

The Sampler

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Canning Season Dilemmas

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In this issue:

Canning Season Dilemmas	1
Canning Season Dilemmas continued	2
Top Four Tips to Cultivating an Attitude of Gratitude	3
EFNEP	4
Create Better Health News Corner	5

With canning and food preservation in full swing there are a few questions and concerns USU Extension food preservation experts would like to address:

Q: Since there is a shortage on Ball and Kerr canning lids, what can I do to preserve my harvest?

A: There are basically only two options-- freeze the produce, pie fillings, jams and jellies, salsa; OR, dehydrate the fruits and veggies. (Freeze drying is another option for those who have a freeze dryer.) We know that cucumbers do not freeze or dehydrate well, and about the only thing that is still a viable option for cucumbers is a refrigerator pickle.

Q: How do you know when your lids are out of date? Is there a best by date on the box?

A.: The USDA canning guide states the unused lids' should work well for 5 years from date of manufacture. Older unused lids may fail to seal on jars. No, a date is not always listed on the box. It is best

practice to write the date on the box when you purchase them and base it off of that date. You can also call the manufacturer.

Q: I have heard that the dome steam canner can be used in place of a water bath canner, is that true?

A: Steam canning recommendations have been recently updated. Steam canners are an acceptable method for processing high acid foods that have a processing time that is LESS than 45 minutes. A research tested recipe developed for a boiling water canner must be used in conjunction with the Atmospheric Steam Canner. https://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/nchfp/factsheets/steam_canners.html



Q: Is food still safe to eat when there is liquid lost and the product is exposed above the liquid level (siphoning)?

A: Siphoning, while frustrating does not pose a food safety issue — as long as the jar seals (sometimes siphoning liquids and food particles get in the way of sealing). The product is still fine to eat, but will discolor faster.

Q: When the jar doesn't seal within an hour or two, is it appropriate to turn it upside down to encourage the sealing to take place?

A: No, this is not a safe practice and turning the jars upside down may not provide a good vacuum seal. Sometimes it takes a few hours to seal. Wait patiently for the natural vacuum seal to happen. If it isn't sealed after 12-24 hours—reprocess, or freeze

Q: When steaming grapes to make grape juice, the juicer states that water bath is not necessary. Is that true? Or do we process?

A: All bottled fruit, including juices, are going to have a water bath processing time.

Q: Would the grape juice be processed for 10 minutes?

A: Grape juice processing times depend on the size of jar, and the altitude. Processing times can be found at https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_02/grape_juice.html

Q: How long are vegetables blanched?

A: It depends on the veggie, but a handout we will provide in the resource folder will have a table of blanching times. nchfp.uga.edu/publications/uga/uga_dry_fruit.pdf



Q: Why do I need to add lemon juice or citric acid to my tomatoes, my mother never did, and she canned for years?

A: There are so many different varieties of tomatoes across the country and combined with different growing conditions, not all tomatoes have a pH low enough to ensure safety from the botulism spore producing a toxin. So the recommendation to cover all tomato pH levels is to add 2 tablespoons lemon juice per quart, or 1/2 teaspoons of citric acid per quart.

Q: What is the rebuttal to the naysayer who would say that many people who canned these unsafe recipes lived to tell the tale?

A: Not every jar contains botulism spores, and there's no way to tell, no amount of washing, or sterilizing gets rid of it. If it's there, then the toxin grows if it is improperly canned. You're playing

Russian Roulette. At USU and USDA we encourage optimum food safety to significantly reduce the risk...and would hope you would do the same for those who eat your preserved food.

Q: Is it safe to home can tomato soup?

A: There are not many tested and approved recipe for different types of tomato soup. The Ball Blue Book does have one, but it won't turn out thick and creamy like a commercially canned soup. You could add dairy and thickener **AFTER** you open it to serve.

Resources you may want to become familiar with:

- USU Extension food preservation work group has a great website at <https://extension.usu.edu/preserve-the-harvest>
- The National Center for Home Food Preservation is fantastic: nchfp.uga.edu
- Ball Corporation Recipes: <https://www.freshpreserving.com> 

~Teresa Hunsaker

GOLDEN-LICIOUS CHEESE CAKE BARS

- 1/3 cup butter
- 1/3 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup flour
- 1/2 cup walnuts, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 cups golden delicious apples
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 package (8 oz.) cream cheese
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons light cream
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Blend butter and brown sugar in small mixing bowl. Add flour and walnuts. Mix to make crumb mixture. Reserve 1 cup for topping. Press remainder on to bottom of 8-inch square pan. Bake at 350° for 12 minutes until lightly browned. Cover crust with grated apples. In small bowl, blend sugar with cream cheese; beat until smooth. Add egg, cream, lemon juice, and vanilla. Beat well. Pour over apples and sprinkle with reserved crumbs. Bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes. Cool and cut into 2-inch squares. Yield:16.

Top Four Tips to Cultivating an Attitude of Gratitude

Current challenges may encourage many to reflect on what they are most grateful for in life. Cultivating gratitude can lead to amazing benefits, and not just during times of crisis. Some of these include:

- ◆ Improved relationships with others. Having an attitude of gratitude makes us nicer, more appreciative, enhances empathy, and reduces aggression. As a result, it can help us deepen our friendships, improve our marriages and family connections, and help us develop new positive relationships with others.
- ◆ Improved mental and physical health. Gratitude helps us to better cope with stress, increases self-esteem, and helps in boosting our coping skills when challenges arise. It also boosts our immune system. Research has also shown that gratitude can help individuals have more energy, and more and better sleep quality.
- ◆ Career boost. Gratitude can lead to better decision making, people skills, and can help boost productivity and goal achievement.

Gratitude has some amazing benefits! So how does one better cultivate this attitude of gratitude? Consider these four quick tips to increasing gratitude.

1. Keep a gratitude journal. Write down one or two things every day that you are grateful for. Get creative—searching for those small things like having warm water for a shower or a bed to sleep in can help to develop an attitude of gratitude. Reading through past entries can also provide a positive boost when needed.
2. Share your appreciation. Let others know that you appreciate who they are or what they have done. How to best show appreciation will depend on the person (a written note, a small gift, quality time together, etc.) but a sincere thank you is always appreciated.
3. Look for the positive. How we interpret the situation can impact our future thoughts and feelings. For example, when facing a challenge, look for the potential benefits such as increasing patience or empathy for others. Ask a friend or family member for help when it seems difficult to see any positives from a situation.
4. Some people need a visual reminder to maintain mindfulness of gratitude. For those

individuals it may be helpful to create a list of people or things that they may often take for granted and place it where they will see it often.

If you haven't already, consider giving yourself the gift of gratitude during this challenging time. It is free, doesn't take much time, and the benefits are enormous, long lasting, and one of the simplest ways to improve life satisfaction. ☺

~Naomi Brower
USU Extension Professor

References:

<http://www.webmd.com/women/features/gratitude-health-boost>
<http://happierhuman.com/the-science-of-gratitude/>

BAKED APPLE PIE EGG ROLLS w/Caramel Cream Cheese Dip

1 can apple pie filling Cinnamon and sugar
1 pkg. egg rolls wrappers ¼ cup melted butter

Place contents of apple pie filling in a bowl and cut up apple pieces into smaller pieces. Next, spoon approximately 2 tablespoons pie filling into an egg roll wrapper. Fold in sides of wrapper and roll tightly. Use a dab of water to secure the tip of the wrapper. Repeat with the remaining egg roll wrappers and filling. Place egg rolls on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, seam side down. Brush each egg roll with melted butter. Bake at 375° for 10 to 12 minutes, then brush each egg roll with melted butter again. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar; bake for an additional 5 minutes. Cool egg rolls for 5 to 10 minutes before serving. When serving in caramel cream cheese dip. Note: If you prefer to fry these in oil, preheat the oil to 350° and fry each egg roll until golden brown.

Caramel Cream Cheese Dip

1 package (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
¼ cup brown sugar
½ teaspoon cinnamon
½ cup caramel ice cream syrup/sauce
2 cups cool whip, whipped cream, or similar topping

In medium mixing bowl, combine cream cheese, brown sugar, cinnamon, and caramel sauce. Beat well until light and fluffy. Fold in the whipped topping, and drizzle with a little more caramel sauce for serving.



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FOOD
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Is the high cost of food getting you down? Here are 10 tips to help you stretch your food dollars:

- 1 Plan, plan, plan!** Before you head to the grocery store, plan your meals for the week. Include meals like stews, casseroles, or stir-fries, which “stretch” expensive items into more portions. Check to see what foods you already have and make a list for what you need to buy.
- 2 Get the best price** Check the local newspaper online, and at the store for sales and coupons. Ask about a loyalty card for extra savings at stores where you shop. Look for specials or sales on meat and seafood—often the most expensive items on your list.
- 3 Compare and contrast** Locate the “unit price” on the shelf directly below the product. Use it to compare different brands and different sizes of the same brand to determine which is more economical.
- 4 Buy in bulk** It is almost always cheaper to buy food in bulk. Smart choices are family packs of chicken, steak, or fish and larger bags of potatoes and frozen vegetables. Before you shop, remember to check if you have enough freezer space.
- 5 Buy in season** Buying fruits and vegetables in season can lower the cost and add to the freshness. If you are not going to use them all right away. Buy some that still need time to ripen.
- 6 Convenience costs...go back to the basics** Convenience foods like frozen dinners, pre-cut vegetables, and instant rice, oatmeal, or grits will cost you more than if you were to make them from scratch yourself. Take the time to prepare your own—and save!

- 7 Easy on your wallet** Certain foods are typically low-cost options all year round. Try beans for a less expensive protein food. For vegetables, buy carrots, greens, or potatoes. As for fruits, apples and bananas are good choices.
- 8 Cook once...eat all week!** Prepare a large batch of favorite recipes on your day off (double or triple the recipe). Freeze in individual containers. Use them throughout the week and you won't have to spend money on take-out meals.
- 9 Get our creative juices flowing** Spice up your leftovers—use them in new ways. For example, try leftover chicken in a stir-fry or over a garden salad or to make chicken chili. Remember, throwing away food is throwing away your money.
- 10 Eating out** Restaurants can be expensive. Save money by getting the early bird special, going out for lunch instead of dinner, or looking for “2 for 1” deals. Stick to water instead of ordering other beverages, which add to the bill.

Source: USDA

Home Buyer Education Classes

USU Extension Office

1181 No. Fairgrounds Dr., Ogden

- ◆ Saturday, Oct. 24, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- ◆ Saturday, Dec. 5, 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

These classes help prepare people for the home buying process. Topics that will be covered are: how much can you afford, mortgage loans, credit, shopping for a home, what to expect at closing and much more. Cost is \$25 per household for certificate and free if you only want education. Call 801-399-8207 to register.



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