

Steam Canner Basics

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A Good Life Farm.com



With 10
Favorite
High Acid
Canning
Recipes!

Table of Contents

- What is a Steam Canner?
- Benefits of Steam Canning
- Is Steam Canning Safe?
- What Foods can be Steam Canned?
- How to Steam Can Safely
- Choosing the Right Foods and Recipes
- Heating the Jars
- Maintaining Temperature
- Processing Time
- Recipes

What is a Steam Canner?

Many people have never heard of steam canning. Steam canning is a particular method of canning where an **atmosphere of steam** is created to process the **high acid foods** being canned, instead of using a hot water bath.

Steam canners remind me of a big cake tin. The bottom that holds the water is relatively shallow and holds a rack for the jars. The lid is a large dome that goes down over the jars.



Benefits of Steam Canning

Steam canning is my favorite way of processing things like [jellies](#) and [salsas](#) for several reasons.

*Steam Canners
use less water.*



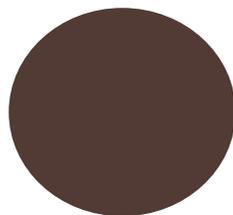
Because there is only about 2 ½ quarts of water used (it varies by model) the canner is **much lighter**. The weight alone of a traditional hot water bath canner can be prohibitive. Persons with back issues or who do not have the strength to carry that heavy pot will find steam canning much more doable.

Heavy hot water bath canners can also be very hard on your stove. If it is a glass top stove, or if the stove isn't durable enough, it could damage it. I have actually had my stove top bend under the weight of a canner in the past.

Steam Canners Use Less Energy

Another great benefit is that it takes much less energy to bring the canner to temperature than it does a great big pot of water, as used with the hot water bath canning.

The smaller quantity of water prevents your kitchen from getting heated up as much. You can pour the water out right away, as it cools quickly. No waiting for ages for the pot to be cool enough to be safe to move. This is great for summer – when a lot of our canning takes place.

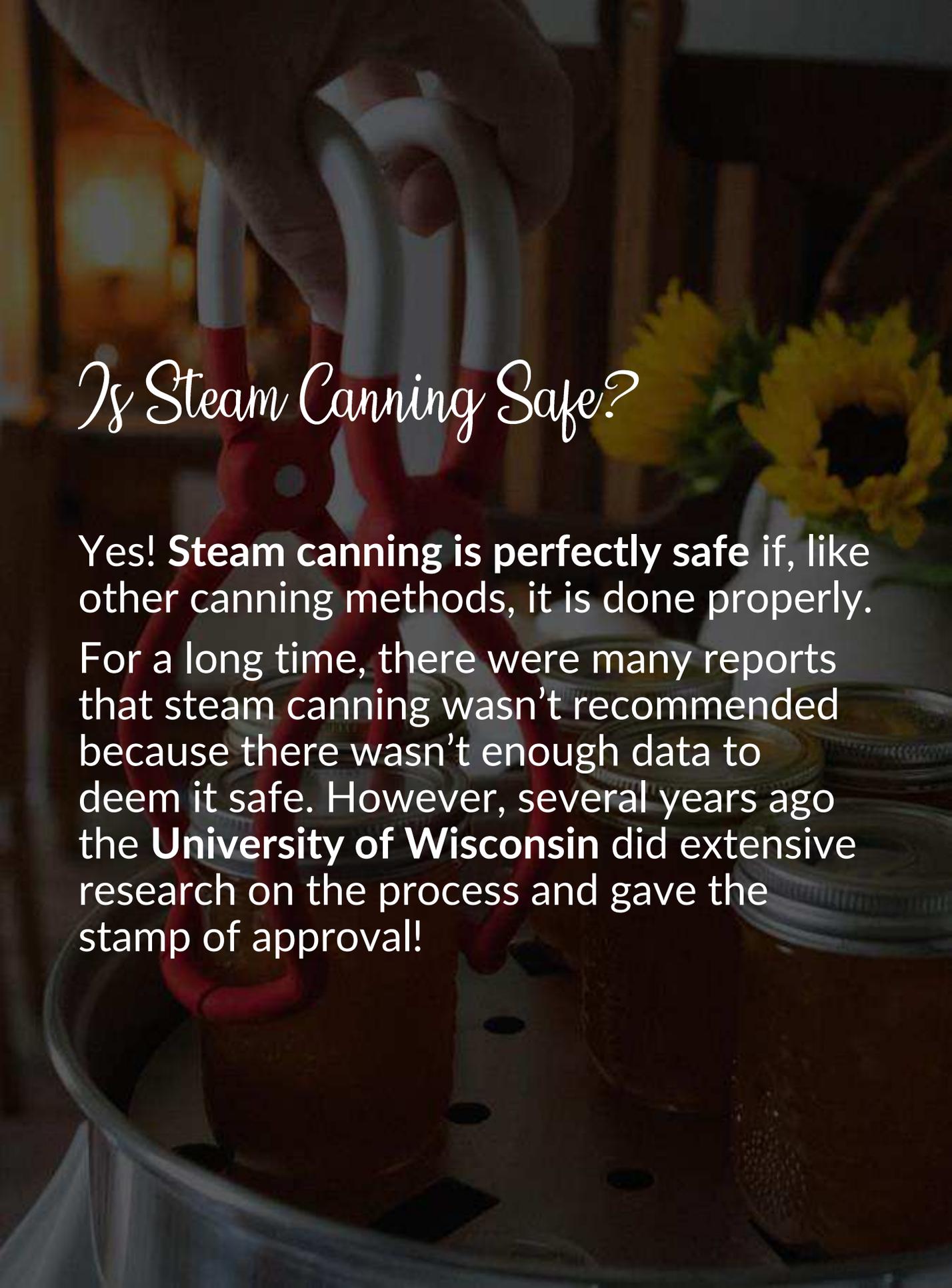


Steam Canners are Easy to Use

There's **no lowering jars into boiling water – or lifting them out.** I don't know about you but lowering my rack of filled jars is almost as nerve-wracking as when it comes time to pulling them out.

Reaching into the hot canner and trying to grab those little jars can be daunting. I am always afraid I am going to drop one and splash scalding water all over the place. I actually did once, and miraculously didn't end up in the ER.

The rack in the steam canner is much more **level** than a traditional canner rack. Jars in the traditional rack often shift, tilt, or sometimes even fall over. This risks your seals and leads to more seal failures. The smooth rack in the steam canner allows even the notoriously tipsy, small jelly jars to stay level.



Is Steam Canning Safe?

Yes! **Steam canning is perfectly safe** if, like other canning methods, it is done properly.

For a long time, there were many reports that steam canning wasn't recommended because there wasn't enough data to deem it safe. However, several years ago the **University of Wisconsin** did extensive research on the process and gave the stamp of approval!

What Foods can be Steam Canned?

Steam canning can be used to process foods that are **naturally acidic** – with a pH level of **4.6 or lower**. Foods like apples, peaches and many other foods. It can also be used to process acidified foods like pickles, jams and salsas.

Essentially, **if a food is safe for hot water bath canning, then it is likely safe to be steam canned**. The exception would be if the processing time exceeds **45 minutes** for where you live.

The reason for the time limitation, is because the steam is continually venting and the water boiling. Unlike with a water bath canner, you **cannot add additional boiling water** to the canner as it is processing.





How To Steam Can Safely

Choose the Right Foods and Recipes

Remember: **Only acidic foods** that are safe for hot water bath canning, can be steam canned. Foods that are **not acidic** – like meats, soups, beans and others – that **must be pressure canned**, cannot be steam canned.

Only use tried and true recipes.

Use [recipes](#) that have been tested and deemed safe for hot water bath canning, and are for quart, pint or smaller jars. Recipes chosen should also have a processing time for 45 minutes or less. Any recipe that requires a longer processing time, will need to be done in a traditional hot water bath canner.



A kitchen scene featuring a white ceramic pitcher filled with bright yellow sunflowers. To the left, a white bowl holds several white eggs. In the foreground, several clear glass jars are arranged on a metal tray, which is placed on a white stove. The background shows a wooden chair and a wooden spoon holder with various kitchen utensils.

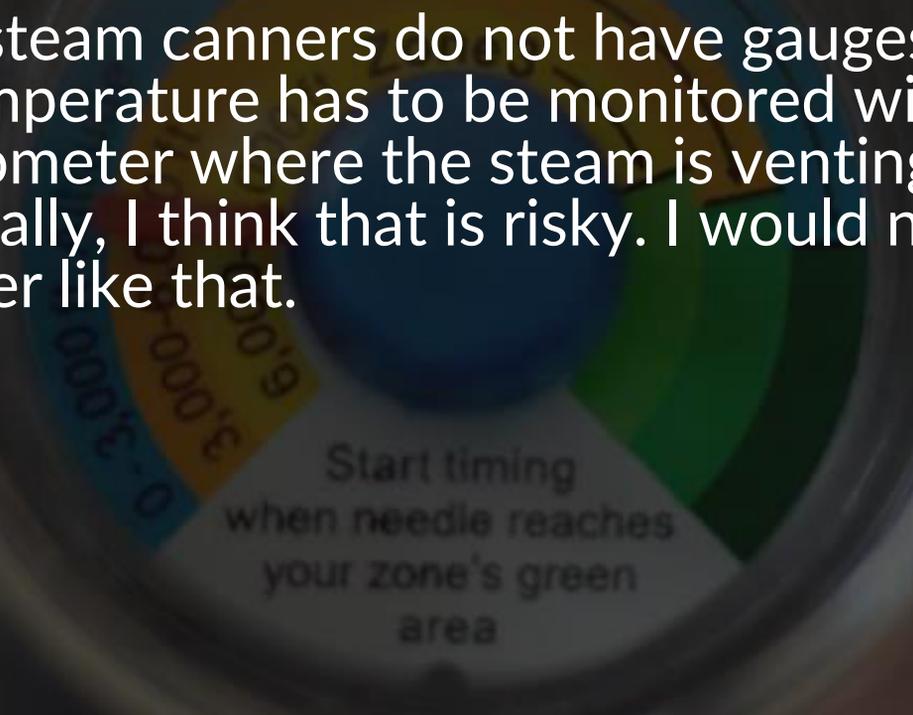
Heat the Jars

Jars should be pre-heated and filled with hot liquid, whether it is raw or hot-packed foods.

Maintain The Temperature

Jars have to be processed at **210-212°F**. If the lid begins bouncing or spitting water, lower the heat of your stove enough to stop that action but still maintain the correct temperature. If the stove is too hot, and you boil the water dry, the food will not be properly processed and is unsafe.

Some steam canners do not have gauges and the temperature has to be monitored with a thermometer where the steam is venting. Personally, I think that is risky. I would not use a canner like that.



Start timing
when needle reaches
your zone's green
area

The steam canner that I use has a gauge built into it that shows you without a doubt, when your canner has reached the required temperature. It even has readings for different elevations, so there is no questioning if it is the proper temperature or not.

Processing Time

Processing time does not begin until the steam canner has reached the appropriate temperature. The lid cannot be opened and you must **maintain the appropriate temperature the entire time.** Processing time is the same in a steam canner as it is in a hot water bath canner. As with all canning recipes, the time must be adjusted according to the elevation for where you live. (See the article on my website that explains this.)

Once the processing time has finished, turn off the heat. Then carefully **remove the dome lid** – tilt it away from you so you don't burn yourself with the steam.





Use a jar lifter to transfer your processed jars to the surface where you will allow them to cool – whether a cooling rack or a towel-lined counter. The jars should cool naturally, away from drafts for at least 12-24 hours. That's it!

As I said before, steam canning is my favorite method of non-pressure canning. I rarely use my traditional hot water bath canner anymore, because the steam canner is simply so much easier to use!

Give it a try, I'm sure you will agree!





10 Favorite Recipes

Recipes

The following pages contain my family's **10 favorite recipes** that are high acid foods, so they can be processed in a steam canner.

- Spiced Apple Preserves
- Clover Blossom Jelly
- Strawberry Jalapeno Jam
- Pomegranate Jelly
- Watermelon Jelly
- Vanilla Peach Jam
- Zucchini Bread Jam
- Spicy Dill Pickles
- Curry Pickled Cauliflower
- Pickled Slaw

Spiced Apple Preserves



Delicious apple preserves, with chunks of apple, and spiced with cinnamon and nutmeg. This recipe makes about 8 half pint jars.

Spiced Apple Preserves

Ingredients:

- 4 c apples, peeled, sliced and cored (for this recipe, I use sweet, "eating" apples, like Fuji, Macintosh, Jonathan, Red Delicious, etc.)
- 1 c water
- 1 Tb bottled lemon juice
- 1.75 ounce powdered pectin
- 4 c sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1 lemon, thinly sliced (seeds removed)





Instructions:

1. Combine the apples, water and lemon juice in a large non-reactive pot.
2. Bring it to a boil, then reduce the heat, cover and simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Whisk in the powdered pectin.
4. Bring the mixture back to a boil.
5. Add in the sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg and lemon slices.
6. Bring the mixture to a rolling boil, and boil for 1 minute – stirring constantly.
7. Remove it from the heat and ladle into prepared half pint jars, leaving 1/4 inch head space. Use a bubble wand to remove any air bubbles.

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9. Wipe the jar rims with a damp cloth that is dipped in white vinegar to remove any residue.
10. Close the jars with lids and rings and place the jars in your canner.
11. Process the jars for **10 minutes**.

Note: All canning recipes give instructions for elevations under 1,000 feet. If you live at a higher elevation, adjust for your elevation. See my article on the website for more information.

12. Allow to cool in a draft-free location for 12-24 hours.
13. Test the seals, remove the rings, wiped down the jars, label and store in your pantry.



Clover Blossom Jelly



Learn how to make a delicious and unusual jelly from the clovers that grow in your yard

Clover Blossom Jelly

Ingredients:

- 2 c clover blossoms, white, red or crimson
- 2 1/2 c water, boiling
- 1/4 c lemon juice, bottled
- 1.75 oz powdered pectin, classic
- 4 c sugar, organic preferred





Instructions:

1. To begin, you will need to pick 2 cups of clover blossoms. Pick ones that look fresh and healthy.
2. Wash the blossoms with cold water, then place them in a quart mason jar or other heat-safe container. Pour in the boiling water. Close the lid and let this sit overnight to create a clover infusion.
3. Prepare your canning supplies and jars.
4. Use a jelly bag or cheese cloth to strain the solids from the infusion. You will need 2 1/4 cup of liquid. If for some reason you don't have enough, you can add a little water to make up the difference.
5. Combine the clover infusion, lemon juice and powdered pectin in a large non-reactive pot.

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6. Stir over high heat until it comes to a rolling boil. Boil for 1 minute.
7. Add in all of the sugar and bring it back to a boil, stirring continually. Boil hard 1 minute.
8. Remove it from the heat and skim off any foam.
9. Ladle the jelly into prepared, hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch of headspace.
10. Remove any air bubbles.
11. Wipe the rim of the jar with a damp cloth dipped in white vinegar to remove any residue.

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12. Place a lid and ring on the jar, finger tight.
13. Process the jars in your canner for **10 minutes**.
(Adjust for elevation)
14. Carefully transfer the jars to an out of the way place, away from drafts. I generally line the counter with a folded dish towel or use my canning mat that a subscriber made for me.
15. Allow the jars to cool undisturbed for 24 hours.
16. The next day remove the rings, test the seals, label the jars and store in your pantry.
17. If a jar didn't seal, place it in your refrigerator to use.

Enjoy!



Strawberry Jalapeno Jam

Don't let the word *jalapeño* scare you.
This jam is all flavor and zero heat.
It's my most popular canning recipe!

Strawberry Jalapeno Jam

Ingredients:

- 4 cups crushed strawberries, approximately 2 quarts of strawberries – washed and stems removed.
- 1 cup minced jalapeño peppers, approximately 4-5 peppers, cores and seeds removed
- 1/4 c lemon juice, bottled
- 1.75 oz. powdered pectin, classic
- 7 c sugar





Instructions:

1. To begin, you will need to prepare 8 half pint canning jars and lids. Have these prepped and ready to go, along with your steam canner and canning supplies.
2. Combine the crushed strawberries, minced jalapeño peppers, lemon juice and pectin in a large stock pot.
3. Bring this mixture to a simmer, stirring continually. When it begins to bubble, add in the sugar.
4. Bring the entire mixture to a rolling boil (this is where the big pot plays in) stirring rigorously with a long handled spoon or spatula (non-metal.)

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5. Boil it for one minute and reduce the heat all the way down to low. Continue stirring until it settles down and is still.

6. Once the jam has settled, use a ladle to scrape off the foam from the top of the jam. Discard the foam.

7. Carefully ladle the hot jam into the prepared hot jars. Give the jam in the pot a stir each time you fill a jar. Jars should be filled to 1/4 inch head space.

8. Use a damp cloth to wipe the rim of the jar, making certain it is clean. (I dip the cloth in white vinegar.) Place a lid and ring on the jar, and place it into your canner. Repeat with all of the jam and jars.

9. Process your jars for **10 minutes**. (Adjust for elevation.)

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10. After the 10 minute processing time, carefully remove your jars to a surface that is covered with a folded towel. This should be a draft-free location, out of the way where the jars can sit undisturbed for 12-24 hours. In a short time, you will begin to hear the “Ping!” of success. The sound of the lids suctioning down and vacuum sealing.

11. After the cooling period, you can remove the rings if you like and store the sealed jars in your pantry.

12. Open jars must be refrigerated.

Enjoy!



Pomegranate Jelly



This Pomegranate Jelly is incredibly easy to make, and because it uses store bought juice, you can make it any time!

Pomegranate Jelly

Ingredients:

- 3 1/2 c pomegranate juice
- 1 Tb lemon juice
- 6 Tb classic powdered pectin, or 1.75 ounce box
- 1/2 teaspoon butter
- 5 c granulated sugar



Instructions:

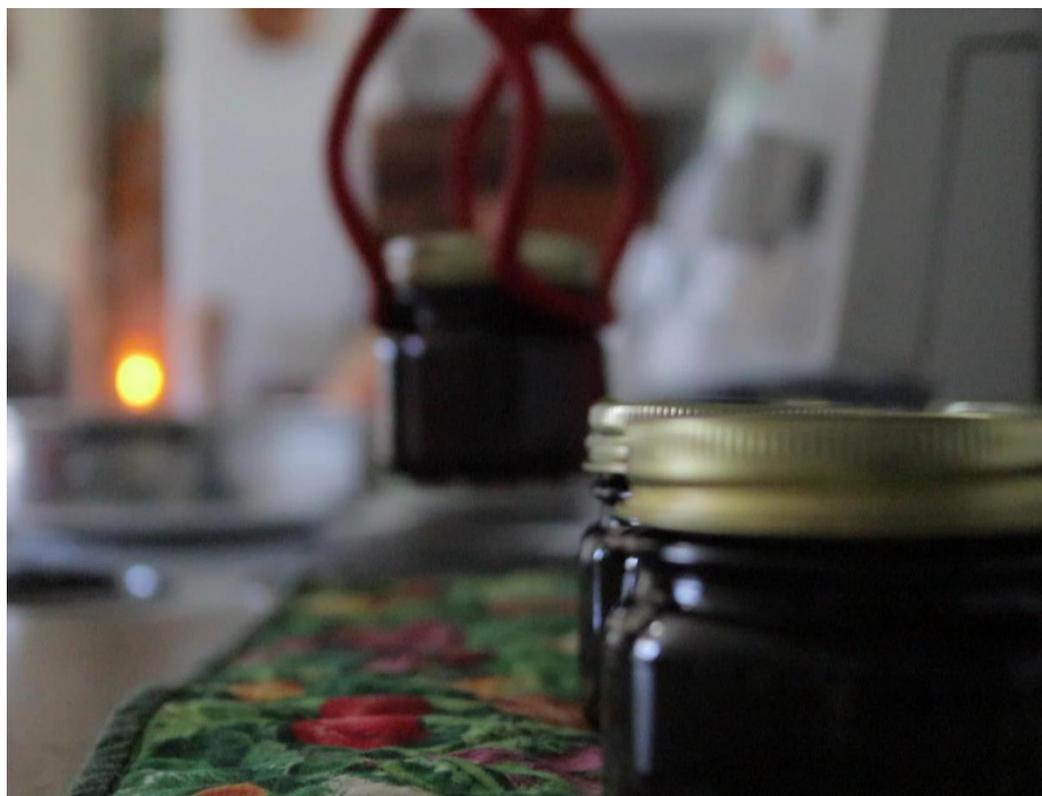
1. To begin, combine the pomegranate juice and lemon juice in a large, non-reactive pot.
2. Slowly whisk in the pectin.
3. Add in the butter.
4. Heat the mixture to a boil, stirring continually. Boil for 1 minute.
5. Add the sugar, and bring the mixture back up to a rapid boil. Boil for 1 minute.
6. Remove it from the heat and remove any foam that may be there. (The butter prevents most or all of it.) Immediately ladle the jelly into hot half-pint canning jars, leaving 1/4 inch of headspace.
7. Wipe the rims of the jars with a damp cloth that has been dipped in white vinegar.

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8. Place a lid and ring on the jar and place the jar in the steam canner. Do this with all of the jars.
9. Process the jars for **10 minutes**. (Adjust for Elevation.)
10. After the jars have processed, turn off the heat, remove the lid of the canner and let the jars rest for 5 minutes.
11. Transfer the jars to a line surface in a draft-free location and let them sit for 12-24 hours.
12. Remove the rings, test the seals and label the jars. Store them away in the pantry.

Enjoy!



Watermelon Jelly



You can enjoy that wonderful summer flavor all year long with this Watermelon Jelly!

Watermelon Jelly

Ingredients:

- 2 cups watermelon juice
- 5 c sugar
- 1/3 c white wine vinegar
- 1/4 c bottled lemon juice
- 2 pouches liquid pectin



Instructions:

1. Combine the watermelon juice, sugar, vinegar and lemon juice in a large pot.
2. Bring the mixture to a boil, stirring continually. Boil 1 minute.
3. Add in the liquid pectin, and bring the liquid back to a full boil. Boil 1 minute.
4. Remove it from the heat.
5. Ladle the jelly into hot, half-pint jars. Leave 1/4 inch head space.



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Using a food mill to juice your watermelon makes it easy to get the watermelon juice for the jelly

6. Wipe the jars with a damp cloth that is dipped in white vinegar.
7. Close with lids and rings.
8. Process the jars in the steam canner for **10 minutes**. (Adjust for elevation.)
9. Allow the jars to cool in a draft-free location for 12-24 hours.
10. Remove the rings, test the seals and label the jars.

Enjoy!



Vanilla Peach Jam



Beautiful Peach Jam made with sugar that is infused with the flavor of vanilla bean

Vanilla Peach Jam

Ingredients:

- 7 c granulated sugar
- 2 vanilla beans
- 4 cups crushed peaches, skins and pits removed, about 4 lb
- 2 Tb lemon juice, bottled
- 1/2 teaspoon unsalted butter
- 1 pouch liquid pectin, 3 ounces



Instructions:

Prepare the Vanilla Sugar



1. To begin, put the sugar in a container with a lid.
2. Use a sharp paring knife to split the vanilla beans in half the long way. Scrape out all of the vanilla beans and put them in the sugar. Cut the pod in small pieces, about 1/2 inch or so, and put them in the sugar.
3. Use a spoon to stir the vanilla bean all into the sugar. Break up the seeds as much as possible, they will try to stay together in a lump.
4. Close your container and let it sit for 2 days, stirring occasionally.
5. After 2 days, sift the vanilla pod pieces out of the sugar and discard. The small beans will stay, but you want to remove any large chunks.

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Making the Jam

1. Remove the skins and pits from the peaches, and crush them with a potato masher.
2. Combine the peaches, sugar, lemon juice and butter in a large non-reactive pot. Heat over medium heat, stir and cook until the sugar is dissolved.
3. Turn up the heat and bring it to a boil. Boil for 1 minute.
4. Add the liquid pectin, and bring it to a rolling boil. Boil hard for 1 minute.
5. Remove the jam from the heat, and jar it up.
6. Ladle the hot jam into hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch of head space.
7. Use a bubble wand to remove any air bubbles.



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8. Wipe the rim of the jars with a damp cloth dipped in white vinegar.
9. Place a lid and ring on the jars closing to finger tight.
10. Place the jars in your steam canner.
11. Process the jars for **10 minutes**. This time is for pint, half pint or 4 ounce jars. (Adjust for elevation.)
12. After the jars have processed, transfer them to a lined surface in a draft-free location and let them rest undisturbed for 12-24 hours.
13. Remove the rings, test the seals, label and store in your pantry.
14. If a jar did not seal, place it in your refrigerator to use immediately.

Enjoy!



Zucchini Bread Jam



This unusual jam recipe has the flavor of classic Zucchini Bread, but in the form of a Spreadable jam.

Zucchini Bread Jam

Ingredients:

- 4 cups finely shredded zucchini
- 1 c apple juice
- 3 ounces powdered pectin (1 pouch)
- 1/3 c raisins
- 1 Tb bottled lemon juice
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
- 3 c sugar



Instructions:

1. To begin, combine the shredded zucchini, apple juice, pectin, raisins, lemon juice, cinnamon and nutmeg into a large pot. (I always use an 8 quart, stainless-steel stock pot. Enameled cast iron is also fine. You never want to use aluminum or other reactive metal. That includes the utensils as well.)
2. Stir the ingredients together and bring it to a rolling boil over medium high heat. A rolling boil is a boil that can not be stopped by vigorous stirring.
3. Add the sugar and again bring it to a rolling boil. Stir continually. Boil for 1 minute and remove it from the heat.
4. Ladle the jam into prepared half pint jars. Leave 1/4 inch of head space.



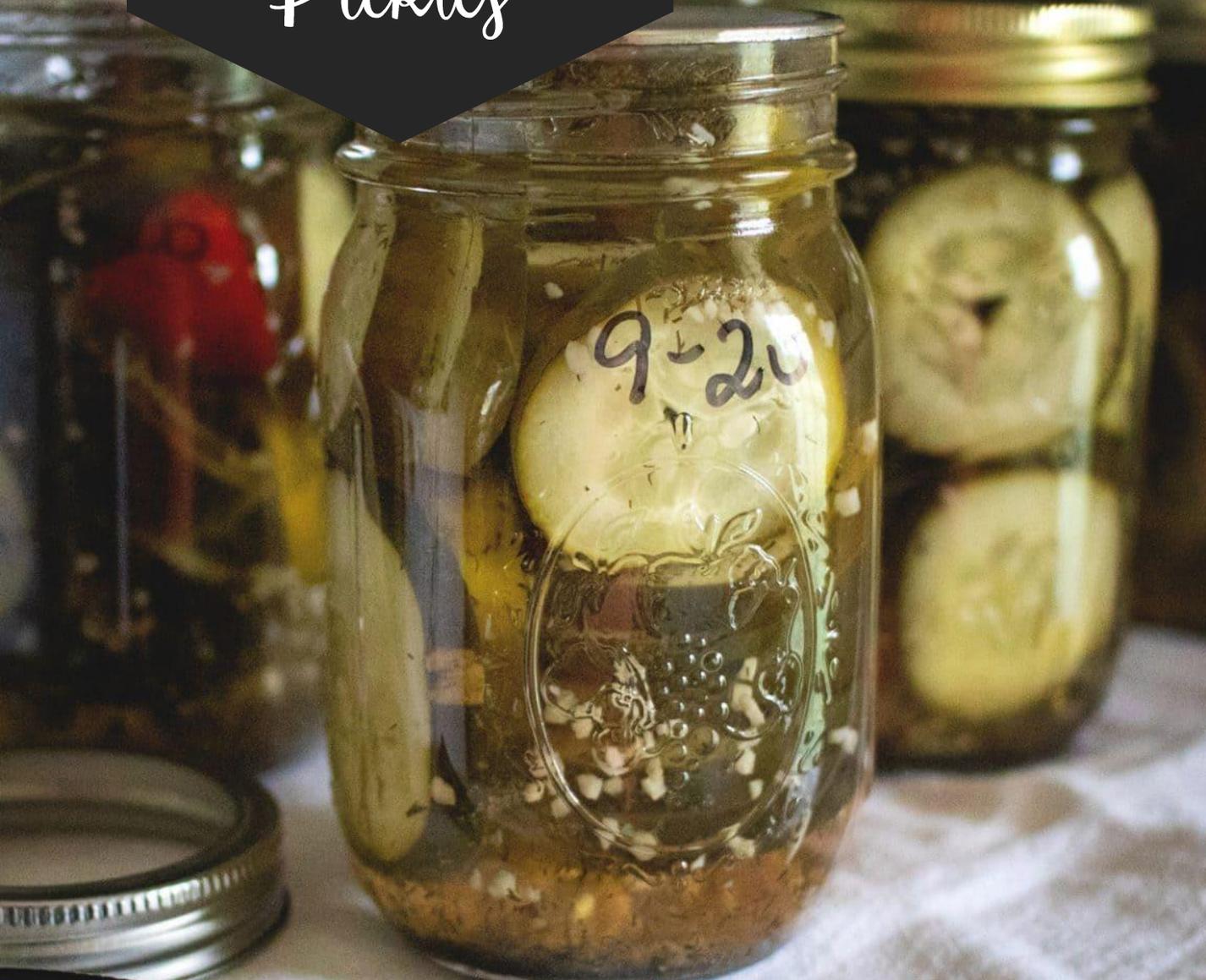
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5. Remove air bubbles, wipe the rims, and add the lids and rings.
6. Place the jars in your steam canner, and process for **15 minutes**. (Adjust for elevation.)
7. When they are done processing, turn off the heat, and remove the lid to the canner and allow the jars to sit for 5 minutes.
8. Carefully remove the jars to a surface that is lined with towels, or a cooling rack – in a place that is draft-free. Leave the jars, undisturbed for 12-24 hours.
9. Remove the rings and test the seals.
10. Label and store in your pantry.

Enjoy!



Our Favorite Spicy Dill Pickles



These spicy dill pickles are packed full of flavor, and not too sweet. I can barely keep jars of them in the pantry, because they get eaten so fast!

Our Favorite Spicy Dill Pickles

Ingredients:

- 8 lb cucumbers, washed and drained
- 3/4 c sugar
- 1/2 c canning/pickling salt
- 1 quart water
- 1 quart white distilled vinegar
- garlic cloves, see recipe instructions
- hot chili peppers, washed and drained, *see recipe instructions*
- dry dill, *see recipe instructions*
- pickle crisp, *see recipe instructions*



Instructions:

1. To begin, you will slice all of the cucumbers with a mandolin or knife. Discard the blossom end as you slice all of the cucumbers.
2. Cut the stems from the chili peppers (use gloved hands.)
3. Combine the salt, sugar, water and vinegar in a large pot. Bring it to a boil. reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes.
4. Place a whole or minced clove of garlic in each hot jar.
5. Place a chili pepper in each jar.
6. Pack the cucumber slices into the jars, leaving 1/4 inch head space.
7. Add in 1/2 teaspoon of dry dill and 1/8 teaspoon pickle crisp to each pint jar. (1 tsp dill and 1/4 tsp pickle crisp for quarts.)



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8. Ladle the liquid into the jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace.
9. Use a bubble wand to remove any air pockets. Add additional liquid if needed to return the level to 1/4 inch headspace.
10. Wipe the rims of the jar with a damp rag that has been dipped in white vinegar. This ensures that there is no residue, and your lids can seal properly.
11. Close with lids and rings.
12. Process the jars in your steam canner for **15 minutes**. (Adjust for elevation.)
13. Place the jars on a cooling rack or counter lined with towels, in a draft-free location for 12-24 hours.
14. Remove the rings, test the seals and label the jars.

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15. Allow the pickles to sit for **at least 2-3 days** before you try them. **A week would be better.** This will give the cucumbers time to properly pickle in the liquid.

Enjoy!

Curry Pickled Cauliflower



These spicy dill pickles are packed full of flavor, and not too sweet. I can barely keep jars of them in the pantry, because they get eaten so fast!

Curry Pickled Cauliflower

Ingredients:

- 6 quarts water
- 2 Tb canning salt
- 12 c cauliflower florets, this takes 4-5 heads of cauliflower
- 4 cups water, distilled or filter
- 4 cups white vinegar
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 2 cups honey
- 2 cups onion, thinly sliced
- 1 c red bell pepper, diced
- 2 Tb mustard seeds
- 1 Tb celery seed
- 2 tsp curry powder
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes
- pickle crisp



Instructions:

1. To begin, cut and break your cauliflower into bite sized florets.
2. In a large pot, combine 6 quarts of water and the canning salt. Bring them to a boil and add the cauliflower to the water. Boil for 3 minutes and pour the cauliflower into a colander to drain. Let it sit for now.
3. In a stainless steel stockpot or large soup pot, combine all of the rest of the ingredients except the pickle crisp.
4. Bring the mixture to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer it for 5 minutes.
5. Pack the cauliflower into hot, clean pint jars.
6. Add 1/8 teaspoon of pickle crisp to each jar.
7. Fill the jar with the brine mixture to 1/2 inch headspace.

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8. Use a bubble wand to remove air bubbles, and add brine as needed to adjust for the 1/2 inch head space.

9. Wipe the rim of the jar with a damp cloth dipped in white vinegar to remove any residue. Close the jars with a lid and ring.

10. Place the jars into your canner and process the jars for **15 minutes**. (Adjust for elevation.)

11. Once the time is completed, turn off the heat and open the canner. Let the jars rest for 5 minutes.

12. Transfer the jars to a draft-free surface that is lined with a towel or other cloth.

13. Let the jars cool for 12-24 hours. Remove the rings, test the seals, label and store them away in your pantry.

14. Allow the jars to sit for 1-2 weeks to develop the flavor. The pickled cauliflower is best when chilled.

Enjoy!



Easy Pickled Slaw



This Pickled Coleslaw with carrots is an easy canning recipe. You'll love the great flavor that this tasty side has!

Easy Pickled Slaw

Ingredients:

- 1 head cabbage, green or purple – shredded
- 2 Tb canning & pickling salt
- 3 whole carrots, peeled and finely shredded
- 2 c water
- 2 1/2 c white distilled vinegar
- 2 1/3 c granulated sugar
- 4 pinches celery seed
- 1/2 teaspoon pickle
crisp



Instructions:

1. To begin, prepare your jars and canner. Jars should be washed, inspected and ready for use.
2. Combine the shredded/thinly sliced cabbage in a large bowl with the canning salt. Toss the cabbage to mix the salt all through it. Cover the bowl with a tea towel and set it aside for 2 – 4 hours.
3. Place cabbage in a colander, and rinse with cold water to remove as much of the salt as possible. Work in batches, and then let the cabbage rest in the colander a few minutes while you prepare the brine.
4. Combine the water, vinegar and sugar in a large, nonreactive pot. Bring the mixture to a boil, and let it boil for 1 minute. Reduce the heat to keep the brine nice and hot while you do the next step.
5. Put the shredded cabbage in a large bowl and add the shredded carrots. Mix them together.

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6. Pack the cabbage and carrot mixture into your jars, leaving 1/2 inch of head space.
7. To each jar add a pinch of celery seed and 1/8 teaspoon of pickle crisp.
8. Ladle in the brine.
9. Remove any air bubbles with a bubble wand, and adjust the volume to maintain the head space if needed.
10. Wipe the rims of the jars with a damp cloth that is dipped in white vinegar to remove any residue.
11. Close the jars with a lid and ring.
12. Process the coleslaw in your canner for **15 minutes**. (Adjust for elevation.)





13. Allow the jars to rest on a lined surface in a draft-free location for 12-24 hours.

14. Remove the rings, and test the seals. Label the jars and store them in your pantry.

15. Allow the jars to sit in your pantry for 4 weeks, giving the cabbage time to pickle and for the flavor to develop.

Enjoy!



Find these and countless more recipes on my website, many with videos!

A Good Life Farm.com

Additional Helpful Links

The following articles may be of help to you in your food preservation. Click the titles to visit the article in your browser.

[How to Adjust Canning Recipes for Elevation](#)

[How to Substitute Powdered Pectin for Liquid Pectin](#)

[Dry Canning and other Canning Questions](#)

[How to Fix Runny Jelly or Jam – Set Failure](#)

If you are reading this in print, simply search for these titles on my website.