broken seal may indicate spoilage and the contents of the jar should not be consumed by humans or pets, and it should be destroyed. As a side note, when removing jars from your canner be sure to lift them straight up, without tipping, and place them where they will cool. Tipping the jars may result in food particles getting between the lid and the jar top causing either a temporary seal or no seal at all.



Northern San Joaquin Valley Master Food Preservers!

Please welcome the newest California Master Food Preserver program: Northern San Joaquin Valley, serving the counties of San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Merced.

A dedicated and enthusiastic group of volunteers went through an intensive one week crash course to become certified Master Food Preservers. Their days were filled with learning and cooking, their evenings were spent reading and completing one or two quizzes. They presented mini-demonstrations on the last day and then received their final examination. They will bring back to life the MFP program that once flourished in the Central Valley.

Watch for announcements of their events in this newsletter.

Kale, the Other Chip

According to the [Produce for Better Health Foundation](#), kale is a member of the cabbage family that is very popular in Northern Europe. It was so popular in Scotland that being invited to “come to kale” was an invitation to dinner.

Kale is in season now. While many people steam, stir-fry, eat it raw, and substitute it for spinach, you can also use it to replace potato chips with a much healthier snack—kale chips! You can either use your food dehydrator or your oven. There are many recipes online for Kale Chips; here’s a simple, but tasty one.

Ingredients:

1 large bunch kale, any variety

2 - 3 teaspoons olive oil

3/4 teaspoon salt

Optional: your favorite seasoning (Cajun, Creole, Cayenne pepper, ... experiment!)

Preparation:

1. Remove (and compost!) the tough stems from the leafstalks.
2. Wash the kale leaves and dry them well in a salad spinner or by gently rolling the leaves in a clean dishtowel.
3. Tear the washed and dried leaves into just slightly larger than chip sized pieces; they will shrink slightly as they dry.
4. Toss the kale in a large bowl with the olive oil and salt. Massage the leaves well with your clean hands. All of the leaves should be more or less evenly coated with the oil. (Tip: Start with a small amount of kale. Coat with oil, add more kale. Repeat until all kale is coated.)



Dehydrated Kale Chips

- Spread the leaves on the dehydrator trays in single layers. Do not crowd the leaves or they won’t dry evenly. It is ok if the leaves touch, but don’t overlap them.
- Dry the kale at 145°F for 1 hour.
- Reduce the heat to 115°F and dry for an additional 3 to 4 hours until crispy dry.

Baked Kale Chips

- Preheat the oven to 375°F.
- Spread the kale out on a cookie sheet with sides. Again, don’t overlap the leaves.
- Bake for about 15 minutes and then start watching carefully. Some of the kale will already be baked and crispy, some not. Pull out those chips that are done.

Select the Best Kale

Choose dark-colored kale bunches with small-to-medium leaves. Avoid brown or yellow leaves.

Store Fresh Kale

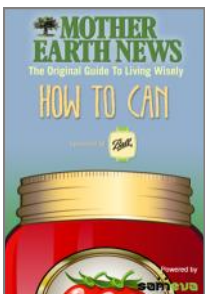
Place kale in a plastic bag in the coldest part of the fridge for 3-5 days.

Store Kale Chips

If they aren’t all eaten right away, transfer to an airtight container. If your kale chips last long enough to get limp, just pop them back into the food dehydrator for a freshening up.

Kale Nutrition Benefits

Kale is low fat, saturated fat free, cholesterol free, low sodium, excellent source of vitamin A and vitamin C, good source of calcium and potassium.



How to Can App

(Reprinted with permission from [Mother Earth News](#))

This is a comprehensive app that explains how to can fresh produce using both water bath and pressure canners. Complete basic instructions plus timing details for over 20 crops make this free app a must-have for anyone who cans or wants to learn how to can. The app's instructions are adapted from authoritative canning advice from the United States Department of Agriculture and Jarden Home Brands, maker of the Ball brand home canning products, America's leading supplier of canning jars, lids and supplies.

The Basics section will fully equip even the most novice of canners with all the information needed to get started canning. It provides the list of recommended equipment, safety guidelines, and detailed step-by-step instructions for both water bath and pressure canning methods. The Crops section gives the quantity of produce you'll need and the expected yield of canned goods to help you plan efficiently. Complete instructions are included — plus an easy-to-use chart detailing the proper processing times — for each crop and recipe. The Resources section will provide links to more books and sites to further hone your canning skills. Plus, you'll find the best way to get quality home canning supplies and news from Ball Canning and Recipes. Get more information about the [How to Can app](#).

Get Ready for Canning Season!

Spring will be here soon, bringing all the fun and work associated with putting the garden in order for summer veggies. For now, most home food preservers are enjoying the food put up last year and looking forward to new projects in the summer. Even if you can throughout the year, this is a great time to get things ready for summer canning.

Start by evaluating the big items. Take advantage of the Master Food Preserver's free service and get that pressure canner checked. Pressure canners with dial gauges should be checked every year. (This is not necessary with weighted gauges.) Replace gaskets and pressure relief valves every two to three years.

Clean the water stains in your pressure canner. Place one tablespoon of cream of tartar per quart of water in your canner. Put the lid on and boil the water until it reaches five pounds pressure. Turn off the heat and let the pressure drop to zero. Loosen the lid and let the lid sit on the canner for 45-60 minutes. Voila! Drain, rinse, and dry.



Before cleaning ...

After cleaning ...

Examine your boiling water bath canner for holes (!) and make sure it fits your type of stove. You can use a flat bottom canner on a coil style electric stove, and a flat or ridged bottom is appropriate for gas stoves. Be very careful when using a boiling water bath canner on a smooth topped range: the canner must fit the heating element exactly or it may damage the unit. Contact the manufacturer with questions about canning on a smooth top range.

Don't forget the little things! This is a great time to go through all the jars and rings that have stacked up over the winter. Make sure there are no cracks or chips in the glass jars and that the rings are not bent or rusted. There is no need to check any used lids.....never reuse lids for canning! (But keep them for freezing and storing dehydrated food. Mark them as used.)



After checking these basics, feel free to look at other tools and extras that help make canning easier and more fun. There are many items that help the home canner, such as funnels, magnetic sticks for lids, jar lifters and more. Don't forget the other things, such as labels and wraps to personalize your canned goods. There are many programs available for free on the internet that allow home food preservers to create unique designs for labeling foods.

Check the canning equipment now, and when canning season is upon us everything will be ready to go!



Upcoming Master Food Preserver Classes

In the Central Sierra and Sacramento Counties



Amador/Calaveras County:

Contents Under Pressure

Date: Saturday, February 9

Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

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

Learn how a pressure canner works, how to safely use it, and watch several canning demonstrations to learn how to can your own broth, soups, stews, vegetables, and meat sauces. This is a free demonstration.

Freezing & Dehydrating

Date: Saturday, March 16

Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

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

Make the most of your winter garden and bulk purchases and learn how to maximize your freezer and cupboards by freezing and drying various foods to keep them from spoiling. This is a free demonstration.

Sacramento County:

Freezing Tips

Date: Saturday, February 9

Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: UC Cooperative Extension Auditorium, 4145 Branch Center Road, Sacramento

Basic introduction to maximizing your freezer. This is a free demonstration.

Sauerkraut & Winter Vegetables

Date: Wednesday, February 20

Time: 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Location: UC Cooperative Extension Auditorium, 4145 Branch Center Road, Sacramento

Learn to make sauerkraut and to preserve winter vegetables. There is a \$3 materials fee for this class.

Food Safety in a Power Outage



If your power goes out, knowing what to do with the food in your refrigerator and freezer can help you stay healthy. When the power goes out, the most important thing to remember is: **Keep the fridge and freezer doors closed!**

- A closed refrigerator will keep food cold for about 4 hours.
- A full freezer will keep temperature for about 48 hours (24 hours if half-full).
- If the power is going to be out for a long time, buy dry or block ice.

Perishable foods that have not been kept properly chilled can harbor dangerous pathogens that could make you and your family sick. For more information on keeping food through a power outage see the links below.

Remember, when in doubt, throw it out!

[Frozen Food and Power Outages: When to Toss](#)

[Refrigerated Food and Power Outages: When to Toss](#)

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 Gauge Testing

Test your pressure canner gauge for accuracy once a year. Call the El Dorado County 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.

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

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

Master Gardener Classes



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

Amador County

- 9: [Grafting](#)
- 23 am: [Growing Great Vegetables \(Part 1\)](#)
- 23 pm: [Pruning Olive Trees and Grapes](#)

El Dorado County

- 9: [Propagation 1](#)
- 16: [Beekeeping](#)
- 23: [Spring & Summer Vegetables](#)



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