

FROM THE MAILBAG

Bottling Pears

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I noticed an enquiry about bottling pears in *The Listener*. The secret of keeping pears white while stewing or bottling is to do them in the pressure cooker. I discovered that stewed pears come out beautifully white and with all their flavour, so when I bottled pears I used the same method and they are lovely, just like tinned ones. I made the usual syrup and then put in the pears about enough for two jars at a time and cooked them under pressure 2 to 2½ minutes, but 1½ minutes would be enough for ripe ones. Any method involving long cooking destroys colour and flavour of pears. I tried the same method for peaches, but found they went raggy and broke up, so it is not suitable for them. "Ponsonby."

Preserving for Diabetics

Dear Aunt Daisy,

Recently in *The Listener* a woman was asking for a way to preserve fruit for herself, being a diabetic. My husband suffers from this complaint and for years I have done between 50 and 60 bottles a year and they keep well, as long as they are airtight. I do any fruit, gooseberries, plums, peaches, nectarines, pears, tomatoes and apricots. Put the fruit in jars with a small quarter teaspoon of salt per quart on top. Then fill to top with cold water and put in bottom of oven, on an oven shelf, and cook. When tender put on rings and lid, screw down and let get cold before putting away. When using, anyone who can take sugar can add it as desired. When stewing apples, add a little salt and stew them in the usual way. With rhubarb add a little salt and a pinch of baking soda, and stew as usual. If your correspondent would like any more information I will gladly give it if she writes c/o Aunt Daisy.

"Cambridge."

Cooking a Swan

Dear Aunt Daisy,

I have heard you giving tips for cooking swans. Here is another good tip well tried by both my mother and myself, especially if the swan is a large one and of doubtful age. After skinning and cleaning the bird for cooking, leave it stuffed with whole onions overnight. This removes any strong taste which is apt to spoil the flavour when cooked. The onions are of no use for the stuffing afterwards.

"Waipuk-ite."

Here is the cooking method. Stuff with ordinary sage and onion stuffing. Put in large pot ¼ full of boiling water and steam 2 hours. Take out of pot, flour well and put into oven with dripping in baking dish. Bake 1 hour and brown nicely. If you do not possess a pot large enough, put at once into baking dish filled with boiling water and some dripping, and put into oven. Cover bird with greased paper, and baste well. Cook 3 hours.

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