

Preserving Fruit and Vegetables in War Time

PRESERVING in wartime is even more necessary than in days of peace, for no food at all must be wasted. We must take every care, therefore, to have no failures.

Bacteria

All fruits, including tomatoes, are easy and safe to preserve. *Non-acid vegetables*, such as peas, beans and corn, need very careful sterilising at boiling point for *three hours*, preferably for two hours on one day, and a third hour the next day, leaving the jars to cool down in the waterbath overnight, and then bringing to the boil slowly, and *keeping* boiling for at least another hour the second day. This is because the bacteria which attack vegetables are much harder to kill than the yeasts and moulds which spoil fruits; the bacteria themselves may be killed by the first boiling, but their "spores" (or seeds), retain their vitality after hours of boiling, and will germinate on cooling. That is why the non-acid vegetables should be re-sterilised the second day.

Pressure Cookers

In America the home-service demonstrators and advisers have been warning women of the necessity of boiling all home-preserved vegetables for 20 minutes before eating, unless they have used a pressure cooker. This caused some stir among the thousands of women who have always preserved peas, beans, etc., year after year without pressure cookers, and never had any trouble. It was explained, however, that there is always a danger of "botulinus poisoning"—which, though somewhat rare, is nevertheless, nearly always fatal, and that boiling the preserved vegetables for 20 minutes before eating is really no trouble, and prevention is better than cure. Even if the vegetable is to be used in salad, it should still be reboiled and cooled again. Asked whether this extra boiling does not lessen the vitamin value, the advisers point out that even this is better than being poisoned.

Bacteria and Acid

Bacteria do not develop in fruits or vegetables which are slightly acid, such as tomatoes or rhubarb, nor in jams or canned fruits. But they do favour meat, fish, eggs and milk, and also peas, beans and corn. Therefore, always add about a dessertspoonful of lemon juice or vinegar to each preserving jar of peas or beans, before sterilising.

The Waterbath

This is the best and safest method. After preparing it the first time, it is no trouble at all. Use a large pan, or a kerosene tin cut lengthwise, or the copper. Do not stand the bottles directly on the bottom of the pan or they will break; stand them on folded cloths or paper, or the rack from your grilling pan, or on a home-made wooden rack. See also that the bottles do not touch one another, but are separated by wedges of cloth or paper. Have ready an improvised lid—a board, or a tray, or even folded sugar bags, anything to *keep in the steam*. Fill the vessel about half-full, and bring it to the boil. You

can put in your cold, filled jars of fruit when the bath is cold, and bring gradually to the boil, or you can put hot jars into the hot bath. Don't put hot jars into cold water, or vice versa, or they will break. Count the time of sterilising from the time the water in the bath boils. Boil till the fruit is cooked, but not broken, having covered each jar loosely with its lid, or with a saucer or tin lid. Keep the lid on the waterbath, so that the steam is kept in. When done, take out each jar one by one, and screw down *immediately*. Stand the jar upside down if using screw-tops, to see if any leakage occurs, which would mean that the seal is imperfect.

To Preserve Green Peas

Preserve young, but matured peas. (1) Cook them for five minutes in boiling water without sugar or salt. (2) Strain into colander and run cold water through them. (3) Pack into clean jars, not too tightly, and fill up with water which has been boiled and cooled. (4) Add a dessertspoon of sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt, and a tablespoon of lemon juice or vinegar to each quart jar (this last is most important). Put lids on loosely, place jars in cold waterbaths, cover it to keep in the steam, and bring the water slowly to the boil. Keep the water at boiling point for two hours. Tighten the covers of the jars, and leave to cool in the boiler for 24 hours. Next day, bring to the boil again, and keep at that for one hour. Then store in cool, dry place.

Without Screw-top Jars

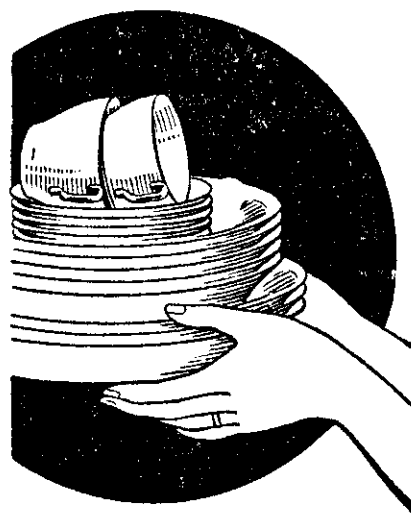
If you have no rubber rings, proceed as above, but sterilise for the whole three hours on the one day. Then take out the jars one by one, and immediately pour on an inch of very hot, clean fat (half beef and half mutton), which you must have ready on the stove. Then paste over the whole top of jar with two thicknesses of paper covered with flour and water paste. When using the peas, boil them in the usual way for 20 minutes, adding mint, and sugar and salt to taste.

FROM THE MAIL BAG

A Cornish Pasty

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I am a Cornish woman, have been in New Zealand for 30 years, and have made Cornish pasties hundreds of times. On a recent Saturday I had six visitors whose parents were Cornish, and I made for our tea nine Cornish pasties, which were described as delicious. This is the real Cornish way:—Make a good short crust, and roll out desired size. Chop up a quarter of an onion, a slice of swede turnip, a small potato (all sliced finely), and then add your beef steak cut into very small pieces, but not minced. Add pepper and salt, then $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon of stock (if you have it), and $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cold water. Place mixture on one half of rolled-out pastry, fold the other half over it, brush over with egg or a little milk, and bake in a good oven for half an hour, then slower for $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours.—Yours, *Cornish Lass (Pukekohe)*.



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