

PRESERVING

THERE is no doubt that many people will want to preserve fruit without sugar — or with only a very little. Although the flavour of the fruit thus preserved is not as good, it nevertheless acts very well, and sweetening to taste is added when the fruit is to be eaten. This is simple enough if you are using the fruit for a pie, but less convenient when you want to serve a bowl of plums or peaches with custard or junket or blancmange. How comfortable it used to be to have a cupboard full of jars of fruit in syrup, all ready to eat — with thick cream! However, it is better to have plenty of unsweetened preserved fruit than no fruit at all. When using, pour off the water into a saucepan, add sugar to taste, and perhaps a dash of colouring and a drop or two of flavouring essence, and boil up, making a good syrup. Then pour this over the fruit in a serving bowl, and leave to get cold.

Without Sugar (Or Nearly)

Pack the fruit carefully into jars, put a tablespoon of sugar over the top of the fruit (this can be omitted, but it does help). Fill up with boiled and cooled water, or if you have heated the jars, you can use hot water. Put the lids on the jars and sterilise in water-bath until the fruit is cooked and soft, but not broken up. If your jars are cold, you must start with cold water-bath and bring slowly to the boil. If the jars are already hot, you can put them into a hot water-bath. In America they emphasise having the water deep enough to cover the jars by two inches, and indeed our own pioneers advocated using the copper and submerging the jars. But nowadays so many people have no copper, and we find that if the jars stand in water which comes half-way up, and the steam is kept in by a tight-fitting lid, improvised or otherwise, the preserving gets on quite well. When cooked, take the jars out one by one, overflow with boiling water and seal airtight immediately.

With Sugar

The easy way — the old way — is to make a syrup by boiling together the sugar and water for 10 minutes, then put the clean fruit in carefully, and simmer gently till soft. Ladle out carefully, without breaking the fruit, into hot sterilised jars — one at a time — cover with boiling syrup, and seal immediately. About 4oz. of sugar to a pint of water makes a good syrup.

French Beans

These may be dried or packed in salt and sugar. If sterilised, add a dessert-spoon of vinegar or lemon juice to the water, and keep the water in outside bath at boiling point for three hours — two hours the first day and another hour the second day. Even then, you must boil them again for 15 to 20 minutes before using. This may sound very fussy, but actually beans and peas and all non-acid vegetables are unsafe unless pre-

served in pressure cookers. Ordinary boiling point is not hot enough to kill the bacteria which may develop in non-acid vegetables. All commercially canned vegetables are done in pressure cookers, and are therefore safe. Pressure cookers will undoubtedly be available after the war. In the meantime, thousands of women will ask why should they stop preserving beans and peas when they've been quite successful for years? This sounds perfectly sensible to me, too, but all Health Departments now warn us very seriously about the botulinus poisoning which is definitely a menace, and which is caused by eating non-acid vegetables preserved without a pressure cooker, unless they are re-boiled for 15 minutes before eating. Practically all vegetables except tomatoes are considered non-acid. When you open a jar of home-preserved vegetables, be vigilant to detect any strange odour or appearance or outburst of air. Never taste it to find out! Even a taste would be dangerous if there is any trouble.

Preserved Beans (Salt and Sugar—Good)

To 2½lb. beans allow 1lb. salt and ½lb. sugar. Cut beans as for the table, put in a bowl. Mix sugar and salt well, sprinkle over beans, and leave overnight. Next day pack into jars, cover with the brine which formed. Keep in a cool place. Don't screw airtight. Wash and cook as usual.

Dried Beans

String and cut the beans very finely as for cooking. Spread out on paper or tray, and put in sun during hottest part of the day. Can also be put on rack over stove, or in a cooling oven—door must be left open. Turn occasionally. Protect from flies. Do this till they are thoroughly dry and crisp—resembling tea-leaves. Store in airtight jars, or in paper bags. To use, soak overnight and cook in usual way. Cover with butter-muslin if drying outside. May take some days to dry properly.

Bottled Raspberries, Loganberries, Strawberries, Red and Black Currants

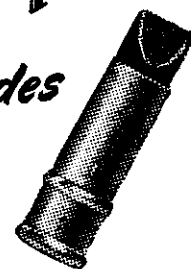
Have them fresh and good. Fill them into hot jars, shaking down well. Pour boiling syrup (or water) over till nearly full, cover loosely, and sterilise in water-bath till thoroughly cooked. Overflow with boiling water and seal immediately.

Preserved Berries (No Sugar)

Fill jars with firm berries (logan or other) and put into oven till well heated. They will settle down a good bit, and you may use one jar to fill up the others. Then fill up to top with boiling water; run a spoon-handle round to let out any air-bubbles, and screw down airtight. Cover jar-top with wax if doubtful about seal. To use, boil up with sugar to taste.



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