

CANNING BASICS with Terry Kevlin

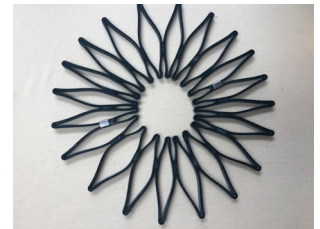
High acid foods can be processed through a boiling water method. In canning acidity is everything. High acidity means a low pH and the pH target is 4.6 and below. A list of high acid foods is easily searched on the internet but we are talking about things like: apples, blackberries, cranberries, citrus, peaches, pears, sauerkraut, tomatoes, and pickles.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED

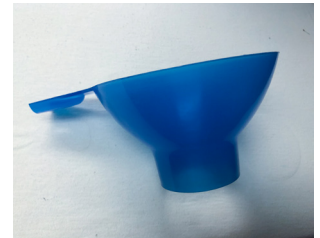
Stock pot: Choose a stock pot with a flat bottom that allows enough space it will have 1-2" of boiling water over the top of the tallest jars without boiling out.



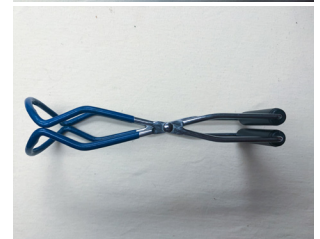
Canning Rack or something to keep the jars off the bottom of the pot (pictured: a silicone trivet).



Wide mouth funnel



Jar Lifter: Use a jar lifter made for canning. Regular tongs do not grip jars well.



Lid Lifter-Magnetic lid lifters will help you to remove lids from their water bath safely.



Bubble remover- which can be the handle of a wooden spoon, old chopstick or something not metallic. This can double as something to help measure head space in top of jar.



Jars, lids and rings to match your crop and your canning recipes. Jellies 1/4 to 1/2 pint jars. Pickle spears and disks - 1 pint wide mouth jar. Tomato juice a quart jar. USE ONLY tempered glass jars. Lids and rings are two separate things-the rings secure the lids on the jar, and the lids are single-use flat circles with a small rubber seal.



How to Can

Step 1: Choose foods your family enjoys. Ensure you have enough jars, lids, and rings before the canning season begins in earnest.

Step 2: Ensure you have all the recipe ingredients before you get started and ensure you have enough time to complete the process in a single go.

Step 3: Remember canning preserves but does not improve flavor. Choose just picked produce if possible (overripe tomatoes may lose some of their acidity and need to be pressure canned). Pack uniform sized pieces to allow for even cooking. **CLEAN YOUR SPACE BEFORE YOU GET STARTED.**

Step 4: Inspect jars for chips or cracks and discard any that show these defects. Wash jars in hot soapy water and keep them hot until ready to fill. Dishwasher can be used if you leave the door closed until you pull out a jar. Or fill the clean jars with water and keep them hot in the microwave. Lids should be heated but not boiled until needed.

Step 5: Fill canner halfway and heat water to near boiling. Have a kettle or pot of boiling water ready if more water is needed to ensure 1-2" of water above the top of the jars.

Step 6 : Fill one jar at a time. **ORDER:**

1. Fill, maintaining proper head space
2. Remove air bubbles
3. Clean the rim
4. Place lid and tighten band. Do not over-tighten the band. The phrase most often used is fingertip tight.

Step 7: Use jar lifter to put in canner. (I put each jar down in the pot as I fill it. Some folks use a basket so they all go in at once.) Set the pot lid and bring to a boil. Once water is at a rolling boil, start your timer for the amount of time required by your recipe. Processing times will change with the size of the jar. Do not skimp on the time or the boil level.

Step 8: After processing time has been met turn off heat and remove lid... then let sit for 5 minutes before removing the jars. Place jars on a dry cotton towel or wooden surface. (Polyester will melt. DO NOT place on a cold counter) Leave an inch or 2 between jars and let cool naturally for 12-24 hours before re-checking the seal. Listen for the ping.

Step 9: After jars have cooled test the seal. Press the center of the lid to make sure it is concave. Remove the ring and turn the jar on its side to check for seepage. If it did not seal in 24 hours you can re-process the food in a new clean jar. Check the first jar and lid to see if there is damage which caused the failure to seal. If jar is chipped assume the failure occurred during processing and throw out the food and the jar.

Step 10: Lids should not be used again if they are dented or bent so they are a good place for a label. Jars should be good for years. Label with product, date and source of recipe. Storing unopened jars without the ring may enable them to last as long as your jars.

Step 11: Ideal storage temperature for canned goods is between 50 - 70*. Pick a dark, dry, cool location ie a cabinet for storage. After 1 year natural chemical changes may occur that could lessen quality in flavor, color, texture, and nutritional value so, foods stored for the longest time should be used first.

There is an amazing number of things that can be pickled. Sweet pickles, sour pickles, dill pickles. There are an amazing number of things that can be turned into jellies and jams... one of my favorite is lemon basil hot pepper jelly. Explore and experiment.

More information on canning is available on line at sites like [USDA Ball Jar](#), [Extension agents](#) and I have found a number of good used books at McKay's book store.

Enjoy!



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