

Home Canning is Way to Enjoy Seasonal Eating

There's nothing quite so satisfying as enjoying fruits and vegetables from your own private stock of canned foods and preserves. And, if you've grown your own, as so many people are doing in these inflationary times, canning and preserving can be particularly economical.

However, beginning home canners should be careful to use the proper equipment and follow proper procedures—carelessness can result in spoilage or even death.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture warns that pressure canners should be used for meat, poultry and all vegetables except tomatoes. The reason for this admonition is that such foods are low in acid and need the high temperatures of pressure canning to kill deadly botulism germs and organisms that spoil foods.

Experts also warn that cutting the processing time can result in damage; so can makeshift supplies. Fluctuating heat is another pitfall to avoid, according to experts; heat should be kept steady during processing.

When selecting produce for

canning, make sure that fruits are fresh and firm and that vegetables are young and tender. (In the case of tomatoes, "do not use overripe ones, as tomatoes lose acidity as they mature.") Be sure to wash produce thoroughly as dirt contains some of the most die-hard bacteria.

You can readily obtain canning supplies in most supermarkets and discount stores. Canning doesn't require a great deal of equipment, but it is essential to have the proper items on hand.

The procedure is not complicated, consisting simply in heating fruits and vegetables hot enough to destroy spoilage organisms. The U.S. Department of Agriculture offers a complete guide, "Home Canning of Fruits and Vegetables", which is available for 45 cents from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

Correct canning equipment and procedures can add up to savings for the family budget, the enjoyment of good seasonal foods all year long, and the satisfaction of saying, "I put it up myself!"





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