

# Preservation Notes



University of California

Agriculture and Natural Resources

UCCE Master Food Preserver

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## Master Food Preservers San Joaquin County



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the Master

### Food Preservers

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# Summertime is Here!

This is one of the best times of the year for preservers, first timers and experienced. Summer in the central valley gives us a plethora of fruit and vegetables with which to work preservation magic. The produce available for jams, jellies, conserves, marmalades, soft spreads and fruit syrups will be at its peak.

Vegetables reach their peak and are calling to be made into soups, preserved by pressure canning, ready for the cold winter days.

And don't forget the barbeques. Who doesn't cook outdoors at least once during the summer months. This month we have a great article keeping food cold and a handy flyer on safe grilling techniques.

Lastly, we are accepting applications for our 2018 training. If you have been thinking about signing up to become a UC Master Food Preserver, now is the time to get your application in! You can find more information about the [training on our website](#).

Have a great Summer preserving!



2017 Master Food Preserving Training—Canning Class

## Using Reliable Resources

Have you noticed the interest in home food preservation? Equipment sales are up, cookbooks are selling and home cooks, from beginners to experts, are enjoying the pleasure of canning, freezing, jams, jellies and drying foods. Some are doing it for creativity or to give as homemade gifts. Others want to control salt, sugar and other preservatives in the foods they eat. Some want to save money by preserving the excess garden bounty.

Whatever your motivation, it is very important to use reliable recipes, instructions and equipment. As you are searching the internet, look at the source of the recipe. Has it been researched and tested by a university or reputable company, or is it great Aunt Sue's kitchen concoction? When in doubt, you can always contact our Master Food Preserver Program (209-953-6100) and we can help answer your preserving questions.

**I eat local**



**because I can**



Did You  
Know?

Our newsletter has hyperlinks to other useful websites. Click on the underlined words to open a page. It's as easy as that!

# Quick Fresh-Pack Dill Pickles

[Recipe from the National Center for Home Food Preservation](#)

- 8 lbs of 3- to 5-inch pickling cucumbers
- 2 gals water
- 1¼ cups canning or pickling salt
- 1½ qts vinegar (5 percent)
- ¼ cup sugar
- 2 quarts water
- 2 tbsp whole mixed pickling spice
- about 3 tbsp whole mustard seed (2 tsp to 1 tsp per pint jar)
- about 14 heads of fresh dill (1½ heads per pint jar) or 4½ tbsp dill seed (1½ tsp per pint jar)

**Yield:** 7 to 9 pints



Please read [Using Boiling Water Canners](#) before beginning. If this is your first time canning, it is recommended that you read [Principles of Home Canning](#).

**Procedure:** Wash cucumbers. Cut 1/16-inch slice off blossom end and discard, but leave ¼-inch of stem attached. Dissolve ¾ cup salt in 2 gals water. Pour over cucumbers and let stand 12 hours. Drain. Combine vinegar, ½ cup salt, sugar and 2 quarts water. Add mixed pickling spices tied in a clean white cloth. Heat to boiling. Fill jars with cucumbers. Add 1 tsp mustard seed and 1½ heads fresh dill per pint. Cover with boiling pickling solution, leaving ½-inch head-space. Adjust lids and process according to the recommendations in [Table 1](#) or use the low- temperature pasteurization treatment. For more information see "[Low-Temperature Pasteurization Treatment](#)".

**Table 1.** Recommended process time for **Quick Fresh-Pack Dill Pickles** in a boiling-water canner.

		Process Time at Altitudes of		
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Raw	Pints	<b>10 min</b>	15	20
	Quarts	<b>15</b>	20	25

## FAQ—What Is Steam Canning

Steam canning, or atmospheric steam canning, can be a safe method for home preservation of most high-acid foods (i.e., foods with pH of 4.6 or below). The steam canner, also called an atmospheric steam canner, was initially developed in the 1920s as an alternative to the boiling water canner. Steam canning is a more environmentally friendly process than boiling water canning for the following reasons: 1) the steam canner uses much less water than a boiling water canner and 2) the steam canner reaches the required temperature for processing more quickly and thus uses less energy than the boiling water canner.

For more information on steam canning, read the [Guidelines for Safe Canning of Acid Foods in a Steam Canner](#)



# What to do if the Freezer Stops

Summer is here and air conditioners are operating in full force, in many areas power is maxed out. At some point, you may experience a rolling blackout or some other type of power failure. Do you know what to do if you are without electricity for a long period of time when it comes to your frozen food? Maybe your freezer is having mechanical issues or perhaps you accidentally unplugged it when you meant to unplug something else. Whatever the cause may be, here are some tips to hopefully help salvage that freezer full of frozen food.



When a freezer does fail to work, the first rule is to keep the freezer door closed. In a well-filled freezer, food will probably remain frozen for about two days if the door is kept closed.

When you first notice that your freezer has stopped, try to determine the cause. It might be something simple like a blown fuse, a shortage in the electrical circuit or an accidental disconnection. In case of a power failure, check with the utility company to see how long it will be before power is restored.

If your freezer is not likely to be operating again within a day, you can do one of several things.

First, check into moving your frozen food to a freezer that is working. If there is no space available in another freezer, use dry ice in your freezer to keep your food frozen. Put heavy cardboard on top of packages of frozen food in each compartment of your freezer and put the dry ice on top of the cardboard.

You can provide extra insulation for your freezer by covering it with blankets or quilts. Putting packaging material or crumpled newspapers between the cabinet and the blankets will also help. Be sure, however, to fasten coverings away from the air vents on the outside of the freezer in case power resumes while you are not home.

During the seasons when power failures are frequent or if you know the power will be off, it is good insurance to run the freezer between  $-10^{\circ}\text{F}$  and  $-20^{\circ}\text{F}$ . The colder the food, the more slowly it thaws. If you have food that has started to thaw, [follow these guidelines](#) on what should be done with those items. For more information, [click here](#).

# Summer Food Safety Tips

Keeping food at proper temperatures — indoor and out — is critical in preventing the growth of foodborne bacteria.

Cold perishable food should be kept in the cooler at  $40^{\circ}\text{F}$  or below until serving time. Once you've served it, it should not sit out for longer than 2 hours, or 1 hour if the outdoor temperature is above  $90^{\circ}\text{F}$ . If it does — discard it. Foods like chicken salad and desserts in individual serving dishes can be placed directly on ice, or in a shallow container set in a deep pan filled with ice. Drain off water as ice melts and replace ice frequently.



Hot food should be kept hot, at or above  $140^{\circ}\text{F}$ . Wrap it well and place it in an insulated container until serving. These foods should not sit out for more than 2 hours, or 1 hour in temperatures above  $90^{\circ}\text{F}$ . If food is left out longer, throw it away to be safe. For more summer food safety tips, [click here](#).

# Happy Knife, Happy Life!

Steve Ikeda, MFP

Have you ever been cutting with a knife and wondered if you could possibly be holding the knife wrong side up? A sharp kitchen knife is a joy to behold. Conversely, a knife with a dull edge can not only turn an everyday task into a Herculean chore, but make it infinitely more dangerous, too.

Sharp knives make cleaner, more precise cuts. They'll cut with less effort, which means less fatigue for both the professional chef as well as the home cook, whether the task is to break down 20 chickens in an hour or shred a bushel of cabbage for kraut. Less fatigue means better knife control, which in turn leads to fewer cut fingers. And when those fingers do get cut—as they eventually will—a sharp knife will leave a much cleaner wound that heals faster than a ragged cut from a dull knife.

How do knives get dull? By getting used and abused. It's as simple as that. Repeated contact of the edge of the knife against a hard surface—like a cutting board (more on that later)—takes a toll on the edge. A knife edge might start out being razor sharp, but with every stroke on the cutting board it will start to roll to one side or the other. Harder impacts on the board can result in microscopic bits of the blade breaking off. The blunting effect is gradual enough that at first you might not even feel it, but without attention to maintain edge geometry, a rolled edge will become duller than the wrong end of a stake.

If you catch this rolling in time, you can rectify it quite easily with a few strokes on a hone or steel. Done correctly, this can straighten the roll and restore a great deal of 'sharpness', and it only takes six or eight strokes on each side. If it is not caught in time, however, the rolled edge can break off completely, leaving a jagged or rounded edge that cuts poorly.

A little regular maintenance can preserve a good edge for a surprisingly long time. It helps to get in the habit of giving your knife a few quick strokes on a steel every time you use it, and if you've got a big cutting job, touching it up with a few more strokes any time the cutting seems to be getting a little difficult.



Honing a knife

Please note that this habit of honing a knife is not sharpening. Sharpening a blade takes both the right equipment and a little practice, and can't adequately be covered here, but suffice it to say that a good hone every day can reduce the need for sharpening to as little as once or twice a year. If you prefer not to make the investment of time and money on sharpening your own knives, many meat cutters, butcher shops, and full-service grocery stores will sharpen them for a small fee.

So far, we've discussed how using knives can make them dull, but let's turn to how we often abuse them, too. Do you store your cutlery loosely in a kitchen drawer, randomly jumbled like the Devil's version of jack-straws? Do you wash your knives in the dishwasher? Do you use a glass, marble, or bamboo cutting board? All these take a toll on your knives, and not just on their edges.

The best way to store knives is in a dedicated block (resting on their spines, not on their edges) or a magnetic wall-mounted holder. This keeps them from banging and rattling against anything that might cause a burr or nick on



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## Happy Knife, Happy Life continued

their edges. And while the dishwasher may clean them with a minimum of effort, all that heat (from the washing as well as drying cycles) can damage wood handles and loosen rivets, and the force of the spray can cause the blades to strike against other hard objects in the dishwasher.

As for cutting boards, glass and marble are beautiful and popular, but they are bad for your knives and pose a danger to you, too. They are so hard that they'll accelerate the edge rolling described earlier, dulling a knife in just a few strokes. They might also cause the knife to slip during use, increasing the chance of cutting a finger (or worse). Bamboo boards do not pose the same danger, and they may seem to be a good choice since they're made of an ecologically sustainable grass, but even the best bamboo cutting boards have a high proportion of naturally-occurring silica, which is basically sand. The best boards are made of hardwoods, but if you can't bring yourself spring for an end-grain maple cutting board—which could easily run over \$100—you can opt for the next best thing: a polypropylene board at a fraction of the cost. Poly boards have the added advantage of being dishwasher-safe, too.



## Fruit Leather—A Great Summertime Snack

Fruit leather is made by drying thin layers of pureed fruit in the oven or dehydrator. Sometimes called fruit rolls or taffies, fruit leathers make delicious, wholesome and nutritious high-energy snacks for people on the go and are a great snack for kids. They are relatively light in weight, easy to stick in a beach bag for a trip to the pool or beach, easy to prepare and a good way to use left-over canned fruit and slightly over-ripe fresh fruit. The combinations of fruit you can use are endless and kids have fun mixing their own flavor combinations. Applesauce is an inexpensive (and easy) puree to add if you want to spread out your fruit some. It takes a lot of blueberries to make a



blueberry fruit leather but blueberry apple(sauce) is much cheaper and easy to make. If you want to kick things up a notch, you can add spices like nutmeg or cinnamon or flavorings like vanilla or almond extract. Shredded coconut or chopped nuts are great additions and marshmallow cream or peanut butter make great fillings!

For information on how you can make your own fruit leather, visit the [National Center for Home Food Preservations website](#).

# Freezing Summer's Bounty

Freezing is one of the easiest, most convenient and least time-consuming ways to preserve foods at home. The extreme cold stops growth of microorganisms and slows down changes that cause spoilage and affect quality in food.

The National Center for Home Food Preservation, hosted by the College of Family and Consumer Sciences at the University of Georgia, recently conducted a survey of home freezing practices. The survey revealed that 94.4 percent of respondents home freeze some type of food item. Plastic bags are the most frequently used packaging material for freezing food items. Other containers suitable for freezing fruits and vegetables, however, are plastic freezer containers, or glass canning/freezing jars.



"Don't use paper cartons, like milk boxes," said Elizabeth Andress, director of the National Center for Home Food Preservation. "Many plastic containers that foods are packaged in for purchase, like yogurt, dips and sour cream, do not provide characteristics for preserving quality in the freezer. Freezer foil and coated paper are good for odd shaped foods."

## Preparing the food

Fruits should be washed and sorted before freezing. Discard those that are not yet ripe or of poor quality. Allowing fruit to soak in water will cause loss of nutrients and flavor.

"Stem, pit, peel or slice fruit as desired; prepare enough fruit for only a few packages at a time to prevent browning," Andress explained. "Do not use galvanized equipment in direct contact with fruit, the acid in the fruit dissolves zinc, which can be harmful in large amounts."

Use vegetables at peak flavor and texture. Whenever possible, harvest in the morning and freeze within a few hours. Wash vegetables thoroughly in cold water and sort according to size for [blanching](#) and packing. Blanching, which is scalding vegetables in boiling water or steam for a short period of time, should be done to ensure highest frozen food quality and shelf life.

"Blanching stops the action of enzymes that can cause loss of flavor, color and texture," Andress said. "Blanching time is crucial and varies with the vegetable and its size. Underblanching stimulates the activity of enzymes and is worse than not blanching at all; overblanching can cause loss of flavor, color, vitamins and minerals."

Specific blanching times can be found at the Web site below.

Water blanching is the most widely recommended method for blanching vegetables. Use one gallon of water per pound of vegetables. Put the vegetables in a blanching basket and lower into vigorously boiling water. Place a lid on the pot and start counting blanching time as soon as the water returns to a boil.

As soon as blanching is complete, cool vegetables quickly to stop the cooking process by plunging the basket of vegetables immediately into a large quantity of cold water. Cooling vegetables should take as long as blanching. Drain vegetables completely after cooling.



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# Freezing Summer's Bounty

## Fruit Packs

"There are several ways to pack fruit for freezing, such as a syrup pack, sugar pack, dry pack or unsweetened pack," Andress said. "Most fruits have better texture and flavor if packed in sugar or syrup, however, sugar is not needed to preserve the fruit."

Sugar syrups can be made by dissolving sugar in water completely and then pouring it completely around and over fruit in the packed container. You may need to heat the water to get all of the sugar dissolved, but completely cool or even refrigerate the syrup to get it cold before using on fruit. Use  $2\frac{3}{4}$  cups sugar to 4 cups of water for most fruits. For mild flavor or very sweet fruits, use  $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups sugar per 4 cups of water. About  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{2}{3}$  cups of syrup is needed per pint of fruit.

To make sugar packs, simply sprinkle sugar over the fruit and mix gently until the juice is drawn out and the sugar dissolved. Dry packing works best with berries and smaller fruits that give good flavor without sugar. Pack the fruit, seal and freeze.

Peaches, apples, pears and apricots darken quickly when exposed to air and can darken in thawing. Use ascorbic acid in the package to prevent discoloration of fruits during the freezing process. "Ascorbic acid in a powder form is available at some drugstores or where freezing supplies are sold," Andress said. "Add  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon pure powdered ascorbic acid to cold syrup shortly before using, stir gently, not to add air. To use in sugar or dry packs, dissolve in 2 or 3 tablespoons of cold water and sprinkle over fruit just before adding sugar." If you use a commercially sold fruit color preserver that is not pure ascorbic acid, follow the directions on the box.

## Packaging and Labeling

Most foods require headspace between the packed food and closure to allow for expansion as food freezes. Headspace recommendations can be found at the Web site listed below.

All packaged food should be room temperature or cooler before putting in the freezer. Do not overload your freezer with too much warm food at one time. Quick freezing is best for frozen food quality. Spread the new packages around until they are frozen, then they can be stacked together if desired.

"Be sure to label all foods with name of food, date and type of pack," Andress said. "Most fruits and vegetables will remain high in quality for eight to 12 months. Longer storage will not make the food unfit for use, but may impair its quality."

It is a good idea to post a list of the frozen foods with freezing dates near the freezer and check the packages off the list as they are removed.

For more information on freezing, visit the [National Center for Home Food Preservation website](#).

This article was written by April Reese Sorrow and Elizabeth L. Andress, Ph.D.  
National Center for Home Food Preservation  
March 2004

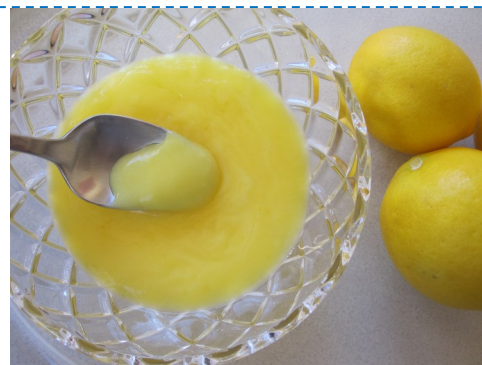


# Lemon Curd

Yield: about 3 cups

4 teaspoons grated lemon peel  
2/3 cup lemon juice (bottled or fresh)  
5 eggs  
1 cup sugar (\*add 1 additional Tablespoon if using Meyer lemon juice)  
1/2 cup melted butter

1. In a blender, blend the first four ingredients until smooth.
2. With blender motor running at lowest setting, gradually add melted butter, pouring in a steady stream.
3. Transfer the mixture to a small, heavy, non-reactive (i.e. stainless steel) saucepan.
4. Cook over medium heat, stirring continuously until mixture thickens. Make sure temperature reaches 170 degrees Fahrenheit.
5. Remove from heat and ladle into hot jars. Leave 1/4 inch headspace.
6. Cover with cap and ring, cool in refrigerator, then freeze.



Serving suggestions: excellent as a topping on pound cake, shortbread, croissants, scones, pancakes, waffles, tea biscuits, crepes, etc. Pairs very well with summer berries (blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries) from your local Farmer's Market.

Recipe Source: Northern San Joaquin Master Food Preservers Training 2013

## Coming Events

**Classes at Cabral Ag Center are from 10 am—2:00 pm. Cost is \$25.00. [Please register on our website.](#)**

### **July 21: Preserving Peaches**

Peaches, peaches, peaches!!! The UC Master Food Preservers of San Joaquin County are hosting a summer preserving class. The subject is PEACHES!

This is a hands on, make and take class. Low fee of \$25.00 which includes learning all about water bath canning, uses of peaches in food preservation, recipes, light lunch including beverage, and a jar of each product made at this class.

### **August 18: Tomatoes**

Tomatoes are always one of our sought after workshops. Whether you use your home grown tomatoes for salsas, marinara sauces or just canning whole tomatoes

for a winter treat... this is a workshop you don't want to miss.

### **September 15: Unique Pickles**

Our Farmers Markets are loaded with cucumbers perfect for pickling - dill, sweet, bread and butter, or refrigerator. But cucumbers aren't the only vegetable or fruit you can pickle. Attending this workshop will teach you the pickling basics you can apply to your garden favorites.

### **October 20: OLIVEtoberfest!!!**

How do you like your Olives! Do you have an olive tree and all it does is make a mess because you don't know what to do with the little fruit? Are you interested in planting an olive tree and having your own supply of olives for friends and family. Come to this DEMONSTRATION and learn the ways to process and prepare olives for consumption. It's a demonstration you

## Gifts From the Kitchen

**Saturday, November 17  
10:00 am to 4:00 pm  
\$50.00**

When it comes to gifts, nothing beats homemade. Be prepared for this holiday season by attending Gifts from the Kitchen. You will learn how to make FOUR simple preservation items as well as techniques to make your gift look special. This is a longer workshop and also a larger workshop. Come prepared to have fun, meet some new preserver friends and take home four samples of items you can easily make at home.



**We are now accepting applications!  
Application deadline is August 11!**

# **2018 San Joaquin UC Master Food Preserver Training**



Do you want to learn more about safe home food preservation methods? Are you willing to share your skills & knowledge?

**We are now accepting applications for our next training that begins September 2018.**

Visit our website for more information.  
[ucanr.edu/sjmf2018](http://ucanr.edu/sjmf2018)

Space is limited. Application deadline is August 11th.





# GRILLING ESSENTIAL: FOOD THERMOMETERS

You cannot determine if food is fully cooked just by looking at it. The only way to make sure food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature is to use a food thermometer. Before using any food thermometer, read the manufacturer's instructions.

## Tips for Using a Food Thermometer:

- 🔥 These thermometers are not designed to remain in food while it is cooking.
- 🔥 To ensure safety and prevent overcooking, check the internal temperature of the food toward the end of the cooking time, before the food is expected to finish cooking.
- 🔥 The food thermometer should be placed in the thickest part of the food and should not be touching bone, fat, or gristle. Check the temperature in several places to make sure the food is evenly heated.
- 🔥 Clean your food thermometer with hot water and soap before and after each use!

## The best types of food thermometers for grilling:

### Digital Instant-Read (Thermistor)

- Reads in 10 seconds
- Place at least 1/2" deep
- Can measure in thin and thick foods

### Thermometer-Fork Combination

- Reads in 2-10 seconds
- Place at least 1/4" deep in thickest part of food
- Sensor in tine of fork must be fully inserted
- Can be used in most foods, convenient for grilling

Safe Minimum Internal Temps	
160 °F	Ground Beef
165 °F	Poultry, including ground poultry.
145 °F Plus 3 min stand time for safety.	Beef, veal, lamb, steaks & roasts.



## Be sure to include safe food handling in your cookout plans!

**CLEAN** – Wash hands and surfaces often.

**SEPARATE** – Don't cross-contaminate!

**COOK** – Cook to proper temperature.

**CHILL** – Refrigerate promptly!

