

THE ESSENTIALS-ONLY GUIDE TO CANNING PRESERVES

ONCE YOUR FRESH FRUITS OR VEGGIES HAVE BEEN PROCESSED, CANNING IS THE NEXT STEP TO MAKE THEM ACCESSIBLE YEAR-ROUND

FOODLAND ONTARIO

Though fermenting, a food process almost as old as food itself, has come into fashion in recent years, canning and preserving is a straightforward and enjoyable way to enjoy local seasonal fruits and vegetables year-round from either your home garden or from a local farmer's fields.

As an added bonus, preserving the fruits or vegetables at home allows for a level of control over the end product that's just not possible commercially.

While the process, and the risk, might seem daunting at first, the steps are

straightforward and have been followed for hundreds of years.

Home-preserved goods also make great, unique, gifts.

The following is the essentials-only guide to canning, using the water bath method, starting at the point where you've prepared your produce for preservation.

This method can be used for canning fruits, but to can vegetables safely,



John Stewart photo

This year's canning proceeds include caraway pickled beets and peach chutney.

they must be processed using a pressure-canner.

WHAT YOU NEED

JARS AND LIDS

• 125 mL, 250 mL, and 500 mL — usually used for jams and jellies

• 500 mL, 1L, and 1.5L — usually used for pickles, relishes, fruits, vegetables, and sauces

• **Note:** Only use jars designed for home canning

• Use new, never used, self-sealing lids to ensure a good seal

CANNING TOOLS

- Canning funnel
- Ladle
- Jar lifter
- Tongs
- Lid lifter
- Canner (a large pot)
- Electronic timer

PREPPING

Inspect jars for nicks, scratches, and uneven rims that might prevent a proper seal or break.

Wash jars and lids with hot, soapy water and rinse with hot water. While dishwashers can wash or sanitize jars, they're not reliable enough to sterilize for canning.

Sterilization requires boiling temperatures of 100 C.

TIP: To prevent hard water film on jars, place a crumpled piece of aluminum foil in canner water.

Otherwise, remove

hard-water film or scale on jars by soaking in a mixture of half a cup of vinegar and eight cups of water for a few hours.

STERILIZING

As most preserves are processed for 10 minutes or more, sterilization is no longer necessary.

You may still choose to sterilize jars before filling for extra insurance against spoilage.

To sterilize: place jars upright on rack in boiling water canner.

Cover with hot water and bring to a boil over high heat. Boil for 15 minutes and leave in water until ready to use.

FILLING AND PACKING

Fill only the number of jars you can process in one canner-load at a time.

A canning funnel is handy for filling jars and prevents rims from getting sticky. After filling one jar,

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