



Canning from City to Country



Classic American cooking is taking the nation by storm. From the spicy specialties of the Southwest to the robust soups and stews of the Northeast, regional recipes are gaining national popularity. What better way to re-create the flavor of the heartlands than with home-grown produce, canned to preserve its flavorful goodness.

According to Ball Corporation and National Presto Industries, you don't have to be a rural resident to undertake a canning project. Rooftop gardens are sprouting up in cities coast-to-coast. In the suburbs, grow-your-own has always been a hobby. Even if you don't have a green thumb, you can still can it, using selections from the farmstand or supermarket.

With the right equipment, like home canning jars and a pressure canner, pressure canning is easier than ever before. The secret to successful canning is to select the freshest produce available and carefully follow the manufacturers' directions that accompany the canning jars and pressure canner.

A variety of foods, including meat, vegetables, fruit and herbs, are excellent for canning. As the following recipes demonstrate, an entire meal, from Squash Soup to Herbed Vegetables to Beef in Red Wine, can be prepared, canned and enjoyed later on. Meat sauce is a make-ahead topping for spaghetti or other pasta. Peachy Chili Sauce, eaten on the side or atop a meat dish, and Dilled Zucchini Sticks round out the dinner menu. Take advantage of summer's bounty to create a smorgasbord for the future.



CANNING TIPS

- To reduce jar breakage, use a non-metallic utensil such as a plastic spatula, to remove air bubbles from jars.
- Process 1/2 pint jars for the same length of time as pint jars and 1-1/2 pint jars the same amount of time as quart jars.
- Always use canning recipes from a reliable source, such as the United States Department of Agriculture.
- Prepare home canning jars and lids according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for operation of pressure canner.
- Vent the pressure canner to remove air from the unit and jars. This allows processing to be done at an accurate pressure. When processing at 10 pounds, vent for 7 to 10 minutes; at 15 pounds pressure, vent for 5 minutes.
- Before tasting canned foods, check foods for spoilage indicated by broken seals, leakage, mold, gassiness, spurting liquid when jar is opened, sliminess, cloudiness and disagreeable odors. Even if no signs of spoilage are obvious, canned meats, vegetables and other low acid foods should be boiled for 15 to 20 minutes before tasting. Or pour canned food into a pressure cooker and heat to 15 pounds pressure. Let pressure drop of its own accord.

Squash Soup and Sauce Base

- 12 cups cubed summer squash (yellow, zucchini, etc.)
- 3/4 cup chopped onions
- 3/4 cup chopped celery
- 3 cups cubed potatoes (about 1-pound)
- 8 cups chicken broth
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder (optional)
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme leaves or 1-1/2 teaspoons dry thyme
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil or 1-1/2 teaspoons dry basil
- 1 teaspoon salt

Combine vegetables and chicken broth. Bring to a boil and cook 3 minutes. Add seasonings. Ladle into clean, hot jars leaving 1/2-inch head space. Add additional boiling chicken broth, if more liquid is needed. Remove air bubbles. Adjust caps. Process in a pressure canner at:

- 10 pounds pressure—Pints 30 minutes
Quarts 40 minutes
- 15 pounds pressure—Pints and Quarts 20 minutes

Yield: 9 pints.

CREAMED SQUASH SOUP—Boil 1 pint jar Squash Soup and Sauce Base for 15 minutes. Puree mixture in food processor or blender, adding chicken broth if desired. Add 1 cup yogurt or sour cream and blend. Serve hot or chilled. Makes 2 servings.

Beef in Red Wine

- 6 slices bacon, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 5 pounds round steak, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 onions, thinly sliced
- 3 cups peeled, grated apple
- 3 cups shredded carrot (about 6 large)
- 1-1/2 cups beef broth
- 1-1/2 cups dry red wine
- 6 cloves garlic, minced
- 6 small bay leaves
- 3 teaspoons fresh thyme or 1 teaspoon dry thyme

Fry bacon, stirring occasionally. When crisp and lightly browned, remove bacon. Brown steak cubes in bacon drippings. Add onion, apple, carrot, broth, wine, garlic and bay leaves. Bring to a boil and cook until all pink is gone from meat. Ladle hot mixture into clean, hot jars, leaving 1-inch head space. Add 1/2 teaspoon thyme to each pint or 1 teaspoon to each quart. Remove air bubbles. Adjust caps. Process in a pressure canner at:

- 10 pounds pressure—Pints 75 minutes
Quarts 90 minutes
- 15 pounds pressure—Pints and Quarts 50 minutes

Yield: 6 pints or 3 quarts.

2 Way Herbed Vegetables

- 16 cups cut green beans (about 2-pounds)
- 4 cups sliced carrots (about 1-pound)
- 1/4 cup sliced celery
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 4 cups cubed new potatoes (about 1-1/2 pounds)
- HERB MIXTURE 1
- 8 sprigs dill
- 2 teaspoons dill seed
- 4 cloves garlic
- 4 teaspoons chopped parsley
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 16 peppercorns
- HERB MIXTURE 2
- 4 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
- 4 teaspoons chopped parsley
- 4 cloves garlic
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 16 peppercorns

Combine vegetables and cover with water. Bring to a boil and cook 3 minutes. Layer hot vegetables in clean, hot jars leaving 1/2-inch head space. Prepare herb mixtures and divide among jars of vegetables. Pour hot cooking liquid over vegetables, leaving 1/2-inch head space. Add additional boiling water, if more liquid is needed. Remove air bubbles. Adjust caps. Process in a pressure canner at:

- 10 pounds pressure—Pints 30 minutes
Quarts 40 minutes
- 15 pounds pressure—Pints and Quarts 20 minutes

Yield: 12 pints or 6 quarts.

Dilled Zucchini Sticks

- 4 pounds zucchini
- Water
- 1/2 cup salt
- 6 cups cider vinegar
- 2 cups water
- 4 cups sugar
- 4 teaspoons mustard seed
- 2 teaspoons celery seed
- 2 teaspoons cayenne pepper
- 8 cloves garlic
- 8 heads dill

Cut zucchini in half crosswise; then into lengthwise sticks. Cover with 1-inch water and salt. Let stand 2 hours. Drain thoroughly. Combine vinegar, 2 cups water, sugar, mustard seed, celery seed, and cayenne pepper. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes. Pack zucchini sticks lengthwise into clean, hot jars, leaving 1/4-inch head space. Add 1 garlic clove and 1 dill head to each jar. Pour hot liquid over zucchini, leaving 1/4-inch head space. Remove air bubbles. Adjust caps. Process 15-minutes in boiling water bath. Yield: 8 half pints.

Casbah Meat Sauce

- 3 pounds ground beef
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 4 hot green chili peppers, seeded and minced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 7 pounds ripe tomatoes, chopped (about 17 medium)
- 2 cups dry red wine
- 4 bay leaves
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 tablespoons cinnamon
- 3 tablespoons chopped fresh oregano or 1 tablespoon dry oregano
- 4 tablespoons chopped parsley

Brown beef; pour off drippings. Stir in onion, peppers and garlic; cook until tender. Add tomatoes, wine, bay leaves, salt and cinnamon. Bring to a boil and simmer until thickened (about 30 minutes). Remove bay leaves. Stir in oregano and parsley. Ladle into clean, hot jars, leaving 1-inch head space. Adjust caps. Process in a pressure canner at:

- 10 pounds pressure—Pints 75 minutes
Quarts 90 minutes
- 15 pounds pressure—Pints and Quarts 20 minutes

Yield: 8 pints or 4 quarts.

Peachy Chili Sauce

- 15 ripe tomatoes, peeled, cored, and chopped
- 12 ripe peaches, peeled, pitted, and chopped
- 4 medium onions, peeled and chopped
- 2 small chili peppers, seeded and chopped
- 1 medium red or green sweet pepper, seeded and chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 cups cider vinegar
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice

Combine all ingredients, stirring to mix. Bring to a boil; lower heat and cook over low heat until mixture thickens, stirring occasionally (about 90 minutes). Pour hot mixture into clean, hot jars, leaving 1/4-inch head space. Remove air bubbles. Adjust caps. Process 15 minutes in boiling water bath. Yield: 8 pints.