

RECIPES **ASK** QUESTIONS *Aunt Daisy* ANSWERS

PRESERVING FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

PRESERVING fruit and vegetables is not difficult, and need not be very expensive—for it can be done without sugar and without expensive equipment. There are only two essential points to be remembered.

First: The fruit or vegetables must be properly sterilised, in order to kill all the spores (or seeds) of the yeasts and moulds which attack fruits, and the bacteria which attack vegetables, especially peas and beans and sweet corn.

Second: After sterilising, the fruit or vegetables must be sealed absolutely airtight immediately, before any air (containing more spores) can reach it.

The bacterial spores which attack vegetables are much harder to kill than the yeasts and moulds which spoil fruits, and which can be eliminated by a fairly short exposure to a temperature of 160 degrees F. Bacteria require boiling heat (212 degrees F.) for a long time; in the case of peas, for instance, they need three hours altogether, two hours on one day, and then another hour after 24 hours cooling. That is because more bacteria may germinate after the first cooling, and even one live bacterium will spoil a batch, for each can produce twenty millions in 24 hours! (What a family!)

Bacteria do not thrive, however, in any fruits or vegetables which contain acid, such as tomatoes or rhubarb; and it is therefore wise to add a little vinegar or lemon-juice to each preserving jar of peas and beans—about a dessertspoonful to a quart jar.

To Sterilise

1. **The Oven.**—Fruit may be done in the oven, just a few jars at a time, perhaps after cooking the dinner, while the oven is still hot, or by taking a special day for it. You may use a scone-tray to stand the jars on, but have it covered with a thick layer of paper, and leave a space between each jar, and plenty of space between the sides and back of the oven, so that the heat can circulate freely. Most people, however, like to stand the jars in a large meat dish, in order to catch any juice which bubbles out, thus saving much oven cleaning. Set the regulo at 1 in a gas oven, or to low (bottom element only) in an electric oven. Peas and beans cannot be satisfactorily sterilised in the oven.

2. **The Water-bath.**—This is the other method of sterilising. Use a large saucepan, or a kerosene tin cut lengthwise, or the copper. Do not stand the bottles

directly on the bottom of the pan, or they may break. Stand them on folded cloths, or even paper, or the rack from your grilling pan, or a home-made wooden rack. Also see that the bottles do not touch each other, but are separated

HOME-MADE DOG BISCUITS

In response to numerous requests for home-made dog biscuits, here are two very good recipes:

(1). *Get a calf's liver, or three pennyworth of ox liver, and boil it in a little water for about twenty minutes. Mince it up, and place in the oven to dry off a little. Measure and put cup for cup liver and bran; 2 cups of pollard, and 1 1/4 tablespoons of salt, all in a bowl, and mix with enough water to dampen it, so that when it is squeezed in the hand it forms a little cake. Press into square sandwich trays. Cook slowly 1 1/4 hours or more. Do not have it too wet.*

(2). *Mix some wholemeal with water—it must be fairly moist, or it will crumble. Roll it out, cut in rounds, and bake in a slow oven till dry and hard. Some cooked, minced liver, or butcher's mince may be added if liked.*

rated by wedges of cloth or paper. The job can be done more quickly if you cover the water-bath with a lid, and some folded sugar bags on top of that if it is not tight fitting, in order to keep in the steam. In that case you will not take long to bring the water to the boil, because you need only one-third fill the vessel. The lids are just placed loosely on the jars; if you have jars without lids, just cover them with saucers or anything handy, to keep in the heat. Count the time of sterilising from the time the water begins to boil—not from the time you put in the jars. If you find it inconvenient to cover the water-bath, you must have the water right up to the necks of the jars, and it will take more fuel to keep it boiling. However, it would not make very much difference when doing fruit, which takes only a short time—until the fruit is cooked, but not broken—probably 30 to 40 minutes, according to the size and kind, but peas and beans take so much longer.

Preserving Peas

It is not advisable to try any "short-cuts" or easy methods when preserving peas. We sometimes hear of people who

are successful by just excluding the air (sealing them down in cold water) or by just cooking them as for dinner, putting them into jars, and covering with the boiling liquid, and then sealing. While such methods may happen to turn out all right, it is really just a lucky accident, and not to be relied on. As explained above, the bacteria will germinate even after cooking and cooling; and the only safe and sure method for peas is to sterilise them twice, 2 hours the first day, and one hour the second day; and to add a little vinegar or lemon-juice to each jar. Tighten the lids after the first sterilising, loosen them for the second boiling, and finally tighten them thoroughly afterwards.

The Method.—Select tender, young peas, shell them, then cook for five minutes in boiling water. If tied in a piece of muslin or cheese cloth, they are easy to lift out. Plunge into cold water, then pack into jars, and fill up with cool boiled water, to which one teaspoon of sugar has been added to every pint. It is better to omit the salt as it has a tendency to harden the peas. Add also about a dessertspoon of vinegar or lemon-juice to each quart jar. Adjust the rubbers and screw on the lids loosely. In the case of a spring top jar, adjust the clamp, but do not fasten it down. Pack the jars in the boiler and sterilise for two hours at boiling point. Tighten the covers of the jars and leave to cool in the boiler for 24 hours. The following day, sterilise again for one hour, taking care to loosen the lids in order to let out the steam, otherwise the jars might crack. Then screw down the lids tightly, or fasten down the clamps of the spring top jars and put away in a cool dry place.

French Beans

Choose tender beans, string and cut to the desired size, or even leave them whole. Blanch them by plunging them into boiling water for eight minutes, then into cold water for one minute, the same as for the peas. If tied in a piece of muslin they are easy to lift out. Then pack into jars. If left whole they will look nice in an upright position. Fill up the jars with boiled and cooled water (containing an ounce of sugar and 1/2 oz. of salt to each quart). Add a dessertspoon of vinegar or lemon-juice to each quart jar. Place the lid on lightly and put the jars in the water bath with water up to the necks of the jars, if there is no cover; or only one-third way up if the steam can be kept in. Proceed as for peas, keeping the water at boiling heat for two hours the first day and one hour the second day.

Sweet Corn

This also requires sterilising for 3 hours—two hours the first day, and one hour the second. The cobs must be young.

They can be preserved whole, or with the grains scraped off. If whole, boil them first for ten minutes, then plunge into cold water for one minute. Then pack into jars, fill up with the boiled and cooled water, put the lids on lightly, place in water-bath, and sterilise exactly as for peas.

Green Maize

Pick maize while still in milky stage, before grains have hardened. Remove the husks and silk, and with a sharp knife scrape the grains off the cobs, pressing out the juice, then pack into clean jars. There should be at least 2 inches of juice. If not sufficient add a little water to which a little sugar has been added. Salt has a tendency to harden, and is better omitted. Adjust the rubber rings and screw the lids on loosely. If a spring top jar, adjust, but do not fasten down. Pack the jars in the boiler and sterilise for two hours. Tighten the covers of the jars and leave to cool in the boiler for 24 hours. The following day sterilise again for an hour, first loosening the lids.

Broad Beans

Shell the beans and blanch in hot water for ten minutes, then plunge into cold water for one minute. Pack into jars, fill up with the usual cold boiled water, add one dessertspoon of vinegar or lemon-juice to each quart jar, place in water-bath and sterilise at boiling point for two hours the first day, and one the second.

Preserving Fruit

Fruit may be preserved either with or without sugar. The sugar improves the flavour of the bottled fruit, but it may be necessary sometimes to get the fruit cooked when it is impossible to procure sufficient sugar. In that case the fruit must be heated with sugar when it is being eaten. When preserved in syrup, it is of course, just ready for serving.

Without Sugar

Pack the fruit carefully into jars, fill up with boiled and cooled water, put the lid on loosely, and sterilise either in the oven or in the water-bath, until the fruit is cooked, but not broken. Then screw down tightly at once; or if not screw-top jars, cover with melted wax, and then paste 2 or 3 thicknesses of paper over the top. The jars must be sealed while still boiling, so that when cold, and the steam has condensed, a vacuum will be formed between the fruit and the lid.

With Sugar

This may be done in either of two ways.

1. Make a syrup by boiling sugar and water together for 10 minutes, and then let it cool. The proportion varies, according to whether you want a heavy

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