

## **TREA How-To Workshop Series on Local Food**

### **Today's Discussion: Basic Canning Method with Pamela Reid**



#### **Why Canning?**

Canning stops the spoilage of produce to preserve flavour and gives you the ability to live a more self-sufficient lifestyle. With canning, there are two main methods of preserving low and high acid foods. They are the water bath or pressure canning. The focus here is on water bath canning, great for beginners as pressure canning requires more skill and specialized equipment. A water bath canner is a large pot filled with hot water with either a wood or wire rack that forces air out of both the food and the jars, and it creates a vacuum where bacteria cannot survive.

#### **Bernardin Canning Starter Kit**

- (4) 250 ml Bernardin regular mouth jars with lids and bands, (1) funnel
- (1) canning rack, (1) bubble remover/headspace, (1) jar lifter, 28 gm Pectin crystals

#### **Jar Preparation**

1. Fill 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s of the canner with water or enough to cover the jars with the canning rack inside. Let it sit to boil, which roughly takes 30 to 45 minutes over high heat.
2. Sterilize the jars, lids, and other equipment by setting them in the boiling water for 10 to 15 minutes before you are ready to fill them.

#### **Filling the Jars**

1. Once your recipe is ready, transfer one jar at a time by using the jar lifter to remove the jars from the boiling water to your work area.
2. Fill jars using the canning funnel and a ladle leaving about 1/4 to 1 inch of headspace.
3. Use the bubble remover/headspace along the interior of the jars to release any trapped air bubbles. Also, use a damp cloth or paper towel to clean the top edge of the jars.

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4. Place the sterilized canning lids on the jars by using the magnetic lid, which makes it more convenient to remove the lids one at a time from the boiling water. Next, screw the bands onto the jars, but not overly tight so air cannot escape during the canning process.

### **Processing the Filled Jars**

1. Using the jar lifter, load the jars onto the canning rack and lower the rack into the water bath. There should be approximately 1 inch of boiling water above the jars and ½ inch space between them. Next, cover the canner and bring it to a full boil. Once at full boil, the processing time starts. This depends on the recipe you are using. Note, if the water is boiling too much, then reduce the heat until it comes down to a more gentle boil.
2. After the processing time is complete, transfer the jars onto a cooling rack or towel on a counter using the jar lifter, allowing a 1 inch space between them to cool down. Note, you will hear a pinging sound as the lids flex and seal, which is normal.
3. After the cooling stage, test that jars are sealed correctly by pushing down on the lid center. If sealed, they stay in place, if any lid fails, refrigerate to eat or use a new jar.
4. Wipe down the jars with a damp cloth to remove any residue from the canning process. Also, ensure to label jars with contents and canning dates, and then store in a cool, dark place, and use within 1 year.

### **Tips**

- Always inspect the canning jars for chips along the rim, which could result in unsealed jars or the jar breaking down in the canner.
- Clean jars, lids, other equipment, and workspace before sterilizing to prevent bacteria.
- Do not boil the metal canning lids or rings as extreme boiling water can harm the rubber sealing rings resulting in a broken seal or contamination. Instead, place them into the water that is simmering to clean them.
- Let the contents completely cool down, do not fill too high as this could unseal the jar.
- Non-acidic food should be processed in a pressure canner as opposed to a bath canner because it is not hot enough to destroy botulism bacteria and toxins unless you are going to consume the boiled food right away.

### **To learn more about canning, visit:**

- Bernardin Step by Step Guide: [Link](#)
- Home Canning Safety by Government of Canada: [Link](#)
- Preservation pantry: modern canning from root to top and stem to core by Sarah Marshall

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