



Saving the Seasons: How to Can, Freeze, or Dry Almost Anything

Mary Clemens Meyer, Susanna Meyer

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Welcome to the world of preserving food! There's nothing more satisfying than seeing a row of colorful, home-canned jars on your shelf, or serving your friends and family homemade applesauce or strawberry jam in the winter. Preserving your own food brings peace of mind—you know the quality of the ingredients and the care taken in processing. And the flavor is even better—a generous helping of taste for just a little effort.

Until recently, canning was in danger of becoming a lost art. From the early days of *putting up food* for the winter, canning was a familiar practice in the scrimp-and-save Great Depression and war years of the 1930s and 1940s and the back-to-the-land movement of the 1970s.

When Mary married in 1975, her mother gave her a canner, glass mason jars, and the Ball Blue Book Easy Guide to Tasty, Thrifty Canning and Freezing. She remembers the scary feeling of canning for the first time, carefully following the rules step by step. Soon, though, the process became second nature and led to years of satisfying experiences and good eating!

Not everyone continued preserving food at home, however. The 1980s and 1990s brought cheap canned goods to grocery store shelves. Women joined the work force in unprecedented numbers and had little time for homemaking *extras*. Fewer people had time or interest to grow gardens or buy extra produce to store. The process of canning and preserving food seemed like a mysterious art from the past—not relevant or efficient for modern times.

But something was missing. In the early 2000s, a sharp rise in farmers' markets and CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) subscription farms; a greater demand for organic foods; and the growth of local food and slow food movements, urban and community gardens all illustrated people's desire to reconnect with their food.

At the same time, the children of the 1980s and 1990s who grew up learning about care for the earth reached adulthood, and began making lifestyle choices. Many, like Susanna, are choosing healthier, less processed foods.

Today these young adults and others are taking charge of their food. They want to buy *fresh and local* and grow at least some of their own produce, even if it's one pot of tomatoes on the balcony. They want to feed their babies wholesome meals without additives. They want to be part of the whole experience of food, not just opening a can of tomato soup or a box of flavored noodles.

The good news is that preserving food is not a *mysterious art*. With variations on a few basic rules, you can pickle, can, freeze, and dry almost anything! With clear steps, photos, and easy-to-follow instructions, this book shows you how. It gives the answer to the big question that comes with abundant CSA boxes and home gardens: *What do I do with the extra?* The answer is, *Enjoy it all year long, from your shelf or freezer!*

Happy canning, pickling, freezing, and drying!

—**Mary Clemens Meyer and Susanna Meyer**

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