



\$5.00

"Preserve today, Relish Tomorrow"

Entertain with Ease: Preserved Goodies for Gatherings & Gifting



UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County

Website: <https://link.ucanr.edu/mfp-cs>

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Food Safety / Preserving Basics

Food preservation starts with food safety. Cleaning and sanitizing your work area, washing hands frequently, properly handling produce and meat, and avoiding cross-contamination are all part of the process in avoiding food-borne illness.

Following recipes from trusted resources is the next step in ensuring safety when preserving food. This is especially important when canning: It's critical to follow a current, research-based recipe and to use the correct canning method for the food being processed.

For further details on food safety in general, as well as information on a variety of food preservation topics, visit our Food Safety website, where you'll find a variety of free, downloadable publications and educational posters.

Publications of particular importance that relate to the subjects covered in this handout include:

High Acid Canning Basics ***Introduction to Food Safety*** ***Holiday Food Safety***

Website link: <https://link.ucanr.edu/mfp-cs-foodsafety>.

You can also access the site by scanning this QR code with your smartphone or tablet.



Additional Safe Preserving Resources:

UC Master Food Preservers of Central Sierra <https://link.ucanr.edu/mfp-cs>

UC Master Food Preserver Program <https://mfp.ucanr.edu/>

National Center for Home Food Processing <https://nchfp.uga.edu/>

USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning <https://nchfp.uga.edu/resources/category/usda-guide>

So Easy to Preserve <https://setp.uga.edu/>

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Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving. ©2024. Newell Brands Inc.

All New Ball Book of Canning and Preserving. ©2023. Newell Brands Inc.

Ball website: <https://www.ballmasonjars.com/>

Bernardin website: <https://www.bernardin.ca/>

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Apple Maple Cider Sauce

Maple syrup brings additional fall flavor to this variation on basic applesauce. Delicious on its own or spread on breakfast fare such as muffins or waffles, it also makes a great side dish for pork, ham, or a classic holiday turkey. It, of course, would be a very welcome gift, too!

Yield: about 7 half-pint jars

**BW/STEAM
CANNING**

4½ lbs apples (preferably red)
1 cup apple cider
2 cinnamon sticks
1½ cups maple syrup (preferably dark)

1. Wash, quarter, and remove both stem and blossom ends from the apples, then cut the quarters in half. Add the apples, cider, and cinnamon sticks to a large, deep, nonreactive saucepan. Boil gently, covered, until the apples are soft, about 25 minutes. Remove from the heat.
2. Remove the cinnamon sticks and crush the apples with a potato masher. Pass the mixture through a sieve or strainer to remove skins and seeds. Measure 6 cups of applesauce and return to the saucepan.
3. Bring the applesauce to a boil. Add the maple syrup and return to a boil. Boil 1 minute, stirring constantly.
4. Ladle hot sauce into a hot jar, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed, by adding more hot sauce. Wipe jar rim with a clean paper towel or cloth dampened with white vinegar. Place lid and ring on jar, tightening ring only finger-tip tight (unless otherwise directed by the manufacturer). Place jar in canner. Repeat with remaining jar(s).
5. Process **half-pint** jars in a boiling water or atmospheric steam canner as follows:
 - a. 10 minutes at 0-1,000 feet elevation
 - b. 15 minutes at 1,001-3,000 feet elevation
 - c. 20 minutes at 3,001-6,000 feet elevation
 - d. 25 minutes at 6,001-8,000 feet elevation
6. For boiling water canning, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes. For atmospheric steam canning, turn off heat, leave canner lid on and wait 5 minutes. Remove jars to a rack or towel and let cool, undisturbed, for 12-24 hours and then check seals. Store unsealed jars in the refrigerator or reprocess. Clean and label sealed jars and store in a cool, dry dark location.

Source: bernardin.ca

SWAPPING APPLES AND PEARS

Apples and pears are interchangeable in canning recipes. Feel free to exchange one for the other, or even use a mix of both (just be sure to measure the same quantity).

Cranberry Sauce (Whole Berry)

Cranberry sauce is a classic for any holiday table. And beyond accompanying the turkey and mashed potatoes, it can be used for so much more, such as Slow Cooker Cranberry Meatballs, filling for thumbprint cookies, fruit leather, and a tart addition to a cheese platter or charcuterie board. The easy cranberry mustard recipe (see box below) is a great way to use your preserves: it is delicious served alongside ham or turkey, or on meat and/or cheese sandwiches.

Yield: about 8 half-pint or 4 pint jars

**BW/STEAM
CANNING**

4 cups granulated sugar
4 cups water
8 cups fresh cranberries, washed and picked over
grated zest of 1 large orange (*optional*)

1. In a large non-reactive saucepan, combine sugar and water. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Boil hard for 5 minutes.
2. Add cranberries and return mixture to a boil. Reduce heat and boil gently, stirring occasionally, until all berries burst and liquid begins to sheet from a metal spoon, about 15 minutes. Stir in orange zest, if using, during the last few minutes of cooking.
3. Ladle hot sauce into a hot jar, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed, by adding more hot sauce. Wipe jar rim with a clean paper towel or cloth dampened with white vinegar. Place lid and ring on jar, tightening ring only finger-tip tight (unless otherwise directed by the manufacturer). Place jar in canner. Repeat with remaining jar(s).
4. Process **half-pint or pint** jars in a boiling water or atmospheric steam canner as follows:
 - a. 15 minutes at 0-1,000 feet elevation
 - b. 20 minutes at 1,001-3,000 feet elevation
 - c. 25 minutes at 3,001-6,000 feet elevation
 - d. 30 minutes at 6,001-8,000 feet elevation
5. For boiling water canning, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes. For atmospheric steam canning, turn off heat, leave canner lid on and wait 5 minutes. Remove jars to a rack or towel and let cool, undisturbed, for 12-24 hours and then check seals. Store unsealed jars in the refrigerator or reprocess. Clean and label sealed jars and store in a cool, dry dark location.

Source: Ball Complete Book of Home Food Preservation (2024)

EASY CRANBERRY MUSTARD

Blend together: 1 cup whole-berry cranberry sauce, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup Dijon mustard, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp dried crushed red pepper. Store leftovers in the refrigerator.

Salted Caramel Pear Butter

This delicious pear butter is made easy because the slow cooker does the cooking for you, requiring only an occasional stirring, freeing you up to do other things! Once the pear butter is thickened, can it up (or simply freeze it if you prefer). Wonderful as a spread for breads and muffins, a filling for hand pies or other desserts, or even a topping for ice cream, this spread is sure to please. And pear butter makes a wonderful gift as well.

Yield: 4 half-pint jars

**BW/STEAM
CANNING**

4 lbs pears, peeled, cored, and coarsely chopped
1/3 cup apple cider
2 Tbsp bottled lemon juice
2 1/2 cups dark brown sugar
2 tsp sea salt or kosher salt

1. Place chopped pears, apple cider, and lemon juice in a 4 to 6 quart slow cooker set to high. Simmer, covered, until pears have softened, about 40 minutes. Turn off the heat.
2. Process the pear mixture using an immersion blender (or transfer in batches and process in the bowl of a food processor), until the purée is smooth.
3. Add the brown sugar to the pear purée in the slow cooker and turn the heat to high. Place the lid on a diagonal over the slow cooker, allowing steam to escape at both ends. Simmer on high, stirring every 30 minutes or so, until the puree thickens, darkens in color, and holds its shape on a spoon, about 3 to 4 hours.
4. Ladle hot pear butter into a hot jar, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed, by adding more hot pear butter. Wipe jar rim with a clean paper towel or cloth dampened with vinegar. Place lid and ring on jar, tightening ring only fingertip tight (unless otherwise directed by the manufacturer). Place jar in canner. Repeat with remaining jar(s).
5. Process **half-pint** jars in a boiling water or atmospheric steam canner as follows:
 - 15 minutes at 0-1,000 feet elevation
 - 20 minutes at 1,001-3,000 feet elevation
 - 25 minutes at 3,001-6,000 feet elevation
 - 30 minutes at 6,001-8,000 feet elevation
6. For boiling water canning, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes. For atmospheric steam canning, turn off heat, leave canner lid on and wait 5 minutes. Remove jars to a rack or towel and let cool, undisturbed, for 12-24 hours and then check seals. Store unsealed jars in the refrigerator or reprocess. Clean and label sealed jars and store in a cool, dry dark location.

Source: ballmasonjars.com

Heavenly Fig Jam

Since it's made with dried figs, this delicious fruit spread can be made year-round. Incredibly versatile, it can top morning fare such as toast, scones, and oatmeal; it can be baked in cookies, cakes, and other sweet treats; and it pairs wonderfully with a variety of cheeses, making it perfect for charcuterie boards and all manner of appetizers.

Yield: about 6 half-pint jars

**BW/STEAM
CANNING**

3½ cups sugar
18 oz dried figs
¾ cups water
⅓ cup orange juice
1 Tbsp bottled lemon juice
6 Tbsp (1 – 1.75 oz package) powdered pectin
⅓ cup orange-flavored liqueur (*optional*)

1. Measure sugar into a bowl and set aside. In a large, deep, nonreactive saucepan, combine the figs and water. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring frequently. Reduce the heat, cover the pan, and boil gently until softened, about 20 minutes. Let cool slightly. Transfer the figs to a food processor and purée. Measure 3 cups of fig purée.
2. Return the fig purée to the pan and add the orange juice and bottled lemon juice. Add the pectin and whisk in until dissolved. Bring the mixture to a boil over high heat, stirring frequently. Add the sugar all at once and return to a full rolling boil, stirring constantly. Boil hard, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Immediately stir in the liqueur (if using). Remove the pan from the heat and skim off any foam.
3. Ladle hot jam into a hot jar, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed, by adding more hot jam. Wipe jar rim with a clean paper towel or cloth dampened with vinegar. Place lid and ring on jar, tightening ring only finger-tip tight (unless otherwise directed by the manufacturer). Place jar in canner. Repeat with remaining jar(s).
4. Process **half-pint** jars in a boiling water or atmospheric steam canner as follows:
 - 10 minutes at 0-1,000 feet elevation
 - 15 minutes at 1,001-3,000 feet elevation
 - 20 minutes at 3,001-6,000 feet elevation
 - 25 minutes at 6,001-8,000 feet elevation
5. For boiling water canning, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes. For atmospheric steam canning, turn off heat, leave canner lid on and wait 5 minutes. Remove jars to a rack or towel and let cool, undisturbed, for 12-24 hours and then check seals. Store unsealed jars in the refrigerator or reprocess. Clean and label sealed jars and store in a cool, dry dark location.

Source: *Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving*

FIG JAM AND CHEESE PAIRINGS

Pairing especially well with fig jam are blue, brie, camembert, aged cheddar, feta, goat, gouda, gruyere, Havarti, manchego, and ricotta.

Pear Roasted-Garlic Preserves

Roasting intensifies the flavor of the pears and garlic, and the thyme and pepper add an extra savory note to this elegant preserve. A great accompaniment to meats and cheeses, Pear-Roasted Garlic Preserves can also serve as a base for a delicious salad dressing. Elevate your fall and holiday greens! Whisk together 2 Tbsp of preserves with 2 Tbsp of balsamic vinegar, then whisk in enough good-quality olive oil to reach your desired consistency.

Yield: about 4 half-pint jars

- 1 garlic bulb (about 1 oz)
- 3½ to 4 lbs ripe pears, peeled, cored, and cut into eighths
- 1¼ cups sugar, divided
- ½ cup water
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar (5% acidity)
- 4 Tbsp powdered pectin
- 1½ tsp fresh thyme leaves
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp ground black pepper

**BW/STEAM
CANNING**

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Cut off the pointed end of the garlic bulb, place on a piece of aluminum foil, fold to seal, and place in a corner of a large rimmed baking sheet. Arrange the pear wedges in a single layer on the baking sheet. Bake for 25 minutes.
2. Turn the pears over, sprinkle with ¼ cup of the sugar, and bake for 15 more minutes, or until soft. Transfer the pears to a 6-qt nonreactive Dutch oven and add the water. Place the foil package of garlic directly on an oven rack and bake for 15 more minutes, or until soft.
3. Squeeze the pulp from the garlic cloves into the pear mixture. Mash the mixture with a potato masher until coarsely chopped. Stir in the vinegar, pectin, thyme, salt, pepper, and remaining 1 cup sugar. Bring to a boil, stirring often. Cook to the gel point.

The best method to test for gel is the temperature test. Using a calibrated thermometer, monitor the temperature when the preserves start to boil. Gel point is reached at 220°F (or 8°F above the boiling point at your elevation). For further information, see our poster at <https://ucanr.edu/sites/default/files/2023-12/391137.pdf>.

4. Ladle hot preserves into a hot jar, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed, by adding more hot preserves. Wipe jar rim with a clean paper towel or cloth dampened with vinegar. Place lid and ring on jar, tightening ring only finger-tip tight (unless otherwise directed by the manufacturer). Place jar in canner. Repeat with remaining jar(s).
5. Process **half-pint** jars in a boiling water or atmospheric steam canner as follows:
 - 10 minutes at 0-1,000 feet elevation
 - 15 minutes at 1,001-3,000 feet elevation
 - 20 minutes at 3,001-6,000 feet elevation
 - 25 minutes at 6,001-8,000 feet elevation
6. For boiling water canning, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes. For atmospheric steam canning, turn off heat, leave canner lid on and wait 5 minutes. Remove jars to a rack or towel and let cool, undisturbed, for 12-24 hours and then check seals. Store unsealed jars in the refrigerator or reprocess. Clean and label sealed jars and store in a cool, dry dark location.

Source: All New Ball Book of Canning and Preserving (2023)

Christmas Pepper Jelly

This beautiful jelly is delicious not only with cheese or as a filling for appetizers; use it as a glaze for grilled meats or vegetables. Making chili for Big Game Day? Try adding a jar to your favorite recipe to really pump it up. It makes a lovely gift as well (consider canning the jelly in smaller 4-ounce jars so there's more to spread around!).

Yield: about 3 half-pint jars

**BW/STEAM
CANNING**

- 1/3 cup finely sliced (1/8") dried apricots
- 3/4 cup white distilled or white wine vinegar (5% acidity)
- 1/4 cup finely diced red onion
- 1/4 cup finely diced seeded sweet red pepper
- 1/4 cup finely diced green chili peppers (hot or sweet), including seeds
- 3 cups sugar
- 1 pouch liquid pectin

1. In a large, deep nonreactive saucepan, combine the apricots and vinegar. Let stand for 4 hours.
2. Add the diced red peppers, red onion, and green peppers. Stir in the sugar. Over high heat, bring to a full rolling boil that cannot be stirred down. Stir in the pectin. Boil hard, stirring constantly, for 1 minute. Remove from the heat and quickly skim off foam.
3. Quickly pour the hot jelly into a hot jar, dividing the solids between the jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Wipe jar rim with a dampened clean paper towel or cloth. Place lid and ring on jar, tightening ring only finger-tip tight (unless otherwise directed by the manufacturer). Place jar in canner. Repeat with remaining jar(s).
4. Process **half-pint** jars in a boiling water or atmospheric steam canner as follows:
 - a. 10 minutes at 0-1,000 feet elevation
 - b. 15 minutes at 1,001-3,000 feet elevation
 - c. 20 minutes at 3,001-6,000 feet elevation
 - d. 25 minutes at 6,001-8,000 feet elevation
5. For boiling water canning, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes. For atmospheric steam canning, turn off heat, leave canner lid on and wait 5 minutes. Remove jars to a rack or towel and let cool, undisturbed, for 12-24 hours and then check seals. Store unsealed jars in the refrigerator or reprocess. Clean and label sealed jars and store in a cool, dry dark location.

Source: *bernardin.com*

A PEPPER IS A PEPPER

The heat level of canned pepper products can be adjusted simply by swapping the types of peppers. The key is to swap the peppers – don't increase the amount called for in the recipe.

Pickled Marinated Mushrooms

Serve this delicious pickle as part of a simple hors d'oeuvre tray or fancy charcuterie board, or even as a side dish for a meal. Beyond the holidays, try them mixed into a pasta salad.

Yield: about 9 half-pint jars

**BW/STEAM
CANNING**

7 lbs small whole mushrooms*
 ½ cup bottled lemon juice
 2 cups olive or salad oil
 2 ½ cups white vinegar (5% acidity)
 1 Tbsp oregano leaves
 1 Tbsp dried basil leaves
 1 Tbsp canning/pickling salt
 ½ cup finely chopped onions
 ¼ cup diced pimiento
 2 cloves garlic, cut in quarters
 25 black peppercorns

*Select very fresh unopened mushrooms with caps less than 1¼ inch in diameter.

1. Wash mushrooms. Cut stems, leaving ¼-inch attached to cap. Place mushrooms in pan and add the lemon juice and water to cover. Bring to a boil, then simmer 5 minutes. Drain mushrooms.
2. Mix olive oil, vinegar, oregano, basil, and salt in a saucepan. Stir in onions and pimiento and heat to boiling.
3. Place ¼ garlic clove and 2-3 peppercorns in a hot half-pint jar. Fill the hot jar with the mushrooms and hot, well-mixed oil/vinegar solution, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if necessary by adding more hot liquid. Wipe jar rim with a clean paper towel or cloth dampened with vinegar. Place lid and ring on jar, tightening ring only finger-tip tight (unless otherwise directed by the manufacturer). Place jar in canner. Repeat with remaining jar(s).
4. Process **half-pint** jars in a boiling water or atmospheric steam canner as follows:
 - a. 20 minutes at 0-1,000 feet elevation
 - b. 25 minutes at 1,001-3,000 feet elevation
 - c. 30 minutes at 3,001-6,000 feet elevation
 - d. 35 minutes above 6,000 feet elevation
5. For boiling water canning, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes. For atmospheric steam canning, turn off heat, leave canner lid on and wait 5 minutes. Remove jars to a rack or towel and let cool, undisturbed, for 12-24 hours and then check seals. Store unsealed jars in the refrigerator or reprocess. Clean and label sealed jars and store in a cool, dry dark location.

Source: *USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning (2015)*



Lemon-Sage Wine Mustard

Besides being a great condiment to serve on a holiday table or alongside a charcuterie board, this mild mustard will perk up meat and cheese sandwiches, vegetable salads, and grilled meats.

Yield: about 5 quarter-pint (4 oz) jars

**BW/STEAM
CANNING**

1 bunch fresh sage leaves
 ¾ cup dry white wine
 ¾ cup yellow mustard seeds
 1 cup white wine vinegar
 grated zest of 2 large lemons
 6 Tbsp bottled lemon juice
 ½ cup liquid honey
 ¼ tsp salt

1. Finely chop enough sage leaves to measure ⅓ cup and set aside. Coarsely chop the remaining sage leaves and stems to measure ½ cup and place in a small nonreactive saucepan with the white wine. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring and pressing the sage to release flavor. Remove from the heat, cover tightly, and let steep for 5 minutes.
2. Transfer the sage infusion to a sieve placed over a glass or stainless steel bowl and press the leaves with the back of a spoon to extract all the liquid. Discard the solids and return the liquid to the saucepan. Add the mustard seeds, cover, and let stand at room temperature until the seeds have absorbed most of the moisture, about 2 hours.
3. In a blender or food processor, combine the marinated mustard seeds (including the liquid) and vinegar. Process until blended and most seeds are well chopped. There should be a slightly grainy texture.
4. Transfer the mixture to a nonreactive saucepan and add the lemon zest, lemon juice, honey, salt, and reserved finely chopped sage. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring constantly. Reduce the heat to low and boil gently, stirring frequently, until volume is reduced by a third, about 20 minutes.
5. Ladle hot mustard into a hot jar, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if necessary by adding more hot mustard. Wipe jar rim with a clean paper towel or cloth dampened with vinegar. Place lid and ring on jar, tightening ring only finger-tip tight (unless otherwise directed by the manufacturer). Place jar in canner. Repeat with remaining jar(s).
6. Process **quarter-pint** jars in a boiling water or atmospheric steam canner as follows:
 - a. 10 minutes at 0-1,000 feet elevation
 - b. 15 minutes at 1,001-3,000 feet elevation
 - c. 20 minutes at 3,001-6,000 feet elevation
 - d. 25 minutes above 6,000 feet elevation
7. For boiling water canning, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes. For atmospheric steam canning, turn off heat, leave canner lid on and wait 5 minutes. Remove jars to a rack or towel and let cool, undisturbed, for 12-24 hours and then check seals. Store unsealed jars in the refrigerator or reprocess. Clean and label sealed jars and store in a cool, dry dark location.

Source: Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving (2024)

Dried Orange Peel

Dried orange peel can be purchased at commercially, but it's easy to make your own. Use it in mulling spices, to flavor tea and other beverages, in stovetop potpourri, to decorate, and more!

To Dry Orange Zest:

Using the coarse side of box grater, scrape off just the zest (or use a vegetable peeler to remove thin strips of the zest, excluding the bitter white pith). Spread on leather sheets and dehydrate at 130°F, or bake in an oven at its lowest setting, stirring occasionally to break up clumps, for 3-4 hours, until the zest is firm and brittle, but just slightly pliable. For the best flavor, chop strips of dried orange peel just before using.

DEHYDRATING

To Dry Orange Slices:

Place thinly sliced oranges (a mandoline is helpful) on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake in the oven at its lowest setting, or in a dehydrator at 130°F, for several hours, until completely dry – there should be no signs of moisture. Chop the dried oranges finely with a spice grinder or food processor.



Gingered Pear Freezer Jam

This easy pear jam – with its burst of flavor from citrus juices and zest and hint of spice from ginger – requires no cooking! Make it ahead and store in the freezer (or refrigerator). Spread it on scones or English muffins, use it as a dessert sauce, or serve it with cheese and charcuterie.

Yield: about 5 half-pint jars

1½ cups sugar
 1 package (1.75 oz) freezer pectin
 3½ cups pear purée
 ⅓ cup fresh orange juice, strained
 1 tsp freshly grated orange zest
 1 Tbsp fresh lemon juice
 1 tsp freshly grated lemon zest
 1 tsp finely grated peeled ginger
 dash of salt

FREEZING OR REFRIGERATION

1. Stir sugar and pectin together in a bowl until well blended.
2. Add the pear purée, orange and lemon juices and zest, ginger, and salt, stirring to combine. Stir 3 minutes longer.
3. Ladle jam into freezer-safe containers, leaving ½" headspace, and apply lids. Let stand until thickened, about 30 minutes. Label and date the containers.
4. Refrigerate up to 3 weeks or freeze up to 1 year. Thaw frozen jam in the refrigerator.

Source: usapears.org

Easy Microwave Lemon Curd

This luscious fruit spread can be spread on scones or muffins, used as a filling for tarts, pies, cakes, donuts, and other desserts, or simply eaten by the spoonful. Traditional lemon curd requires stove-top cooking, but this easy version takes only a few minutes and a microwave.

Yield: 2 cups

¾ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (about 3 large lemons)
 1 cup granulated sugar
 8 Tbsp unsalted butter, melted
 2 large eggs, plus 2 large egg yolks
 zest of 1 lemon

**REFRIGERATION
OR FREEZING**

1. In a large microwave-safe bowl, vigorously whisk together all ingredients. To avoid bubble-overs, the contents should fill no more than one-quarter of the bowl (an 8-cup measuring cup works well here).
2. Microwave the mixture in 1-minute increments, removing the bowl from the microwave and stirring to combine after each minute. Once the curd starts to thicken, shorten the cooking intervals to 30 seconds to avoid overcooking. The curd is done when it coats the back of a spoon and starts to mound a bit as you stir and the temperature reaches at least 185°F. This will take about 4 to 8 minutes, depending on the strength of your microwave.
3. Stir the curd one more time, then pass it through a fine-mesh sieve into a clean bowl to remove the zest and any bits of cooked egg. Allow the curd to cool briefly, then re-whisk and press a piece of plastic wrap or parchment paper against the surface to avoid forming a skin. Cool the curd at room temperature until barely warm, then refrigerate until set, about 3 hours.
4. Keep the curd refrigerated for up to 3 weeks, or freeze for longer term storage.

Source: kingarthurbaking.com

"SHORT CUT" 2-INGREDIENT LEMON CURD

When you're out of time and even the easy microwave lemon curd recipe above will take too long, here is a super-quick recipe from thekitchn.com. It's also referred to as a pudding, which is perhaps more apt. While it doesn't have the same bright flavor or mouth-feel of a true lemon curd, it is smooth and creamy and lemony. And if you keep lemon juice in the freezer and a can of sweetened condensed milk in the pantry, a simple dessert topping can be whipped up in no time.

Whisk together a 14-oz can of sweetened condensed milk and ¼ to ⅔ cups of lemon juice (up to 1 cup). The lower amount of juice makes a curd that is sweeter, milkier, thicker, and milder in lemon flavor. Using ⅔ cup yields a curd that is brighter, tangier, and has a looser texture. Using a full cup of juice will make a product that is looser and more sauce-like. *Optional:* Add finely grated lemon zest for more flavor (but the curd will not be as smooth).

Cover and refrigerate for at least 15 minutes, then stir gently before using (avoid over-stirring as the curd can thin out). Can be made 1 day in advance.

Crunchy, Sweet & Spicy Pickled Green Beans

This refrigerator version of pickled dilly beans requires no canning, allowing you to make a jar (or more) in a jiffy. Use these flavorful beans as a cocktail garnish; on antipasto platters, relish trays, or charcuterie boards; with cheese (such as aged cheddar); in salads, with sandwiches, or as a side dish; or simply as a snack. Make these pickled beans spicier by adding additional red pepper flakes or sliced jalapeños, more sweet by adding a bit more sugar, or adjust the spices however you'd like (don't like dill? – then swap it out for celery seed or just leave it out).

Wrapped with a pretty ribbon (and a tag with refrigeration instructions), these pickles would make a delicious gift from your kitchen.

Yield: 1 quart jar

- 10 oz fresh green beans (or yellow wax beans)
- 1 cup white vinegar
- 1 cup water
- 1 Tbsp kosher or pickling salt
- 2 Tbsp sugar, or to taste
- ¼ tsp turmeric (*optional, for color*)
- ¼ tsp crushed coriander seeds (*optional*)
- 2 smashed garlic cloves
- 1 sprig fresh dill or ¼ tsp dill seeds
- ½ tsp mustard seeds
- ½ tsp red pepper flakes (or more to taste)
- ½ tsp whole black peppercorns

REFRIGERATION

1. Wash and trim the green beans to fit in the jar. *Note: While optional, blanching the beans will result in brighter color. To blanch, drop the beans in boiling water for 30 seconds (take care not to over-blanch), then immediately plunge into ice water. Drain thoroughly.*
2. In a saucepan, combine the vinegar, water, salt, sugar, and turmeric and coriander (if using). Bring to a boil, stirring until the salt and sugar dissolve completely (about 2-3 minutes).
3. Add the garlic cloves, dill, and spices to the jar, then pack the green beans in tightly. Carefully pour the hot brine over the beans, fully submerging them. Tap or shake the jar gently (or use a de-bubbling tool) to release air bubbles. Add more brine if needed.
4. Let the jar cool to room temperature, then cap tightly and refrigerate for at least 12 hours before serving (the best flavor develops after 1-2 days). Store in the refrigerator, where it will keep for about 2 weeks.

Source: notycheese.com

LABELLING AND DATING

Put a label with the product name and date not just on your canned products, but on your freezer and refrigerator items as well. Once frozen, many foods look alike and you can't tell for sure what they are. And we've all found containers lurking in the depths of our refrigerators with no recollection of quite how long they've been there. *TIP:* Include the expiration or "use by" date on the label as well.

Three-Fruit Relish

Use Your Preserves! This fresh alternative to classic cranberry sauce features orange marmalade for both sweetness and tartness. The fresh fruit provides great texture.

With cranberries in your freezer, you can make this colorful relish year-round.

Yield: 5 cups

- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup orange marmalade
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 pkg (12 oz) fresh or frozen cranberries, finely chopped
- 2 cups fresh raspberries
- 2 medium tart apples, diced

REFRIGERATION

1. In a large bowl, combine the sugar, marmalade, and lemon juice and mix well. Stir in the cranberries, raspberries and apples.
2. Cover and refrigerate. Stir before serving. Keeps refrigerated for about a week.

Source: tasteofhome.com

Pomegranate Salsa

A crisp, colorful salsa that's both sweet and savory – perfect for winter meals, plain or fancy. Great with chips, of course, but use it also as a relish to serve alongside grilled or braised meats or roasted turkey; in tacos; on top of salad greens; or stirred into rice or other grains.

Control the heat by increasing or decreasing the peppers (or replacing them with a milder pepper), or substitute the cucumber with diced celery or fennel.

Yield: 4 cups

- 2 ½ cups pomegranate arils
- 1 ⅓ cups seeded, diced cucumber
- 1 to 3 jalapeño peppers, seeds removed and minced
- ¼ to ⅓ cup finely chopped cilantro
- ⅓ cup diced red onion
- juice of ½ of a lime

REFRIGERATION

1. Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Serve immediately or chill until ready to serve.
2. Refrigerate leftovers for up to one week.

Source: goodlifeeats.com

DIY Boursin-Style Cheese Spread

Save money by making this easy spread that tastes just like the real thing. Beyond dips, use it to stuff mushrooms or chicken breasts, mix into mashed potatoes or pasta dishes, or top salads.

Yield: makes 6 oz (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup)

- 4 oz cream cheese, at room temperature
- 2 oz (4 tbsp / $\frac{1}{2}$ stick) butter, at room temperature
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp kosher salt
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp ground black (or white) pepper
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp garlic powder
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp dried dill weed
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp dried parsley
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp dried marjoram
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp dried basil
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp dried thyme
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp dried chives

REFRIGERATION

1. Mix all ingredients in a stand mixer (or by hand) until they are well combined. Transfer to a tightly-sealed container and refrigerate for at least a few hours to allow flavors to meld.
2. Serve at room temperature. Keeps, refrigerated, for about a week.

Source: *El Dorado County MFP Laura Crowley*

Cranberry Whipped Cream

This flavorful whipped cream, with its glorious pink color, is perfect for the holidays. It's thick and pipe-able, allowing you to top all manner of desserts, such as pound cake, chocolate tarts and cakes, and more. Try using it in place of plain whipped cream to top hot chocolate!

Yield: makes 2 cups (recipe can be doubled)

- 2 heaping cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- 1 cup cold heavy whipping cream
- 3 Tbsp confectioner's (powdered) sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp vanilla extract

REFRIGERATION

1. In a medium saucepan, heat the cranberries, stirring almost constantly, until the cranberries start to pop and release their juices. Add a small splash of water if necessary to get them started. Boil gently, stirring often, until the juices begin to evaporate and the mixture is nice and thick – this will only take a few minutes. Transfer the cranberries to a blender and carefully blend until smooth. Cool to room temperature (or chill) before using.
2. With electric beaters, whip the cold cream, sugar, vanilla, and 3 tablespoons of the cranberry purée. After the cream starts to thicken, lower the speed of the beaters and bring the mixture just to the firm peak stage (too much beating will give the whipped cream a grainy texture).
3. Use the whipped cream right away, or store it in a container with a tight-fitting lid in the refrigerator for up to 24 hours. Leftover cranberry purée will store, refrigerated, for about 1 week or in the freezer for up to 6 months.

Source: *theviewfromgreatisland.com*

French Vanilla Coffee Creamer

Elevate your morning beverage with homemade coffee creamer – delicious taste with no artificial ingredients! Greater creaminess will result from using a higher fat content milk or cream, however you can use whatever type you prefer, including dairy or non-dairy.

A lovely addition to a holiday breakfast or brunch (or of course after-dinner coffee and dessert), this creamer can be used in more than coffee and tea: Pour it over oatmeal or other cereals or French toast; use it in hot chocolate or smoothies or shakes; or replace the milk or cream in pancake/waffle batter or biscuits.

Yield: 3½ cups

1 can (14 oz) sweetened condensed milk
1¾ cup milk or cream
2 tsp vanilla extract

REFRIGERATION

Pour all ingredients into a 1-quart mason jar, apply an air-tight lid, and shake until well combined (or simply use a whisk or immersion blender). Store in the refrigerator, where it will keep for 1-2 weeks.

Source: 4sonsrusl.com

Apple Shrub (Two Ways)

Shrubs are refreshing vinegar-based beverages that can also be used for more than just drinks: drizzle over ice cream for a sweet and tangy topping, or use it to make a vinaigrette. This apple shrub offers two spice options: a sweet version featuring cinnamon (for an “apple pie” variation, add ½ of a whole nutmeg), or a more savory version with cardamom. Try making both!

To make a refreshing non-alcoholic soda, add a tablespoon or more to taste to a glass. Add ice and top with sparkling water or club soda (or still water if you prefer). For basic shrub-based cocktails, mix ¾ oz of shrub and 2 oz of your preferred liquor in a glass. Add ice if desired, the top with club soda or sparkling water. Adjust to taste, and enjoy responsibly.

Yield: about 1 cup

3 medium apples, quartered
1 cup apple cider vinegar
½ cup turbinado sugar
2 cinnamon sticks ~or~ 1 Tbsp cardamom seeds (removed from pods), lightly crushed

REFRIGERATION

1. Shred the apples using a box grater or food processor (there's no need to seed or core them first). Add the shredded apples and remaining ingredients to a nonreactive container, cover, and let sit in a cool place for up to 2 days. (TIP: Grinding the turbinado sugar into smaller granules can help it dissolve more quickly.)
2. After 2 days, strain the mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl, pressing on the solids to remove any remaining liquid. Pour the liquid into a sterilized jar or bottle, cap tightly, and shake well to combine. Discard the solids.
3. Store the shrub in the refrigerator, where it will keep for up to a year.

Source: Shrubs by Michael Dietsch

Ginger Syrup

Hot and sweet at the same time, this ginger syrup goes beyond beverages. Drizzle it over gingerbread, pancakes, biscuits, oatmeal, or whatever you desire. Presented in a pretty glass bottle, it makes a lovey gift.

Yield: 2½ cups

4 cups (about 16 oz) peeled fresh ginger root, cut into ¼" slices
3½ cups (1 lb, 9 ¼ oz) sugar
3½ cups (28 oz) water

REFRIGERATION

1. Bring all ingredients to a boil in a large, heavy saucepan. Boil for 45 minutes to 1 hour, until the mixture registers 216°F to 220°F on an instant-read thermometer. The lower temperature will make a thinner syrup that's easy to stir into drinks; the higher temperature will make a thicker syrup similar to the consistency of corn syrup. *NOTE: The syrup will thicken as it cools, so you can't tell while it's hot in the pan what the consistency will be – you will need to use a thermometer.*
2. Remove from the heat and carefully strain the mixture into a non-reactive container. Store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks, or freeze for longer storage.

Source: Sift Magazine

DIY Grenadine Syrup

The basis for many cocktails and non-alcoholic "mocktails" – including the classic Shirley Temple, grenadine easy to make at home. And by doing so, you avoid the high-fructose corn syrup and other additives found in commercial syrups. Grenadine is great to have on hand for the holidays (or any time of year), whether you're looking for a refreshing non-alcoholic beverage for adults or a fun treat for the kids.

To make Shirley Temple Mocktails: Fill a tall glass with ice. Add 1 oz (2 tbsp) grenadine, and if desired a splash of orange or pineapple juice. Top with lemon-lime soda (such as Sprite or 7-Up) or ginger ale. Add a maraschino cherry. For a bit more sophisticated version that adults may especially enjoy, fill a tall glass with ice. Add ½ oz (1 tbsp) grenadine, ¼ oz freshly squeezed lime juice, and 5 oz ginger ale. Top with skewered Luxardo cherries.

Yield: about 3 cups

16 oz 100% unsweetened pomegranate juice
2 cups sugar
2 Tbsp lemon juice

REFRIGERATION

1. Combine all ingredients in a medium pan. Cook over medium heat until bubbles appear at the edges of the liquid and the sugar is fully dissolved. **DO NOT BOIL.** Remove from the heat and allow to cool to room temperature.
2. Transfer to an airtight container(s) and store in the refrigerator for up to 1 month, or freeze for longer-term storage.

Source: www.sugarandsoul.co

DIY Poultry Seasoning

Beyond poultry, stuffing and gravy, try using this mix to season croutons, add it to fried chicken batter, or use it for pork, lamb, and meatloaf. This Poultry Seasoning blend is lighter in sage and rosemary (strong-flavored herbs that some find overpowering). You can always add more (or even less) to customize the blend.

Yield: about 4 Tbsp

5 tsp ground thyme
 4 tsp ground sage
 1¾ tsp ground marjoram
 1¼ tsp ground rosemary
 ¼ tsp black pepper
 ¼ tsp nutmeg

**ROOM TEMPERATURE
 STORAGE**

Recipe from the Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County

Hot Honey Spiced Nuts

These flavored nuts make a lovely addition to a cheese or charcuterie board, or can be served simply along with olives and a bit of cheese – or in a bowl all on their own. They make a great snack as well, and of course packed in a pretty container they'll make a beautiful gift.

Yield: about 6 cups

4 cups unsalted, roasted whole nuts (such as cashews, pecans, pistachios, or a mix)
 1 cup seeds (such as pumpkin, sesame, millet, quinoa, sunflower, nigella, or a mix)
 ¼ cup honey
 1 Tbsp unsalted butter (or coconut oil)
 1 tsp dried red pepper flakes
 1 tsp kosher salt, *divided*
 1 tsp turbinado sugar

**ROOM TEMPERATURE
 STORAGE**

1. Preheat the oven to 325°F and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. In a large bowl, combine the nuts and seeds.
2. In a microwave-safe bowl, combine the honey, butter (or coconut oil), red pepper flakes, and ½ tsp of the salt. Microwave until the butter has melted (about 40 seconds). *Alternatively, melt the mixture in a small saucepan on the stove.*
3. Pour the honey mixture over the nuts and seeds and stir until well coated, then spread out the nut mixture as much as possible into an even layer on the prepared baking sheet.
4. Bake, stirring occasionally, until the nuts are tacky and look and smell toasted, about 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from the oven and immediately sprinkle over the remaining ½ tsp salt and all of the turbinado sugar.
5. Let cool on the baking sheet, then transfer to a serving bowl or to an airtight container for up to 4 days.

Source: nytimes.com

Candied Pepitas

A perfect and simple nibble to serve alongside drinks or as part of a cheeseboard, these crunchy candied pumpkin seeds can be used for so much more. Top breakfast items; strew them over sweet potato casserole or roasted vegetables; sprinkle them over salads; or simply eat them as a snack. Pack them in a pretty container and you've got a lovely (and easy-to-make) gift.

Yield: 1½ cups

½ cup packed light brown sugar
 ½ tsp kosher salt
 ⅛ tsp ground cardamom
 ⅛ tsp ground cinnamon
 1½ cups pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
 1 large egg white

**ROOM TEMPERATURE
STORAGE**

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F and line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. In a large bowl, blend the brown sugar, salt, and spices. Stir in the pepitas, then add the egg white. Stir until thoroughly combined, but do not whip.
2. Spread as thinly as possible on the baking sheet. Bake until set and golden brown, about 12 minutes. Let cool completely on the sheet, then break apart. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

Source: delish.com

Gingerbread Caramel Crunch Popcorn

Whether a kid-friendly treat for a holiday party, or a munchie for when you're curled up to watch classic Christmas movies, or a part of a snack buffet for when cheering on your team on Big Game Day, flavored popcorn is always welcome. Try using your own DIY spice blends!

Yield: 14 cups

14 cups popped popcorn
 ¾ cup packed brown sugar
 ½ cup butter, cubed
 ¼ cup light corn syrup
 ¼ cup molasses
 1½ tsp ground ginger
 ½ tsp ground cinnamon
 ¼ tsp salt
 ½ tsp baking soda
 ½ tsp vanilla extract

**ROOM TEMPERATURE
STORAGE**

1. Place popped corn in a large bowl coated with butter or cooking spray. Set aside. Butter the sides of a small heavy saucepan; add the brown sugar, butter, corn syrup, molasses, ginger, cinnamon, and salt. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly. Boil without stirring for 5 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in baking soda (mixture will foam). Stir in vanilla. Quickly pour over popcorn and mix well.
2. Transfer to 2 greased 15x10x1-inch baking pans. Bake at 250 degrees F for 1 hour, stirring every 10 minutes. Remove from pans and place on waxed paper to cool. Store in an airtight container.

Source: tasteofhome.com

DIY Custard Powder

With a jar of vanilla custard powder in the pantry, an easy custard sauce is just a few minutes away. Use it to top home-canned pears, cobblers, crumbles and pies, fresh fruit, baked apples or strudel, British puddings, and pretty much any of your favorite desserts. There are options for making chocolate and strawberry versions too!

Yield: about 1½ cups (without optional additions)

**ROOM TEMPERATURE
STORAGE**

To make custard powder:

1 cup (120g/4.2 oz) powdered milk (full or skim)

½ cup (65g/2.3 oz) cornstarch

2 Tbsp vanilla sugar

¼ tsp powdered yellow food coloring (*optional*)

For chocolate custard powder: add ½ cup unsweetened cocoa powder

For strawberry custard powder: add ¼ cup freeze-dried strawberry powder

1. Sift all ingredients together, then whisk well to ensure all ingredients are well combined. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dark place.

To make custard sauce:

½ cup custard powder*

2 cups milk**

3 Tbsp + 1 tsp white granulated sugar (or to taste)

**If making sauce from chocolate mix, use ⅔ cup.*

If making sauce from strawberry mix, use .583 cups (½ cup + 1 Tbsp + 1 tsp).

***Whole milk will give the creamiest sauce, but light or skim milk (or even water) can be used. Alternative milks can be used, however they will lend their own flavor to the custard.*

1. In a medium saucepan, add the custard powder, milk, and sugar. Whisk to combine until no lumps form.
2. Over low-medium heat, stirring constantly with a whisk, heat the mixture until it begins to bubble. Continue to stir while bubbles break the surface for 30 seconds, until quite thick. If a thinner consistency is desired, add more milk.
3. Store leftover custard sauce in an airtight container in the refrigerator, where it will keep for about 4 days.

Source: Adapted from sugarsaltmagic.com

Tips, Ideas, and Inspiration for Holiday Preserving & Entertaining

There's no need to bake/make all of your holiday desserts: **the bakery at your local grocery store or favorite big box store can be your friend.** Buy pound cake, cut into appropriate portions, and freeze it to use for desserts at holiday time. Top the pound cake with your DIY Custard Sauce or homemade fruit spreads. Use your home-made lemon curd to top a purchased cheesecake (and if you want to get fancy, sprinkle on some homemade candied lemon peel).

Save time by **roasting squashes and pumpkins whole.** Peeling the hard skin and cutting through the dense flesh of these fruits can be a real chore. If you don't need to cube the flesh in preparation for preserving or other cooking needs, simply roast them whole! Wash the pumpkin or squash, place it on a rimmed baking sheet lined with foil or a silicone mat, and roast in a pre-heated 400°F oven until a sharp knife inserts very easily into the center. How long it takes depends on the size of the fruit and the thickness of the flesh. A small squash may take 40 minutes or so; a large one could take 90. When the squash is cool enough to handle, slice it open (be careful of escaping steam), scoop out the seeds and stringy bits and remove the peel. The roasted squash can be made ahead and refrigerated or frozen.

In a hurry for an appetizer? Use your **Heavenly Fig Jam** in a super-quick, 2-ingredient, no cook appetizer. Or wrap your **DIY Boursin** in crispy prosciutto with honey and nuts. Give baked brie topped with your **whole berry cranberry sauce** a pretty update by using refrigerator biscuits in an appetizer that comes together in less than 30 minutes.

<https://www.southernliving.com/2-ingredient-no-cook-party-appetizer-11727777>

<https://healthyishfoods.com/crispy-prosciutto-wrapped-boursin-cheese-with-honey-and-chopped-nuts-four-ingredients/>

<https://www.delish.com/cooking/recipe-ideas/a24228326/cranberry-brie-biscuit-dip-recipe/>

Your homemade **ginger syrup** can be used for more than beverages. Try it in this ginger-molasses cookie recipe: <https://www.kingarthurbaking.com/recipes/soft-ginger-molasses-cookies-and-ginger-syrup-recipe>

Waste Not Want Not! If carrots are on your menu, save those **carrot tops!** They can be used in place of parsley, made into pesto, added to soups, or chopped into a delicious gremolata sauce. Find the recipe here: <https://ucanr.edu/sites/default/files/2024-06/398476.pdf>.

Stymied by how to cut that big wedge or awkward pyramid of cheese? You're not alone. This site provides helpful advice on **how to cut cheese** of all shapes. <https://cheesegrotto.com/blogs/journal/how-to-cut-cheese>





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