

Basics of Food Preservation

1. Canning- using glass jars and two piece lids and processing one of two ways
 - a. Boiling Water Bath (BWB); jars submerged in water, brought to a boil, and boiled, covered for recipe specified amount of time. Steam canning is an alternate form of this. This is for acidic foods only.
 - b. Pressure Canning; jars are put into a pressure canner with a small amount of water, which is brought to a boil, pressure builds in the canner and timing starts once the specified pressure is reached. Non-acidic foods and meats are processed this way.
2. Drying- dehydrating food by circulating warm air around it. Blanching is required for most vegetables before drying.
 - a. Using a dehydrator- an appliance specifically designed for food drying. Buy one that has an adjustable thermostat.
 - b. Using an oven- many newer ovens have a dehydrate function, but you can also dry some foods on the lowest oven setting.
 - c. Air drying- many herbs can be dried by cutting and hanging them in a warm room. In warmer, drier climates, fruit can often be sun dried outside on racks.
3. Freezing- putting into storage in a freezer. Be aware that the top freezer on most refrigerators is **not** suitable for long term storage of food; it is not as cold as a deep freeze.
 - a. Blanching vegetables before freezing helps preserve them better.
 - b. Many types of fruit is best preserved by freezing. Freezing berries on cookie sheets before packaging makes it easier to defrost varying amounts.
4. Fermentation- this includes the process of making pickles and sauerkraut, and beer and wine.
 - a. Lactic acid fermentation- fermenting vegetables own sugars to create lactic acid, which preserves the food.
 - b. Alcohol fermentation- fermenting the sugars in fruit to create alcohol, which preserves the liquid.
5. Storage- storing produce with out processing
 - a. Root cellar- a room or building, often partially underground, with even, cool temperatures where some types of produce can be kept. Our climate is not ideal for root cellaring, but some produce is forgiving (onions, potatoes)
 - b. Room temperature dry storage- properly cured winter squash and garlic can be stored this way.
 - c. In ground storage- carrots, beets, turnips and parsnips can be stored in their growing beds if drainage is good. A heavy mulch helps keep them in good shape.



Terry & Dave's pantry

Chunky Basil Pasta Sauce - You can double, triple, or even quadruple this recipe
8 cups coarsely chopped (peeling optional) tomatoes -- (about 9-12 tomatoes or 4 lb)
1 cup chopped onion
3 cloves garlic, minced
2/3 cup red wine
1/3 cup red wine vinegar (5 % strength)
1/2 cup chopped fresh basil --
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
1 teaspoon pickling salt
1/2 teaspoon granulated sugar
1 6-oz can tomato paste

Combine tomatoes, onion, garlic, wine, vinegar, basil, parsley, salt, sugar and tomato paste in a very large stainless steel or enamel pan. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce heat to low and simmer, uncovered, for 40 minutes or until mixture reaches desired consistency, stirring frequently. Remove hot jars from canner and ladle sauce into jars to within 1/2 inch of rim (head space). Process 35 minutes for pint jars and 40 minutes for quart jars in a BWB. Or process in a pressure canner, 10lbs pressure, pints 20 minutes, quarts 25 minutes.
Yield: 2 quarts

Terry's Spicy Salsa

18 lbs of tomatoes, chopped and drained (peeling optional)
4 onions, chopped
4 sweet peppers, chopped
3 lbs. jalapeno, seeded and chopped (wear gloves when chopping hot peppers!)
4 carrots, finely chopped
10 habenero peppers (use less if you want it milder)
2 heads of garlic, peeled and minced
2 cans chipotle peppers in adobe sauce
4 6 oz. cans tomato paste
1 Tbs. salt
2 Tbs. oregano
2 cups apple cider vinegar

Chop the tomatoes first, and let them drain while you prep the rest of the vegetables. Put chopped onion, carrots, and sweet and jalapeno peppers in a large stock pot. Put the habenero peppers, garlic cloves, chipotle peppers, tomato paste, salt and oregano into a food processor and pulse until well blended. With processer running slowly pour in the vinegar. Stir this into the onion mixture, then add and stir in the chopped tomatoes. Warm the salsa, then ladle into hot jars. Process pints for 15 minutes at 10 lbs. pressure.

Yield: 18-20 pints

Lynden Blue Old-Fashioned Grape Jam

Favoring the taste of past times, once you try this recipe, no other can compare.

Mix together and bring to a boil:

5 Cups Lynden Blue juice and skins chopped
2 Tbs. cinnamon, approx. to taste
1 package pectin (not low sugar type)

When at a boil, stir in 5 Cups sugar. Boil 1 minute. Skim & pack into hot,sterilized jars and process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath.

Yield: 7 pints

Raspberry Vinegar

This is similar to the recipe above, but adds sugar to bring out the fruit flavor.

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups white vinegar or white wine vinegar
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1 cup fresh or frozen (unsweetened) raspberries

Preparation:

Combine sugar and vinegar in a stainless steel or enameled saucepan. Heat, stirring occasionally, until hot but not quite boiling.

Pour mixture into glass bowl. Stir raspberries into the vinegar. Cover with plastic wrap and let stand in a cool place 6 to 7 days. Strain through cheesecloth twice. May be stored for several months in the refrigerator in a jar or bottle with tight-fitting lid.

Makes 1 1/2 to 2 cups.

Quince and Coriander Jelly

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2 ¼ lb. quinces, washed and coarsely chopped with skins and cores intact.

1 tbsp coriander seed

Juice and seeds of 2 large lemons

3 ¾ cup water

4 ½ cup sugar, warmed (put into ovenproof container and place in 200°F oven)

Place quince, coriander, lemon juice and water into a large pan. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer gently for about 1 ½ hours. Cool slightly, then pour into a scalded jelly bag suspended over a non metallic bowl and leave to drain overnight. Measure the strained juice into a large kettle. Add 2 ¼ cups warm sugar to every pint of juice. Heat, stirring over low heat until the sugar has completely dissolved. Increase the heat and boil rapidly with out stirring for 5-10 minutes until the jelly reaches the setting point. Ladle into hot, sterilized jars. Seal and process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath. *Rosemary (2 sprigs fresh or 2 Tbsp dried) can be substituted for the coriander for a more savory jelly.*

Ginger-Pear Preserves

9 cups peeled, cubed pears (about 2 ½ lbs)

2 thinly sliced, seeded lemons

6 cups sugar

1/3 cup chopped fresh ginger

Combine pears, lemons, ginger and sugar and let stand in refrigerator at least 12 hours or overnight. The next day, bring the mixture to a boil, uncovered, over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer until thick (1 to 1 ½ hours), stirring occasionally. Ladle into sterilized jars, seal, and process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath. Makes 6-8 8 oz. jars.

Caramelized Apple Marmalade with Thyme

About 4 pounds tart apples

5 Tbsp fresh lemon juice

2 cups sugar

2 cups fresh apple cider

1 vanilla bean, split, scraped, and cut into thirds

1 tsp cinnamon

2 tsp finely chopped fresh thyme or 1 tsp dried thyme

Peel, core, and cut the apples into 1" pieces. Toss immediately with lemon juice and set aside. Stir together the sugar, ½ cup apple cider, and the vanilla bean in a large shallow pan. Place over high heat and bring to a boil. Cook, without stirring, until the mixture caramelizes to a medium amber color. Add the apple slices, the remaining apple juice, cinnamon, and thyme. The caramel will clump together but will eventually remelt. Continue cooking on moderately high heat, watching carefully the it doesn't boil over. Turn the apples over in the syrup until the pieces are completely glazed and translucent and there is little liquid left in the pan (20-30 minutes). Remove from heat; ladle into hot, sterilized jars and seal. Process in a boiling water bath 10 minutes.

Medlar and Tarragon Jelly

The brown-skinned medlar is a somewhat forgotten, old-fashioned fruit. It is about the size of a crabapple and resembles a rose hip to the extent that there are five open pits surrounding a calyx. The medlar is not considered mature until it is completely rotted, which can occur on the tree after the first frost; or, the fruit can be picked earlier and then spread on a straw mat in a cool place. The flesh of the fruit is not particularly interesting on its own, but the juice has a perfumed scent and thus is prized for compotes, jams, and jellies. The following tarragon-flavored jelly is good with meats— and without the tarragon the jelly is nice on toast and muffins.

2 pounds very ripe medlars, quartered

1/4 cup fresh lemon juice

About 2 cups sugar

4 to 8 sprigs of fresh tarragon, blanched

Combine the medlars with 1 cup water and 2 tablespoons of the lemon juice in a preserving pan, bring the water to a boil, and simmer the medlars for 1 hour, or until they are very soft and mushy.

Tip the contents of the pan into a dampened jelly bag set over a large bowl and let it drain for at least 12 hours or overnight. Measure the strained juice, reserving it, and for every 2 cups juice measure 1 cup sugar. In a preserving pan melt the sugar and the remaining 2 tablespoons lemon juice over low heat, stirring. Bring the syrup to a boil, and add the medlar juice. Boil the mixture, skimming any froth, for 15 minutes, or until the jelling point is reached. Ladle the jelly into four warm sterilized 1-cup jars, add 1 or 2 tarragon sprigs to each jar, and seal. Process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath.

Italian Fruit Syrups

Fruit syrups are great for making fruit sodas (syrup plus seltzer water) or for topping pancakes and ice cream. They can be made from most fruits. A popular flavor is raspberry, and the following recipe can be modified to create any other fruit or berry syrup. The general rule of thumb for making fruit syrup is equal measures of sugar and water, and roughly four cups of any puréed fruit of your choice. You can also add herbs such as mint or thyme for more complexity.

1 pound (roughly 4 cups) raspberries or other berries

1/2 cup water

1/2 cup sugar

2 tablespoons lemon juice

Bring berries, water and sugar to a boil in large saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Boil uncovered 10 minutes, stirring occasionally and adjusting heat to prevent mixture from boiling over. Add lemon juice. (This prevents browning.) Strain through a fine-mesh sieve, discarding the solids. Pour into sterilized jars or bottles. Let it cool: Once chilled, cover and store, refrigerated.

Crème de Cassis- Black Currant Liqueur

2 lbs black currants, with a few leaves (about 7 cups)

4 cups brandy or 4 cups vodka

1 1/2 cups sugar

2 cups water

Directions

Put the bunches of black currants, with their leaves, in a wide mouthed glass jar or a stoneware bottle. Add the sugar and water. Pour in the alcohol, cover tightly and let macerate for about two months.

Strain the liqueur through a cheesecloth, wringing to get all the fruit goodness. Bottle and cork. Keep the bottles of liqueur for one month before opening. Makes about 2 quarts.

Homemade Apple Liqueur (Meilach)

2 1/2 pounds apples

2 cups vodka

2 cups brandy

1 1/2 cups sugar

3/4 cup water

Cut apples into wedges, put in jar. Pour vodka and brandy over apples. Cap and age in a cool place for one month. Strain and filter. Combine sugar and water, boil, cool. Combine liqueur and syrup into aging container, age for a month. Strain as needed.

Variation: Spiced apple. Add two 3" cinnamon sticks, 10 whole cloves, remove spices when filtering/squeezing apples.

Raspberry Liqueur

raspberries

grain alcohol/vodka

sugar

water

Rinse the raspberries and place them in a glass jar. Pour in enough grain alcohol to cover by a few inches, screw the lid on, and allow to steep 3-4 weeks. Over this time, the flavor and color will leach out of the raspberries, leaving the alcohol a deep ruby color, and the raspberries a weird ghostly pink.

When the raspberries have finished steeping, strain them from the alcohol, discard, and filter the solution through several layers of cheesecloth or, preferably, coffee filters. Measure the final amount of alcohol -- this is your base number. In a saucepan, heat 1.5 times that amount of water, and 1/4-1/2 that amount of sugar, depending on how sweet you like things (note that this is less sugar than required for the puckery rhubarb). To give an example: 4 cups raspberry alcohol would need 6 cups of water and 1-2 cups sugar. Let the sugar syrup cool, then add it to your filtered alcohol. Taste (the flavors will be a bit harsh), and add more sugar if desired. Let age for at least a month before enjoying.

Roasted Red Pepper Spread

6 lb. large red sweet peppers (or use sweet peppers with a little heat)

1 lb. Roma tomatoes

2 large garlic cloves

1 small white onion

2 Tbsp. minced basil

1 Tbsp. sugar

1 tsp. coarse salt

1/2 cup red wine vinegar (or ¼ cup red wine vinegar + ¼ cup balsamic vinegar)

Roast peppers under broiler or on a grill at 425 degrees until skin wrinkles and chars in spots. Turn over and roast other side. Remove from heat. Place in a paper bag, secure opening, cool 15 minutes. Roast tomatoes, onion, and garlic under broiler or grill 10 - 15 minutes. Place peppers in a paper bag. Peel onion and garlic. Finely mince onion and garlic.

Measure 1/4 cup and set aside. Peel and seed peppers and peel tomatoes. Puree in food processor or blender. Combine in a large pan. Bring to a boil over med. high heat, stir to prevent sticking. Reduce heat, simmer until spread thickens. Ladle hot spread into hot jars, leave 1/4 inch headspace. Process in water bath canner for 10 minutes.

Online Resources

National Center for Home Food Preservation- this is the official USDA site. Great information for canning, freezing, drying, pickling, and recipes for jams & Jellies.

http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/publications_usda.html

Another USDA site, with links to state extension publications on food preservation.

http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=4&tax_level=3&tax_subject=358&topic_id=1610&level3_id=5942&level4_id=0&level5_id=0&placement_default=0

Harvest Forum at Garden Web. Real people preserving food and talking about it.

<http://forums.gardenweb.com/forums/harvest>

Lactic acid fermentation:

<http://www.wildfermentation.com/resources.php?page=pickles>

<http://www.eco-natural.com/recipes/pickles.html>