



COLLECTIONS

Recipes for Canning and Preserving



RECIPES FOR CANNING AND PRESERVING

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TBook Collections

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Not So Scary: Easy Steps to Canning

By **CATHY BARROW**

MAY 15, 2012

The fruits and vegetables that seduce us early in the season (asparagus, spring onions, rhubarb and now strawberries) make me greedy. I fall hard and completely, happy to lug home cumbersome bags from the farmers' market and create a still life on my kitchen counter of big bunches of vegetables and piles of berries. I want to incorporate all of it into every meal. I want to capture the moment and bottle it.

And now is an excellent time. Perhaps you have made freezer jam or quick refrigerator pickles, those red onions in vinegar, sugar and salt. I'm hoping spring will tempt you to try preservation, a fancy word for canning, and like the act itself, not as scary as it sounds.

You probably have most of what you need: a stockpot large enough to cover the jars with at least two inches of water; a heavy-bottomed pot for cooking the jam (enameled cast iron like Le Creuset, copper or stainless steel). Avoid aluminum as it can leach, leaving your preserves or pickles tasting of metal. Rubber-coated jar lifters are nice, but a pair of tongs with rubber bands wrapped around each of the pincers will provide the same security in lifting the hot jars from boiling water. A big stack of clean dish towels completes the must-haves.

You can buy your jars at the hardware store, where they are usually sold in sizes of half-pint, best for jam, or pint, ideal for pickles. Thrift stores and flea markets are great places to find used jars, but check that they are not chipped or cracked. And be sure to use jars that are made for canning, generally marked Ball or Kerr, with flat lids and rings that hold the lids on tight. The jars and rings are reusable, but lids should be new each time you preserve.

Here's how it works: When the filled and closed jars are lowered into a bath of boiling water, the temperatures inside and outside the jars will equalize, bringing the contents of the jar to 212 degrees Fahrenheit and making them safe for shelf storage. The gasket on the underside of each lid forms a seal as the contents come to temperature, and will ping as the suction draws the lid tight.

It is such a satisfying and alluring sound, telling you that you have successfully protected the contents. If you don't hear it, or if the seal otherwise fails, you can simply repeat the process. But you can avoid seal failure by not overfilling the jars and by completely cleaning the rim before placing the lid on top.

Some of the trepidation surrounding canning is about all that boiling water. Does the phrase “sterilize the jars” strike fear in your heart? Not to worry. Just run them through the dishwasher. If you have no dishwasher or do not trust yours to do the job properly, use that same big stockpot to boil the jars for 10 minutes. You can leave them in the water until it is time to fill them; by then, the water will have cooled a bit and you are less likely to burn yourself.

I use a small saucepan to boil the rings — mostly, just to be sure they are clean. Then I add the lids after turning off the heat. (Canners who boil their jars sometimes put the rings into the same pot, then add the lids for just a minute to soften their rubber gaskets.)

Which brings us to the heart of the matter: Many first-timers fear canning because they are afraid they won't know if they have done it safely. They worry they might somehow end up making their families sick. You should take no chances; when in doubt, throw it out.

But you may be reassured to know that sugar and vinegar are natural preservatives and make it less likely that bacteria will grow inside your jars. Mold is a more likely problem, but even that is rare. To be safe, check the seals. Label and date every jar and use what you make within a year.

And follow common sense. There are so many reasons to preserve the best of the season. Your kitchen will smell divine. Your family and friends may want to help. Or you may find solitary work in the kitchen to be an exquisite break from a busy schedule, a chance to listen to music or the ballgame. Veterans extol the meditative nature of an afternoon spent making preserves.

Then there's the joy, months later, when those preserves make an appearance long after the last of the in-season berries were scattered over the morning oatmeal. Your breakfast toast, bagels or biscuits will be much improved. You will want your jam stirred into plain yogurt, rolled into a crepe, spread between layers of a cake or incorporated into a very special P.B. and J.

Those asparagus and spring onions? As pickles, they are an excellent accompaniment to transform a bit of charcuterie or salumi into a memorable antipasto.

And your preserved fruits and vegetables make lovely hostess gifts or party favors — if you can bear to part with them.

Strawberry Rhubarb Confiture

By **CATHY BARROW**

MAY 15, 2012

Here is a delicious introduction to the business of canning, which can seem daunting but is made much easier by the right equipment and a good recipe. You'll combine strawberries, rhubarb vanilla and sugar over heat and then follow standard canning instructions, laid out in the recipe's instructions. It all leads up to summer sweetness in a jar that you've made yourself. And don't worry: if your preserves are on the runny side, just call them syrup. No one will mind.

Ingredients:

2 pints (about 2 pounds) fresh strawberries, stemmed and cut into bite-size pieces

2 ½ pounds rhubarb, trimmed and cut into 1/2-inch dice

3 cups sugar

Juice of one lemon

1 vanilla bean

¼ teaspoon butter.

Preparation:

1. In a large nonreactive bowl, combine the strawberries, rhubarb, sugar and lemon juice. Split the vanilla bean lengthwise and scrape out the pulp. Add the pulp and bean to the bowl. Mix gently but thoroughly. Cover, refrigerate and allow fruit to macerate 6 to 12 hours.
2. Fit a large pot with a rack or line it with a folded kitchen towel. Fill with water and bring to a boil. Sterilize 6 half-pint canning jars by running them through a dishwasher cycle. If boiling them, add jars to the pot and boil for 10 minutes. The jars may be left in the dishwasher or pot until ready to be filled.
3. Strain the liquid out of the berry mixture into a heavy-bottomed large pot. Allow liquid to drain for a few minutes, pressing on the fruit. Set the fruit aside. Place the pot over medium-low heat and slowly bring the syrup to 220 degrees Fahrenheit on a candy thermometer, a strong boil that won't stir down. If your pan is broad and the syrup is not very deep, tilt the pan frequently and place the candy thermometer deep into the syrup, to measure the temperature more effectively. This could take about 45 minutes. Stir frequently.

4. Place the canning rings in a small saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Turn off the heat and add the lids to soften the rubber gaskets.
5. Remove the vanilla bean from the fruit and stir the fruit into the syrup. The boiling will slow, but will come back quickly. Watch the bubbles in the boil as you stir. Foam will form because the water in the fruit is drawn out, to be replaced with the syrup. In about 10 minutes, when the confiture is almost ready, the foam will begin to dissipate, the bubbles breaking more slowly and exposing a clear syrup below.
6. Turn off the heat. Let the bubbling stop. The fruit should have absorbed the syrup and be suspended through the jam. If the fruit is floating, return it to the heat for another 2 minutes of boiling.
7. Some foam may remain in the syrup; add the butter and stir to dispel the last of the bubbles. Ladle the hot preserves into the warm jars, leaving 1/4 inch at the top, just below the first ring on the jar's neck. Wipe the rims of the jars clean with a damp towel. Place the lids, rubber gasket down, facing the glass rim; tighten the rings, and lower the jars into the stockpot of boiling water. Return to a full boil and boil the jars for 10 minutes. (This is called processing.)
8. Transfer the jars to a folded towel to cool for several hours; you should hear them making a pinging sound as they seal.
9. Test the seals by removing the rings and lifting the jars by the flat lid. If the lid releases, the seal has not formed. Unsealed jars should be refrigerated and used within a month or reprocessed. Rings and the jars may be reused, but a new flat lid must be used each time jars are processed. Reheat preserves to the boiling point, then continue as before. And relax: If your preserves are on the runny side, just call them syrup and serve warm over pancakes.

Yield: 6 half-pint jars (6 cups)

Pickled Spring Onions and Asparagus

By **CATHY BARROW**

MAY 15, 2012

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Ingredients:

1 teaspoon whole coriander seeds

12 black peppercorns

4 teaspoons kosher salt

2 teaspoons red pepper flakes

1 teaspoon yellow mustard seed

4 whole allspice berries

4 whole garlic cloves, peeled

2 pounds freshly picked asparagus about the diameter of a pencil

12 spring onions or scallions

12 garlic scapes or ramps

4 lemon slices

3 ½ cups white vinegar

Preparation:

1. Fit a large pot with a rack or line it with a folded kitchen towel. Fill with water, and bring to a boil. Sterilize four 1-pint canning jars by running them through a dishwasher cycle. If boiling them, add jars to the pot and boil for 10 minutes. The jars may be left in the dishwasher or pot until ready to be filled.

2. Place a small skillet over medium heat. Add the coriander seeds and stir until lightly toasted and fragrant. Divide equally among the four jars. Repeat with the peppercorns. To each jar add 1 teaspoon kosher salt, 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes, 1/4 teaspoon mustard seed, 1 allspice berry and 1 clove of garlic.

3. Trim the asparagus, spring onions and garlic scapes or ramps to fit the height of the jars, leaving 1/2-inch head space. Set aside the trimmed pieces for another use. Fit everything into the jars snugly; there is no rule about which end goes up, and the shape and size of the pieces can vary. Tuck a lemon slice into each jar.

4. Place the canning rings in a small saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Turn off the heat and add the lids to soften the rubber gaskets.
5. In a medium saucepan, combine the vinegar with 3 1/2 cups water. Bring to a boil and funnel into the jars, leaving 1/2 inch of space at the top. Thoroughly wipe the rims of the jars. Using tongs, remove the lids from the hot water, place them on the jars, and screw the rings on snugly but not too tightly.
6. Return the large pot of water to a rolling boil. Gently ease the filled jars upright into the water; the water should be at least 2 inches above the jars. Boil the jars for 15 minutes, then transfer to a kitchen towel to cool. Listen for the ping that comes from the contracting lid as each jar cools, indicating a secure seal.
7. When the jars are completely cool, remove the ring and test the seal by lifting the jar by the lid. If the seal fails, refrigerate the jar and use the contents within 6 weeks. Allow the pickles to mature for 1 month before serving.

Yield: 4 pints

Inviting Tropical Fruits to Stick Around



Pineapple sauce poured over a banana split. (Mary F. Calvert for The New York Times)

By CATHY BARROW

MARCH 19, 2013

The exotic tastes of tropical fruit evoke an endless summer of ocean breezes, sandy beaches and drinks with umbrellas. But just like their colder-climate cousins (say, blueberries and peaches), these fruits have their season.

Most plants produce only one harvest a year, and for pineapples and mangoes that harvest time is now. So they are showing up at groceries in great abundance, ripe and ready to be enjoyed, just as we tire of eating cold-storage apples and pears.

For the apprehensive canner, both the mango chutney and pineapple sauce here are straightforward, uncomplicated and sophisticated condiments: beautiful in the jar, complementing and enhancing the simplest fare, and well worth preserving before the season is over.

With a little knife work and a slow simmer, the pineapple sauce is ready in no time at all. While it shines in a banana split, turning a sundae from typical to tropical, you'll find many other ways to use it: between the layers of a classic yellow cake, added to yogurt or

cottage cheese, or combined with spicy mustard and chopped scallions for a sensational baked chicken.

If the knife work strikes fear into your heart, buy the pineapple already cored and peeled. I won't tell. Chutneys are often made with unripe or dried fruit; they always include vinegar, sugar and spices. This recipe, with ripe fruit, offers a two-toned flavor: sweet and tropical offset by sultry spices and the heat of chilies. It's welcome in a grilled-cheese sandwich, stirred into mayonnaise or yogurt for a quick dip or spread, or alongside any curry or daal.

Please don't forget the "Mad Men"-era hors d'oeuvres: a wheel of Brie, doused in mango chutney and wrapped in refrigerator crescent-roll dough. Substitute puff pastry and a chunk of sharp Cheddar for an updated version.

There are thousands of varieties of mangoes, but two are predominant. The Tommy Atkin is green, blushed with rose, and as large as a softball. The champagne mango, the size of a large peach, is pale gold, with a floral flavor. I prefer the champagne, which tends to be less fibrous and has an impossibly lovely scent, but any mango is a boon. The fruit is full of such promise.

One last suggestion: As you start these preserving projects, type "steel drums" into Spotify and imagine winter away.

Spiced Mango Chutney With Chiles

By **CATHY BARROW**

Time: About 2 hours

Chutneys are often made with unripe or dried fruit; they always include vinegar, sugar and spices. This recipe, with ripe fruit, offers a two-toned flavor: sweet and tropical offset by sultry spices and the heat of chilies. It's welcome in a grilled-cheese sandwich, stirred into mayonnaise or yogurt for a quick dip or spread, or alongside any curry or daal.

There are thousands of varieties of mangoes, but two are predominant. The Tommy Atkin is green, blushed with rose, and as large as a softball. The champagne mango, the size of a large peach, is pale gold, with a floral flavor. I prefer the champagne, which tends to be less fibrous and has an impossibly lovely scent, but any mango is a boon. The fruit is full of such promise.

Ingredients:

5 pounds mangoes, about 9 Champagne or 6 Tommy Atkins

1 cup, or 7 ounces, golden raisins (or dried cranberries, cherries or apricots)

1 cup apple cider vinegar

1 cup, or 7 ounces, brown sugar

½ cup finely minced onion

¼ cup peeled, finely minced fresh ginger

1 teaspoon yellow mustard seed

1 teaspoon coriander seed

6 cardamom pods, seeds extracted

6 Kaffir lime leaves

1 4-inch Chinese long red hot chile, or to taste

1 4-inch serrano chile, or to taste

Preparation:

1. Peel and dice the mangoes to yield 5 cups, or 2 pounds 4 ounces.

2. Put a rack or a folded kitchen towel in a large pot, fill with water and bring to a boil. Add 6 half-pint canning jars and boil for 10 minutes. Jars may be left in the warm water

until ready to be filled. (Alternatively, sterilize jars by running them through a dishwasher cycle, leaving them inside until ready to fill.)

3. Place canning rings in a small saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Turn off heat and add lids to soften rubber gaskets. Rings and lids may be left in water until jars are filled.

4. In a large, heavy, nonreactive pot, stir together mangoes, raisins, vinegar, brown sugar, onion and ginger together. Crush the mustard, coriander and cardamom seeds with the side of your knife or a rolling pin. Add to the pot and stir well. Add the lime leaves.

5. Wearing gloves, slice the chiles into rings. Remove seeds if you wish. Decide how much chile suits your taste. (If you are heat averse, start with half the recommended amount and taste. The chiles may be omitted altogether for a sweeter chutney.)

6. Bring heat up to medium and stir occasionally as mixture comes to a boil. Bring to a good hard boil, stirring all the time. Cook for 25 minutes, being careful to avoid sticking and burning as the mixture thickens. Adjust heat as needed without losing the boil and continue to stir.

7. After 25 minutes, the mixture should be thick, with the fruit suspended in the tangy syrup, and a spoon pulled along the bottom of the pot leaving a trail. Turn off heat and discard the lime leaves.

8. Ladle the hot chutney into warm jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Run a plastic knife gently around inside of jar to remove any air bubbles. Recheck headspace. Wipe jar rims clean with a damp towel. Place lids on jars, screw on rings and lower jars back into pot of boiling water. Return to full boil and boil jars for 15 minutes. Transfer jars to a folded towel and let cool for 12 hours; you should hear them ping as they seal.

9. Once cool, test seals by removing rings and lifting jars by their flat lids. If the lid releases, the seal has not formed. Unsealed jars should be refrigerated and used within a month, or reprocessed. (Rings and jars may be reused, but a new flat lid must be used each time jars are processed.) To reprocess, reheat syrup to boiling then continue as before.

Yield: 5 half-pint jars (5 cups)

Tropical Pineapple Sauce

By **CATHY BARROW**

Ingredients:

8 cups finely diced, very ripe pineapple; about 2 pineapples

2 cups white sugar

1 cup brown sugar

6 stalks fresh mint, rinsed and tied into a bundle

Juice of one lemon

¼ cup dark rum

Preparation:

1. Dice pineapple into 1/2-inch pieces, removing any brown eyes. Combine fruit, sugars, mint and lemon juice. Cover and leave on the counter for 1 hour.
2. Stir pineapple mixture and discard the mint. Add mixture to a heavy nonreactive pan and simmer slowly, stirring regularly, for about an hour, until sauce is very thick and clear and has reached 220 degrees.
3. Add rum. Stir until mixture is thick and clear again, about 5 minutes. Sauce will keep 3 months in the refrigerator or a year if processed.
4. To process, put a rack in a large stockpot or line the pot with a folded kitchen towel, then fill the pot with water and bring to a boil. Add 4 half-pint canning jars and boil for 10 minutes. Jars may be left in the warm water in the pot until ready to be filled. Alternatively, sterilize the jars by running them through a dishwasher cycle, leaving them inside until ready to fill.
5. Place canning rings in a small saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Turn off heat and add the lids to soften rubber gaskets. Rings and lids may be left in the water until jars are filled.
6. Remove the jars from the water bath and ladle hot sauce into warm jars, leaving 1/2-inch of headspace. Run a plastic knife gently around the inside of the jar to remove any air bubbles. Recheck the headspace.
7. Wipe jar rims clean with a damp towel. Place the lids on the jars, screw on the rings and lower the jars back into the pot of boiling water. Return to a full boil and boil for 15

minutes. Transfer jars to a folded towel and let cool for 12 hours. You should hear them ping as they seal.

8. Once cool, test the seals by removing rings and lifting jars by the flat lids. If a lid releases, the seal has not formed. Unsealed jars should be refrigerated and used within 3 months, or reprocessed. Rings and jars may be reused, but a new flat lid must be used each time.

Yield: 4 cups, or 4 half-pint jars

Putting Up Tomato Preserves

By **CATHY BARROW**

SEPT. 10, 2013

If I had to choose only one food to preserve, it would be tomatoes. The unquestionable stars of the summer, they need little more than a trusted recipe to go from jar to dinner. Pasta all'arrabbiata, gumbo, chana masala, enchiladas, shakshuka, bouillabaisse: each jar holds a world of possibility.

It begins with a beautiful tableau of 8 to 10 pounds of ripe but not overripe tomatoes. But I cannot necessarily promise a beautiful experience. Your kitchen might be small. Or hot. Hand-crushing the fruit inevitably ends with juice on the counter, the floor, the cabinets. Add a vat or two of boiling water and you get the idea.

But wait: Rather than focusing on the drudgery, I sometimes plan a party, gathering friends and family with promises of food and drink. Many hands make quick work of the mountain of tomatoes. And knowing there will be tomatoes on the shelf in the dark days of winter? That alone makes the day worthwhile.

Any tomato will work. I prefer Brandywines and what are often called Rutgers varieties: Reds, Jersey Reds and Ramapos. If they're available, I'll opt for paste or Roma tomatoes for their rich flavor and slightly higher yield. I avoid yellow, green or maroon tomatoes because the colors do not translate well to the jar. At some farmers' markets slightly bruised or otherwise not-quite-perfect tomatoes may be available; these are the veteran's choice for economy alone.

Acidity, a crucial element of safe canning, varies widely among tomatoes. Adding lemon juice or citric acid to each jar ensures you will have a low enough pH level to avoid botulism. Bottled lemon juice or the juice from the common Eureka lemon will work; do not substitute other citrus or even Meyer lemons because they do not have the same acidifying power. I use citric acid because it adds less flavor and is less expensive.

Can your tomatoes with just the acid and perhaps a bit of salt and make your marinara later, after you open the jar, just as you might with canned tomatoes from the store. Avoid the temptation to jazz up the tomatoes with flavors; the addition of peppers, chiles, onions, garlic, mushrooms, meat, carrots, celery or oil all play havoc with the acidity you have taken care to regulate.

I will heat up the kitchen and make a mess each weekend from now until the tomato vines are killed by frost. The jars I put up will hold the flavors of sunny afternoons when I need them in January.

Preserved Crushed Tomatoes

By **CATHY BARROW**

Preserved summer tomatoes are a sort of pantry insurance policy: you'll have captured a bright tomato flavor to add to your cooking for the remainder of the year. Use these crushed tomatoes as you would the canned kind you buy at the store, in jambalaya (Pierre Franey's shrimp jambalaya recipe is a good start), tomato soup (this unusual version incorporates fresh goat cheese) or pasta sauce (like this spaghetti sauce, Kim Severson's family recipe). You'll need four or five quart-sized jars (32 ounces each) or eight or 10 pint-sized ones (16 ounces each); when the time comes to use the purée, simply open a jar and use the purée as you would the store-bought stuff.

Ingredients:

8 pounds ripe firm red tomatoes (10 to 12, depending on size)

Lemon juice, bottled lemon juice or citric acid

Salt (kosher, pickling or fine sea salt only), optional

Preparation:

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cut an X in the base of each tomato. Gently drop tomatoes into water. When they bob to the surface, remove and place in an ice bath.
2. Put a rack in a large stockpot or line pot with a folded kitchen towel, then fill it with water and bring to a boil. Add quart or pint jars and boil for 10 minutes. Jars may be left in warm water until ready to fill. Alternatively, sterilize jars by running them through a dishwasher cycle, keeping them warm in the machine.
3. Place canning rings in a small saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Turn off heat and add flat lids to soften their rubber gaskets. Rings and lids may be left in water until jars are filled.
4. Peel and core tomatoes and scoop out gel and seeds. With your hands, tear and crush tomatoes into a large nonreactive pot. After adding a few tomatoes, bring them to a brisk boil, crushing further with a potato masher or the back of a large spoon. (This will keep tomatoes and juice from separating in the jar.) Continue to add crushed tomatoes, maintaining a bubbling, brisk boil. When they are all added, boil for 5 minutes.
5. Ladle hot tomatoes into warm jars, leaving a little more than 1/2 inch head space to accommodate lemon juice. If using citric acid, fill to 1/2 inch head space. Into every quart jar, add 2 tablespoons lemon juice or 1/2 teaspoon citric acid. For pints, use 1 tablespoon

lemon juice or 1/4 teaspoon citric acid. If using salt, add 1 teaspoon to each quart or 1/2 teaspoon to each pint.

6. Wipe jar rims clean with a damp towel. Place lids on jars, screw on rings and lower jars upright into the pot of boiling water. Return to a full boil and process for 45 minutes for quarts or 35 minutes for pints. If there are both in the pot, process for the longer time. Transfer jars to a folded towel and cool for 12 hours. Jars will ping as they seal.

7. Once cool, test seals by removing rings and lifting jars by their flat lids. If a seal has formed, lids will stay tight. Unsealed jars should be refrigerated and used within a week or reprocessed. Rings and jars may be reused, but a new flat lid must be used each time.

Yield: 4 to 5 quart-sized jars, or 8 to 10 pint-sized jars

Preserved Tomato Purée

By **CATHY BARROW**

A little work in prime tomato season will help carry bright summer flavors into the cold of January, giving you a base for pasta sauces, gumbo, enchiladas, shakshuka, bouillabaisse — a world of possibility. It's an afternoon of chopping, puréeing, simmering and canning, the heat of the day reminding you that the cooler nights, spicy pasta all'arrabbiatas and warming chana masalas are just around the corner. You'll need three quart-sized jars (32 ounces each) or six pint-sized ones (16 ounces each).

Ingredients:

8 pounds firm, ripe, red tomatoes (about 10 to 12, depending on size)

Lemon juice, bottled lemon juice or citric acid

Salt (kosher, pickling or fine sea salt only), optional

Preparation:

1. Peel, core and roughly chop tomatoes. Put in a large nonreactive pot, cover and simmer 10 minutes. Purée through medium disc of a food mill to remove skins and most seeds.
2. Put a rack in a large stockpot or line pot with a folded kitchen towel, then fill with water and bring to a boil. Add quart or pint jars and boil 10 minutes. Jars may be left in warm water until ready to fill. Alternatively, sterilize jars by running them through a dishwasher cycle, keeping them warm in the machine.
3. Place canning rings in small saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Turn off heat and add flat lids to soften rubber gaskets. Rings and lids may be left in water until jars are filled.
4. Bring purée to a boil, then down to a sturdy simmer and cook to reduce by one third, about 30 minutes. Ladle hot purée into warm jars, leaving a little more than 1/2 inch head space to accommodate lemon juice. If using citric acid, fill to 1/2 inch head space.
5. Into every quart jar, add 2 tablespoons lemon juice or 1/2 teaspoon citric acid. For pints, use one tablespoon lemon juice or 1/4 teaspoon citric acid. If using salt, add 1 teaspoon to each quart or 1/2 teaspoon to each pint jar.
6. Wipe jar rims clean with a damp towel. Place lids on jars, screw on rings and lower jars upright into pot of boiling water. Return to a full boil and process for 45 minutes for quarts or 35 minutes for pints. If there are mixed sizes, process for the longer time. Transfer jars to a folded towel and let cool for 12 hours. Jars will ping as they seal.

7. Once cool, test the seals by removing rings and lifting jars by their flat lids. If a lid releases, the seal has not formed. Unsealed jars should be refrigerated and used within one week or reprocessed. Rings and jars may be reused, but a new flat lid must be used each time.

Yield: 3 quart-sized jars or 6 pint-sized jars

Preserved Roasted Tomato Purée

By **CATHY BARROW**

Preserving a glut of tomatoes at the end of summer is a smart (though messy) move for cooks who want those bright flavors in the depths of January. Roasting the tomatoes before puréeing them adds depth and a subtle smoky flavor — a welcome addition to soups and sauces. Use any kind of tomatoes you like, as long as they are ripe; Brandywines and what are often called Rutgers varieties (Reds, Jersey Reds and Ramapos) work well, as do paste or Roma tomatoes. You'll need four pint-sized jars (16 ounces each) for purée storage.

Ingredients:

10 pounds red, ripe, firm paste or Roma tomatoes (about 20 to 30, depending on size)

Lemon juice, bottled lemon juice or citric acid

Salt (kosher, pickling or fine sea only), optional

Preparation:

1. Heat oven to 325 degrees. Core and halve tomatoes and scoop out seeds and gel. Pile tomatoes into a large roasting pan, or on 2 sheet pans, cut side up. Do not add oil.
2. Roast tomatoes for 2 hours. Thoroughly purée tomatoes using a blender or immersion blender. It should be smooth and velvety, with no pieces.
3. Put a rack in a large stockpot or line pot with a folded kitchen towel, then fill pot with water and bring to a boil. Add pint jars and boil for 10 minutes. Jars may be left in warm water until ready to fill. Alternatively, sterilize jars by running them through a dishwasher cycle, keeping them warm in the machine.
4. Place canning rings in a small saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Turn off heat and add flat lids to soften their rubber gaskets. Rings and lids may be left in water until jars are filled.
5. In a nonreactive pan, bring purée to a brisk boil for 5 minutes. Ladle hot tomato purée into warm jars leaving 1/2 inch head space, plus room to accommodate lemon juice. If using citric acid, fill to 1/2 inch head space.
6. Into every pint jar, add one tablespoon lemon juice or 1/4 teaspoon citric acid. If using salt, add 1/2 teaspoon to each pint jar.
7. Wipe jar rims clean with a damp towel. Place lids on jars, screw on rings and lower jars upright into boiling water. Return to a full boil and process for 35 minutes. Transfer jars to

a folded towel and let cool for 12 hours. Jars will ping as they seal. Once cool, test seals by removing rings and lifting jars by flat lids. If a lid releases, the seal has not formed. Unsealed jars should be refrigerated and used within three days or reprocessed. Rings and jars may be reused, but a new flat lid must be used each time.

Yield: 4 pint-sized jars

A Gift So Tasty, You Might Keep It

By **CATHY BARROW**

OCT. 30, 2012

Now is the season for pears of all types, but Seckel pears are particularly charming behind glass. About 3 inches tall and perfectly shaped, they layer into a jar halved and cored without any cramming.

Seckel pears stay in the market until around Thanksgiving. Initially olive green, they ripen with a reddish blush, the best of them with the stems still attached. (Stemless pears tend to spoil more quickly.) To determine their ripeness, check for a slight yield around the neck just below the stem. Buy fruit that is generally heavy and firm, hold it in the coldest part of the refrigerator and then ripen for two or three days on the counter before preserving. These jars of pears are ready to serve at once and make beautiful hostess gifts.

A heavier, sweeter syrup will help prevent the fruit from floating in the jar. If you wish to reduce the sugar for a lighter syrup, the fruit will surely float, but it's not a disaster. Any fruit not covered by syrup may discolor over time, so use those jars first. I find that preserving in jars with shoulders (not the wide-mouth style) also helps submerge the fruit.

The heady combination of star anise and vanilla infuses the pears, making a lovely complement to spicy sweets like gingerbread or pumpkin pie at Thanksgiving. Later, on a snowy winter afternoon, the pears can be placed in a tart crust filled with dulce de leche. You can make cocktails with the syrup and save and reuse the vanilla beans.

And you might opt for different flavorings. Ginger, cinnamon and cardamom each match well with pears. Any combination would make a sublime gift.

Preserved Pears With Pepper, Star Anise and Vanilla Syrup

By CATHY BARROW

Ingredients:

2 lemons, juiced

24 Seckel pears (or Bosc or Bartlett, but they may need to be quartered to fit the jar)

2 and 2/3 cup sugar

6 whole star anise

6 vanilla beans

3 tablespoons pink peppercorns

Preparation:

1. Put a rack in a large stockpot, or line the pot with a folded kitchen towel. Fill with water and bring to a boil. Add 6 pint-size canning jars and boil for 10 minutes. Jars may be left in the warm water in the pot until ready to be filled. Alternatively, sterilize the jars by running them through a dishwasher cycle, leaving them there until ready to fill.
2. Place canning rings in a small saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Turn off the heat and add the lids to soften their rubber gaskets. Rings and lids may be left in the water until jars are filled.
3. Fill a large bowl with cold water and add the lemon juice to keep the pears from browning. Peel, halve and core the pears, dropping them into the water as you go. Meanwhile, make the flavored syrup. Bring 8 cups of water and the sugar to a boil. Add anise, vanilla beans and peppercorns.
4. Drain the pears and add to the boiling syrup. Boil for five minutes. Using a slotted spoon, divide pears between six jars. Remove the star anise and vanilla from the syrup, dividing them between jars. Ladle in hot syrup and peppercorns, leaving 1/2 inch of headspace. Run a plastic knife gently around the inside of jar to remove any air bubbles. Recheck the headspace. There may be extra syrup, but resist overfilling the jars.
5. Wipe jar rims clean with a damp towel. Place the lids on the jars, screw on the rings and lower the jars back into the pot of boiling water. Return to a full boil and boil for 20 minutes. Transfer jars to a folded towel and let cool for 12 hours; you should hear them ping as they seal.

6. Once cool, test the seals by removing rings and lifting jars by the flat lids. If a lid releases, the seal has not formed. Unsealed jars should be refrigerated and used within a month, or reprocessed. Rings and jars may be reused, but a new flat lid must be used each time. To reprocess, reheat syrup to boiling, add back pears, return to boiling, then continue as before.

Yield: 6 pint jars, or 12 cups

Some Canning Dos and Don'ts

By **JULIA MOSKIN**

May 27, 2009

Preserving is no more technical or challenging than baking. But because the risks are greater — a fallen cake will not send anyone to the hospital, but a contaminated jar of salsa just might — cooks must do it attentively.

Basic equipment like a dishwasher, new jars and a roll of paper towels can eliminate many possible hazards.

But recipes should be followed closely, and should not be culled from index cards dating from the Great Depression. The Department of Agriculture, having devoted extensive testing to home preserving, recommends not using any preserving recipes developed before about 1990. (The government's first comprehensive guide, "The Complete Guide to Home Canning," was published in 1988; the most recent edition is from 2006.)

Illnesses from home canning are rare, not because jars never spoil, but because spoiled jars often look spoiled: leaky, crusty, bubbly and loose-lidded or with lids that are rounded on top.

Botulism is particularly rare, but it is in a class by itself because of the sneaky, silent nature of the bacteria that cause it. *Clostridium botulinum* grow without oxygen, so they can survive inside a sealed jar. But they can be destroyed by heat.

If in doubt, know that most "spoilors" — molds, yeasts, enzymes and bacteria — cannot survive more than a few minutes' cooking, so the contents of a questionable jar can always be dumped into a pot and reesterilized by boiling for 10 minutes. This will make it safe, although it might no longer be very tasty.

Food that is very sweet, very salty or very acidic is intimidating to spoilors. New canners should practice with fruit, tomatoes, chutneys, pickles and other high-acid recipes like artichoke hearts in lemon juice.

For this kind of preserving, the water-bath method of sterilization is effective and easy, involving lots of boiling water and not much special equipment aside from sturdy tongs. Jars must be clean and hot (running them through the dishwasher works well), but need not be sterilized beforehand. Once they are filled, the jars are boiled to cook and reesterilize the food and create the tight seal that will prevent new spoilors from getting in.

The low-tech tests are still effective: lifting the jar up by the lid, and pressing the lid to make sure the center is sucked down tight. If a jar fails these tests when it comes out of the

water bath, it can be reprocessed right away. If it fails later on, boil the food before eating it, or discard it.

Safe practices, sterilization times, recipes and canning methods are exhaustively covered by the Department of Agriculture's National Center for Home Food Preservation at www.uga.edu/nchfp/. The Jarden company, which makes both Kerr and Ball jars, has instructional videos on its site, www.freshpreserving.com.

Some excellent books with canning basics include "Putting Food By," by Janet Greene, Ruth Hertzberg and Beatrice Vaughan (Plume, 1992); "The Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving," by Judy Kingry and Lauren Devine (Robert Rose, 2006); "Preserving the Taste," by Edon Waycott (Hearst Books, 1996); "Well-Preserved," by Eugenia Bone (Clarkson Potter, 2009), and the books of Linda Ziedrich.

Preserving Time in a Bottle (or a Jar)



Eugenia Bone preserves asparagus. (Evan Sung for *The New York Times*)

By **JULIA MOSKIN**

May 27, 2009

For Eugenia Bone, opening the kitchen cupboard in her SoHo apartment is like dipping into a favorite TV show. “The jars are like characters, with story lines that I remember,” she said recently, scrabbling around in search of a jar of yellowfin tuna preserved in olive oil and salt. “Seeing them brings back the farm where I bought that case of artichokes, or the day we picked all those cherries.”

When the tuna came to light, the date on the label was discouraging: 2006. “The Feds wouldn’t like it,” she said, referring to Department of Agriculture recommendations that home-preserved food be eaten within a year. “But it’s still going to make a great lunch.”

Ms. Bone, who has just published a canning cookbook titled “Well-Preserved” (Clarkson Potter), is not the blue-ribbon farm wife usually brought to mind by the phrase “home preserving expert.” She spent her youth in a plastic miniskirt, smoking and running between punk music shows on the Lower East Side. Now 50, a typically jumpy New Yorker and the mother of two teenagers, she grows nothing, though she is a regular hunter-gatherer at farmers’ markets.

But with her finely developed palate — she is a daughter of the influential Italian-American cookbook author Edward Giobbi — Ms. Bone has joined a growing movement

of home cooks who are interested in preserving flavor, not just food.

“When I was young, we were just trying to desperately hold on to things,” said Edon Waycott, whose “Preserving the Taste” (Hearst Books, 1996) is one of the group’s bibles. She makes preserves from the mulberries, guavas and boysenberries she grows at home in Malibu, Calif., and was raised on working farms in North Carolina and New Jersey. “Now everything is available all the time, but capturing the ripeness and deliciousness of a strawberry is harder than it was back then,” she said.

Preserving food cannot be considered new and trendy, no matter how vigorously it’s rubbed with organic rosemary sprigs. But the recent revival of attention to it fits neatly into the modern renaissance of handcrafted food, heirloom agriculture, and using food in its season. Like baking bread or making a slow-cooked tomato sauce, preserving offers primal satisfactions and practical results. And in today’s swirl of food issues (local, seasonal, organic, industrial), home preserving can also be viewed as a quasi-political act. “Preserving is an extension of the values that made you shop in the farmers’ market in the first place,” Ms. Bone said.

“There’s an incredible surge of interest recently,” according to June Taylor of Berkeley, Calif., a pioneer in using local, seasonal produce and as few added ingredients as possible in her expensive, delicious fruit preserves. “People want to take back their food and their skills from the industrial giants.”

People are also looking for thrifty, crafty ways to eat well. In a time of high food prices, job losses and food safety scares, home canning is booming, with sales of equipment already up almost 50 percent over last year, according to the Jarden company, which makes both Ball and Kerr canning supplies.

Stacks of locally grown, peak-ripe produce are about to appear at farmstands and markets — then disappear for another year. The time window is opening for pickling artichokes, simmering berries and suspending plums in time, and syrup.

On Sunday, about 80 people are expected at a community kitchen in San Francisco’s Mission District, to preserve 500 pounds of ripe apricots trucked in from local organic farms. “The morning team will macerate them in sugar, cardamom and vanilla and the afternoon team will process them,” said Anya Fernald, who conceived the project and publicized it on Facebook and on www.yeswecanfood.com.

Shares in the apricots (future canning parties will tackle cucumbers in July and tomatoes in September) have been sold online, with a discount for those who show up to work in the kitchen. “By joining C.S.A.s or shopping at farmers’ markets, people have made the commitment,” Ms. Fernald said, referring to community-supported agriculture programs,

in which people buy a weekly share of a farm's output. "Now they will learn to deal with the ingredients."

Canning, especially the friendly sounding "small batch" model, reduces the seasonal bounty to a series of manageable afternoon projects. (By contrast, older recipes call for bushels, rather than quarts, of produce.) "It's not a huge annual event, but all of a piece with the way I eat and cook every day," said Georgianne Mora, who lives in South Londonderry, Vt., and blogs at www.acookinglife.typepad.com. "The most flavor, from the best ingredients, with the least interference from me." Ms. Mora, a purist among purists, has experimented extensively with jams cooked almost entirely by the heat of the sun, and sells them at farmers' markets.

Like most ideologically tinged movements, preserving has its warring factions, its fault lines and its taboos. Many American home-canning classics — the kinds that win prizes at county fairs, like peas and carrots, dilled green beans, fruit jellies stiffened with pectin — are considered too sweet, too plain or too artificial by these cooks.

"I have never made one jar of jam with pectin," declared June Taylor, referring to the naturally derived thickener that is a staple of both industrial and home canning. (It is called for in many recipes on the Agriculture Department's canning Web site, the National Center for Home Food Preservation, www.uga.edu/nchfp/, considered the most reliable resource.)

Pectin is present in most unripe fruits and many ripe ones, but Ms. Taylor, Ms. Mora and others consider the prepackaged stuff, available in liquid and powder form, unnatural. Some produce their own pectin as cooks did for centuries, by boiling down the juice of green apples. This is the method espoused by Christine Ferber, the French jam goddess whose tiny workshop at the eastern edge of Alsace is hallowed ground for lovers of fruit preserves. (Her jams are sold at Pierre Hermé's pastry shops in Paris, and her book, "Mes Confitures," begins with a recipe for green apple jelly.)

Even the pectin rebels generally follow the U.S.D.A.'s strict guidelines for canning procedures, which have become even stricter over the last two decades. "After the 1970s there was a real crackdown," said Blake Slemmer, a lifelong canner and self-described "homesteader" in Atlanta who translates the detailed U.S.D.A. instructions into plainer language on his Web site, www.pickyourown.org.

"In the 1980's there was a hard look at the science," said Dr. Elizabeth Andress, director of the National Center for Home Food Preservation, who has worked with the U.S.D.A. for 25 years on developing the guidelines. "Canning is much safer and more reliable than when we began." Current regulations forbid the simple open-kettle canning, in which hot food is spooned into hot jars, sealed, and left to cool. Now virtually all food must be

processed after it goes into the jar, and cooks are firmly discouraged from canning vegetables other than tomatoes. (The high acidity of most ripe fruits helps discourage spoilage; most vegetables have no such natural protection.)

But experienced canners say that the warnings unnecessarily discourage novices. “You should be clean, but you shouldn’t be paranoid,” Ms. Mora said. “Imagine the conditions in which these techniques were developed.”

Although the science of preserving doesn’t change, tastes, economies and ideologies do. Community canneries, where local farmers and cooks could once bring their produce to be canned, or do it themselves using large-scale equipment, have mostly disappeared. But in the Hudson Valley, a group in Schoharie County recently received a grant to help open a new one. Peter Pehrson, who is leading the project, said he was inspired and alarmed by the wasted produce on local farms that are geared for the commercial food market.

“The tradition here is for the community to come in and pick up the gleanings,” he said. “I couldn’t believe how much was left lying in the field.” Mr. Pehrson said he was raised on farms and knew that even basic preserving equipment could solve the problem and create a new resource: locally grown canned vegetables. “Like most home cooks and gardeners, I overbuy, I overplant, and then the moment of reckoning comes,” he said.

Buying too much at the farmers’ market is the main reason Ms. Bone learned to can a decade ago. She loved good food, especially Italian food, and the preserving recipes that other canners used to win ribbons at county fairs just didn’t have the deep, complicated tastes she remembered from her father’s kitchen and visits to his family in Italy. Out of necessity, she began to develop her own safe recipes for canned foods she found useful, like pickled cauliflower and marinated artichokes.

“How much jam and dill pickles can a person get through?” Ms. Bone asked. Her book includes master recipes — for preserves like stewed onions with marjoram, lemony baby artichokes, and figs in brandy — and recipes for dishes that use them up. She is all about the churn of the kitchen, the movement of ingredients from the counter to the cupboard and freezer, back to the counter, to the table, and out. “It’s all part of the kitchen ecosystem,” she said. “It all gets used in the end.”

She stepped away from a stovetop of boiling pots to arrange herself in a yoga pose. “In full peacock your elbows really dig into your stomach,” she said, balancing on her forearms. “Cooks like it because it keeps things moving through the intestinal tract.”

She doesn’t decorate her jars with calico, or stick charming labels on them, and is unconcerned about the color of her asparagus and the occasional overcooked batch of artichoke hearts.

“I’m not in it for the looks,” she said. “If it tastes good, I’ll eat it. If it doesn’t taste good, I’ll make it taste good.”

Sun-Cooked Strawberry Preserves

Adapted from Georgianne Mora

Total Time: 20 minutes plus at least 6 hours' maceration and 2 to 4 days' sun-cooking

2 quarts ripe, unblemished strawberries, rinsed (or raspberries, blackberries or blueberries)

1 ½ to 2 cups sugar

1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice.

1. Watch the weather: sun-cooking requires two or three full days of sunshine and temperatures above 80 degrees. Trim stems or leaves off berries and taste; if they are very sweet, use smaller amount of sugar. Toss berries and sugar in a glass or ceramic bowl. Let sit for at least 6 hours or overnight. Stir occasionally to distribute sugar as it dissolves.

2. Transfer berries to a nonstick or stainless steel pot and add lemon juice. Gradually bring mixture to a boil, then immediately reduce to a high simmer and cook for 5 minutes. Pour into a large stainless steel or plastic tray (or several, depending on size) into a layer 1 to 1 ½ inches deep.

3. Set in direct sun and cover with netting or cheesecloth to keep bugs out and to allow evaporation. Stir gently every few hours. Leave out all day, or at least eight hours; bring indoors (or cover securely) at dusk, set out again in the morning.

4. Watch for syrup under berries to thicken. Depending on weather, this will take two to four days. Mixture may bubble as it heats, but if it starts to foam, can it immediately and use as syrup. (Foam indicates the beginning of fermentation; syrup will still be safe and delicious.) If weather changes, or if mixture does not seem to be cooking, proceed with slow-cooking, below.

5. When all syrup thickens, pour it and fruit into a pot and gently bring to a boil. Pour into sterilized glass jars; tighten lids. Place jars in a deep pot with water to cover. Boil jars for 10 minutes, then remove from pot with jar lifter or tongs. Let cool on counter, untouched, 4 to 6 hours. After 12 to 24 hours, check seals: lift each jar up by the lid, and press the lid to make sure the center is sucked down tight.

Store in a dry dark place for up to one year. Refrigerate after opening.

Yield: About 2 pints.

Note: Jam can be slow-cooked instead of sun-cooked. After macerating fruit in sugar, gently simmer mixture in a large pot, preferably nonstick, for 1 to 2 hours. Stir often; do not boil. When thickened, proceed with canning.

Pickled Asparagus

Adapted from “Well-Preserved” by Eugenia Bone (Clarkson Potter)

Total Time: 1 hour, plus at least 4 hours’ cooling and 4 weeks’ resting

About 5 pounds asparagus, thin to medium-thick

2 ¼ cups distilled white or white wine vinegar (labeled at least 5 percent acidity)

4 tablespoons salt

2 garlic cloves, slivered

1 teaspoon dill seed (optional)

¼ teaspoon hot pepper flakes

¼ teaspoon whole allspice (optional)

¼ teaspoon cumin seed (optional)

¼ teaspoon coriander seed (optional)

Hard-boiled eggs, extra virgin olive oil and freshly ground black pepper, for serving.

1. Cut bottoms off asparagus to make them fit upright in a pint jar. Asparagus tips should be at least 1/2 inch below lid. (Reserve bottoms for another use.)
2. Pour about 2 inches water into a skillet large enough to hold asparagus lying down; bring to a boil. In batches, blanch asparagus: place in skillet, bring water back to a boil, and then immediately remove and run under very cold water or dunk in ice water. Set aside to drain.
3. Combine remaining ingredients in a saucepan with 2 1/4 cups water and bring to a boil. Stir occasionally and cook just until salt dissolves; turn off heat.
4. Prepare 4 clean, hot pint jars and bands, and new lids. (Dip in boiling water, or run through dishwasher.) When jars are dry but still hot, pack asparagus into them, wedging spears in tightly. There should be enough for 3 or 4 full jars: do not half-fill jars.
5. Pour in vinegar solution, just to barely cover tips of asparagus. Make sure to leave 1/2 inch air space above vinegar solution. Distribute garlic slivers and spices evenly among jars. Wipe rims with a clean paper towel dipped in hot water, place lids on top and screw on bands. (Not too tight, just firmly closed.)
6. Prepare a boiling-water bath in a deep pot with a rack. Place jars on rack and pour water over them, making sure water covers jars by 2 to 3 inches. Bring water back to a rolling boil over high heat, start a timer for 10 minutes, then reduce heat and gently boil. When

timer goes off, turn off heat and wait 5 minutes before removing jars with jar lifter or tongs. Let cool on counter, untouched, 4 to 6 hours. After 12 to 24 hours, check seals: lift each jar up by the lid, and press the lid to make sure the center is sucked down tightly.

7. Store in a cool, dark, dry place (not refrigerator) for 4 weeks before using, or up to 1 year. Refrigerate after opening. To serve, drain off pickling liquid and arrange asparagus on plates. Add hard-boiled egg, drizzle with oil and shower with black pepper.

Yield: 3 or 4 pint jars

Make Room in the Fridge for Jam



Nectarine and peach jam with lemon verbena. (Andrew Scrivani for The New York Times)

By **MELISSA CLARK**

September 14, 2012

Making jam is simple. Canning isn't.

The canning part is why it took me years to make a batch of jam, what with all that equipment and the measures you take to sterilize it. What would happen if I did it wrong? Would I kill my whole family after one marmalade-slathered breakfast?

Then I learned about refrigerator jam, which is just what it sounds like: jam you store in the fridge instead of the pantry.

You don't need to sterilize anything, you can skip the pectin and you can cook it in batches of any size, from as small as a pint of perfect strawberries to as large as a bushel of blueberries.

At the most basic level, all you do is throw fruit and sugar into a pan, let it slowly bubble until it starts to look like jam, then taste. If it's too sweet, add lemon juice. If it's too tart, add more sugar (or honey, or maple syrup). You can add flavorings (spices, vanilla bean,

booze, tea, herbs) if you want to zip things up. Or leave it plain, though I often add a pinch of salt to bring out the flavors.

Then let it cool, and store in the fridge (or freezer). Chances are you will eat it all before it starts to grow mold. And if you do spy a suspicious spot, rest assured that the molds that generally grow on jam are not the deadly kind. Some of my friends just scrape off any suspect bits and eat the jam anyway. (If you still want to try canning regardless, directions are online at nytimes.com/dining.)

Ever since I learned the joys of refrigerator jam, I've made it often. Over the years, I've refined certain aspects. If I have time, I use a method I picked up from Christine Ferber, one of France's eminent jam makers. She calls for macerating the fruit in sugar overnight so the juices release, then straining the liquid from the bowl, cooking that down to a syrup before re-adding the fruit. This allows you to cook the fruit less, retaining a better texture and fresher flavor.

I recently tried this with a combination of peaches and nectarines spiked with lemon verbena, and it worked beautifully.

Ripe tomatoes don't need overnight maceration to bring out their juices, so for a sweet tomato jam, I just simmered them with honey and vanilla. It's fabulous on toast with ricotta, and it would also make an unexpected-yet-fitting filling for a linzer torte come the holidays.

As the seasons for juicy fruit jams wane, fruit butter season begins. Instead of the usual apple butter, I combined apples with pears, brandy, brown sugar and cardamom. It's nice stirred into yogurt, but haunting enough to serve as dessert when topped with a little mascarpone and another splash of brandy. All three of these recipes are easy to make, and worth the fridge space to keep.

Canning Jam, From Preparing the Jars to Testing the Seal

By **MELISSA CLARK**

September 14, 2012

Refrigerator jams will last for weeks, maybe even a few months, when kept cold and tightly sealed. You can also freeze the jams for up to six months before they start to lose their texture. But any of these recipes can also be canned for longer storage — up to a year. And canning means you can keep the jams in the pantry, freeing valuable fridge space.

Unless you're making vats of jam, I recommend buying small jars, either 4- or 8-ounce, because they will fit easily in the average stockpot and are easier to maneuver. (By the way, you can reuse canning jars, but make sure to buy new lids to ensure a good seal.)

Once you have your jars, here's what to do.

- 1.** Fit a large pot with a rack, or line with a folded kitchen towel. Fill 2/3 with water and bring to a boil. Add canning jars and boil for 10 minutes. Jars may be left in the warm water in the pot until ready to be filled. (Alternatively, you can sterilize jars by running them through a dishwasher cycle, leaving them there until ready to fill.)
- 2.** Place canning rings in a small saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Turn off heat and add lids to soften their rubber gaskets. Rings and lids may be left in the water until jars are filled.
- 3.** Remove warm jars from the pot and bring water back to a boil. Ladle hot jam into jars just up to the base of the neck, leaving 1/2 inch at the top. Wipe jar rims clean with a damp towel. Place lids on jars, screw on rings and lower jars back into the pot of boiling water. The water should cover the jars; if not, add more. Boil jars for 10 minutes. Transfer jars to a folded towel and allow to cool for 12 hours; you should hear them making a pinging sound as they seal.
- 4.** Test the seals by removing rings and lifting jars by the flat lid. If the lid releases, the seal has not formed. Unsealed jars should be refrigerated and used within a month, or reprocessed. (Rings and jars may be reused, but a new flat lid must be used each time a jar is processed.) To reprocess, reheat filling to the boiling point (as in Step 3), then continue as before.

Nectarine and Peach Jam With Lemon Verbena

Adapted from “Mes Confitures” by Christine Ferber (Michigan State University Press)

Total time: 45 to 60 minutes, plus macerating

Ingredients:

1 lemon

3 pounds ripe nectarines or peaches, or a mix, pitted and sliced

730 grams sugar (3 ¼ cups)

Pinch salt

10 sprigs fresh lemon verbena

Preparation:

1. Grate zest from half the lemon and place zest in a large saucepan. Juice lemon and add the juice to the zest. Toss in fruit, sugar, salt and lemon verbena and bring to a simmer. Turn mixture into a large bowl and refrigerate overnight.
2. The next day, if you plan to can the jam, prepare the jars according to the instructions here.
3. Strain the liquid from the mixture into a wide, shallow pot or large skillet, reserving the fruit. Bring liquid to a simmer and cook until it thickens enough to wrinkle on the surface when you push it with a spoon (a candy thermometer should read 220 degrees).
4. Remove lemon verbena from fruit and add fruit to the pot with the syrup. Simmer fruit gently until mixture looks very thick and jamlike. You can test the jam to see if it's ready by freezing a small plate. Drop a bit of the jam on the plate, let it cool for a minute and then push it with your finger. The top should wrinkle. If syrup is thin and runny, keep cooking and test again in a few minutes (return plate to freezer in the meantime).
5. If canning, spoon into hot sterilized jars and process as directed. Otherwise, let jam cool, then store in refrigerator or freezer.

Yield: 3 half-pint jars

Sweet Tomato Jam With Honey and Vanilla

Total time: About 2 hours

Ingredients:

3 pounds firm ripe tomatoes, cored and diced (about 8 cups)

1 cup honey

300 grams granulated sugar (1 ½ cups)

1/2 teaspoon lemon zest

2 tablespoons lemon juice

2 vanilla bean pods, split

Pinch fine sea salt

Preparation:

1. If you plan to can the jam, prepare the jars according to the instructions here.
2. In a large nonreactive pot, combine ingredients, adding both vanilla seeds and pods to the pot. Simmer over medium-low heat until the mixture is very thick and jammy, about 1 and 1/2 hours. Discard vanilla pods.
3. If canning, spoon into hot sterilized jars and process as directed. Otherwise, let jam cool, then store in refrigerator or freezer.

Yield: 3 half-pint jars

Pear-Apple Butter With Cardamom

August 25, 2004

Total time: 3 ½ hours

Ingredients:

3 pounds soft, ripe pears like Bartlett or Anjou, coarsely chopped with peel and core (10 cups)

2 pounds apples, coarsely chopped with peel and core (8 cups)

1/2 cup brandy

180 grams light brown sugar (about 1 cup)

2 tablespoons lemon juice

5 grams ground cardamom (about 1/2 teaspoon)

Pinch fine sea salt

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preparation:

- 1.** In a large pot, combine pears, apples, 3 cups water and brandy. Bring to a boil and cook over high heat until fruit is very soft and falling apart, 30 to 45 minutes.
- 2.** Run mixture through the fine mesh of a food mill to remove seeds and skin. Return purée to pot and stir in sugar, lemon juice, cardamom and salt. Simmer over low heat, stirring often to prevent scorching at the bottom of the pot, until butter is thick, jammy, sticky to the touch and chestnut-colored, about 2 1/2 hours. Stir in vanilla.
- 3.** If you plan to can the butter, while it simmers prepare the jars according to the instructions here; after it has simmered, spoon into hot sterilized jars and process as directed. Otherwise, let butter cool, then store in the refrigerator or freezer.

Yield: About 3 cups

Peach Preserves

August 25, 2004

Total time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Ingredients:

6 ½ pounds ripe freestone peaches, pitted, sliced into wedges

1 ½ cups sugar

1/3 cup lemon juice

1 tablespoon freshly grated ginger

Preparation:

1. In a food processor, chop peaches in batches to a chunky purée (about 4 1-second pulses), transfer to a 6-quart pot or dutch oven. Add sugar, lemon juice and ginger.
2. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Turn heat to low, and simmer 1 1/2 hours, stirring every 5 minutes.
3. With a spoon, transfer the preserves to 3 pint jars. Fill jars to 1/2-inch from the rim, close the jars and let them cool. Store in refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Yield: 3 pints

Apple Preserves With Cardamom

September 24, 2008

Adapted from Tova Amrami

Total Time: 30 minutes plus 20 minutes' resting

2 tart apples, like Granny Smiths, cored, peeled and quartered

1 cup sugar

1 tablespoon lemon juice

1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom or 3 whole pods, smashed.

1. Place apples in a medium heavy pan and sprinkle with 2 tablespoons water, plus other remaining ingredients. Bring to a slow simmer for about a half hour or until apples are soft.

2. Remove from heat and cover pan for 20 minutes. Serve immediately or transfer to a jar with a lid. Refrigerated, apples will keep for at least a week.

Yield: About 1 ½ cups

Chunky Vanilla Pear Jam

October 2, 1991

Adapted from “Perfect Preserves” by Nora Carey (Stewart Tabori and Chang, 1990)

Total time: 1 hour 30 minutes

Ingredients:

5 pounds pears, preferably Bartlett

Grated zest of a lemon

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

16 ounces frozen apple juice concentrate, thawed

1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise

2 cups water

Preparation:

- 1.** Peel, quarter and core the pears. Chop them in small cubes and toss them in a bowl with the lemon zest and lemon juice. Set aside.
- 2.** In a large heavy saucepan combine the apple juice concentrate with the vanilla bean and the water. Boil it over moderate heat for 10 minutes. Remove the vanilla bean and add the pears and their liquid.
- 3.** Bring the mixture to a boil over moderate heat and cook, stirring frequently, about 45 minutes, or until the mixture thickens enough to hold its shape on a spoon and has reached nearly 220 degrees on a candy thermometer.
- 4.** Spoon the jam into sterilized jars and seal, or refrigerate when cool.

Yield: 3 pints

Preserved Seckel Pears in Pink Peppercorn, Star Anise and Vanilla Syrup

October 30, 2012

Total time: About an hour, plus cooling time

Ingredients:

2 lemons, juiced

24 Seckel pears (or Bosc or Bartlett, but they may need to be quartered to fit the jar)

2-2/3 cup sugar

6 whole star anise

6 vanilla beans

3 tablespoons pink peppercorns

Preparation:

1. Put a rack in a large stockpot, or line the pot with a folded kitchen towel. Fill with water and bring to a boil. Add 6 pint-size canning jars and boil for 10 minutes. Jars may be left in the warm water in the pot until ready to be filled. Alternatively, sterilize the jars by running them through a dishwasher cycle, leaving them there until ready to fill.
2. Place canning rings in a small saucepan, cover with water and bring to a boil. Turn off the heat and add the lids to soften their rubber gaskets. Rings and lids may be left in the water until jars are filled.
3. Fill a large bowl with cold water and add the lemon juice to keep the pears from browning. Peel, halve and core the pears, dropping them into the water as you go. Meanwhile, make the flavored syrup. Bring 8 cups of water and the sugar to a boil. Add anise, vanilla beans and peppercorns.
4. Drain the pears and add to the boiling syrup. Boil for five minutes. Using a slotted spoon, divide pears between six jars. Remove the star anise and vanilla from the syrup, dividing them between jars. Ladle in hot syrup and peppercorns, leaving 1/2 inch of headspace. Run a plastic knife gently around the inside of jar to remove any air bubbles. Recheck the headspace. There may be extra syrup, but resist overfilling the jars.
5. Wipe jar rims clean with a damp towel. Place the lids on the jars, screw on the rings and lower the jars back into the pot of boiling water. Return to a full boil and boil for 20

minutes. Transfer jars to a folded towel and let cool for 12 hours; you should hear them ping as they seal.

6. Once cool, test the seals by removing rings and lifting jars by the flat lids. If a lid releases, the seal has not formed. Unsealed jars should be refrigerated and used within a month, or reprocessed. Rings and jars may be reused, but a new flat lid must be used each time. To reprocess, reheat syrup to boiling, add back pears, return to boiling, then continue as before.

Yield: 6 pint jars, or 12 cups

Grapefruit-and-Meyer-Lemon Marmalade

February 13, 2005

Adapted from June Taylor

Ingredients:

5 pounds grapefruit, rinsed

5 Meyer lemons or small regular lemons, rinsed

1/2 cup lemon juice (from 2 to 3 additional lemons)

2 1/2 pounds sugar

Preparation:

1. Remove the grapefruit skin with a vegetable peeler. Cut the peel into 1/8-inch slivers; stop when you have 3/4 cup. Discard the rest. Slice off the ends of the grapefruit and the remaining grapefruit peel and pith. Remove grapefruit segments, reserving membrane. Stop when you have 5 cups of segments.
2. Cut the ends off the Meyer lemons, deep enough so you can see the flesh. Leaving the peel on, remove the segments of lemon and reserve the membrane. Cut the segments crosswise into 1/4-inch pieces. Put membranes from the grapefruit and Meyer lemons in a jelly bag and tie closed.
3. In a wide and deep pot, combine the grapefruit segments, grapefruit peel, lemon pieces and jelly bag. Add lemon juice and 2 1/2 cups water. Simmer until the grapefruit peel is tender, 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool.
4. Preheat the oven to 225 degrees. Working over a bowl in your sink, squeeze the liquid from the jelly bag; keep squeezing and wringing it out until you extract 1/3 to 1/2 cup of pectin. Add pectin and sugar to the pot. Place over high heat and boil, stirring now and then, until marmalade is between 222 and 225 degrees and passes the plate test. (Spoon a little onto a plate and put in the fridge for 3 minutes. If it thickens like jam, it is done.)
5. Meanwhile, put 6 sterilized 8-ounce canning jars and lids on a baking sheet and place in the oven. When jam is done, remove jars from the oven. Ladle jam into the jars, filling them as high as possible. Wipe the rims. Fasten the lid tightly. Let cool. If you don't get a vacuum seal, refrigerate the jam.

Yield: Makes 6 8-ounce jars of marmalade

Strawberry-Orange Preserves

June 19, 1991

Total time: 6 minutes

Ingredients:

4 cups fresh strawberries, washed, hulled and quartered

4 tablespoons water

6 ounces (3/4 cup) undiluted defrosted orange-juice concentrate

2 envelopes unflavored gelatin

Preparation:

1. Cook berries and water in a covered nonreactive pot 3 minutes. Uncover and mash fruit a little with a fork.
2. Sprinkle gelatin on the orange-juice concentrate and let the gelatin soften. Stir into the hot fruit mixture and cook, stirring, over low heat until gelatin dissolves completely.
3. Cool and spoon into jars. Refrigerate or freeze. Refrigerated preserves will last a couple of weeks; frozen, they last months

Yield: About 3 cups

Note: To add a bit of zest, if you have no objections to a bit of sugar, stir in 2 teaspoons of minced candied ginger after the mixture is cooked.

Recipe Redux: Tomato Preserves



Back Story

These tomato preserves, the recipe for which ran in *The Times* in 1948, are scented with lemon, cloves, cinnamon and ginger, a combination that has roots going back to the 18th century.

Equipment

Preserves are easier to control when cooked in a pot that's thick not just on the bottom but on the sides too. I like enameled cast iron.

The Trick

Cooking preserves should not be an ordeal. Keep the heat — and your nerves — low, and the fruit will gel with no danger of burning.

Byproduct

At the end of cooking you are left with not just preserved tomatoes but also with translucent candied lemon slices, which are best left on the counter for passers-by.

Occasion

Tomato preserves were once served as a condiment with desserts like rice pudding, but why not eat them at all times? On toast, in a Linzer cookie or with aged sheep's-milk cheese.

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By AMANDA HESSER

August 24, 2008

Time has a way of distilling recipes, leaving behind the forlorn, the insipid, those requiring pot-washing marathons. And because time doesn't look back, great foods occasionally get lost along the way. This column aims to unearth and celebrate the unjustly forgotten, and I love the feeling of giving neglected gems a second chance to thrive in history's whirring, gnashing sieve. But sometimes the discoveries leave me mystified: how could we have let tomato preserves slip past?

A few years ago an Italian restaurant in Manhattan introduced marmellata di pomodori — tomato marmalade — a seemingly exotic novelty from the land of culinary wisdom. It seemed so perfectly Mediterranean, emitting warmth, intensity and the promise of a lifestyle we will never have. Only it wasn't anything we needed to import, because we had already done so long ago.

“Americans were big preservers,” said Stephen Schmidt, a culinary historian and the author of the forthcoming book “Dessert in America.” Homemakers going back to the 18th century were putting up tomatoes in syrup, then serving them on their own with custard or as a condiment for desserts like sago pudding, a tapiocalike dish. Later came tomato jelly and jam (sometimes called marmalade). The tomato recipes, which appear in many cookbooks, including “The Virginia House-wife” and “The Fannie Farmer Cookbook,” often contained lemon or ginger, and the preserves in syrup were sometimes made with yellow tomatoes. “One of the criteria for these preserves was for the syrup to be clear,” Schmidt said. “That was a point of pride. Women clarified the sugar before making the preserve.” (Clarifying is no longer necessary now that sugar is factory-made.)

In 1948 — the heyday for canned foods and the sunset for tomato jelly and preserves — The Times ran a recipe for tomato preserves that could have been dated 1848. You begin by peeling small, slightly underripe pear-shaped tomatoes and simmering them whole in a syrup scented with lemon, cloves, cinnamon and slivers of fresh ginger. The tomatoes tint the syrup the color of embers and, if cooked correctly (that is, gently), never become part of it. Instead you simmer them until the tomatoes’ flesh brightens and becomes translucent at the edges. Then you pack them in jars and cover them with the syrup. They are sublime-looking and -tasting: tender like a plum, with a concentrated, persistent fragrance like a tropical flower.

As this fine recipe has itself been preserved for more than 50 years, there is no reason to alter the tomato preserves in any way, as Maria Hines, the chef at Tilth in Seattle, agreed. But there’s plenty you can do with them. Hines mashed the tomatoes and cooked them down as you would for tomato paste, then blended this mixture with custard as the base for ice cream, the sweet equivalent of tomato quiche. Hines also made a caramel of sugar, lemon and heavy cream, mixing in some of the tomato’s preserving syrup at the end — in a sense, preserving the preserve. The ice cream is rich and vegetal, and the caramel wraps around it, encasing it in strands of citrusy sweetness.

Still, the question lingers: what happened after 1948? How could we have stopped making tomato jam, while strawberry lived on? A hole in the mesh of the culinary sieve, certainly.

1948: Tomato Preserves

This recipe was created by Ruth P. Casa-Emellos, the director of the New York Times test kitchen.

This is best made with at least 3 pounds of tomatoes. Using level pounds makes the math easier. Buy the smallest plum tomatoes you can find, so you can leave them whole.

Small plum tomatoes

For each pound of cored and peeled tomatoes:

$\frac{3}{4}$ pound sugar

3 cloves

1 stick cinnamon

1 $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch slice peeled ginger

$\frac{1}{4}$ lemon, thinly sliced, seeds discarded.

1. Select slightly underripe tomatoes, preferably the small, pear-shaped ones. Core the tomatoes, then skin them by cutting a shallow X in their rounded end and dipping them in boiling water for 30 seconds. Peel. If the tomatoes are large, slice them in half across the middle and remove their seeds. Weigh the tomatoes, then measure the sugar and spices.
2. Layer the tomatoes and sugar in a deep, heavy saucepan (enameled cast iron works best). Cover and let stand overnight — no need to refrigerate.
3. The next day, tie the spices in cheesecloth. Add the spice bag to the tomatoes along with the sliced lemon. Place over medium heat and bring to a simmer. Cook, stirring often, until the tomatoes have become slightly translucent and the syrup is thick and begins to gel. Don't boil the syrup, or the tomatoes will fall apart. If the tomatoes finish first, remove them from the pan and reduce the syrup over medium-high heat. Remove the spice bag. Meanwhile, sterilize enough jars to accommodate the amount of preserves.
4. Fill the jars $\frac{3}{4}$ full with tomatoes and lemons (or save the lemons to eat separately), and cover the tomatoes with syrup. Seal, using your preferred canning method: paraffin or processing.

2008: Tomato-Preserve Ice Cream

By Maria Hines, the chef and owner of Tilth in Seattle.

For the ice cream:

Tomato preserves (see previous recipe), made with 4 pounds tomatoes, prepared up through Step 3

2 cups heavy cream

2 cups half-and-half

½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise

6 large egg yolks

¾ cup sugar

For the caramel (optional):

½ cup sugar

¼ teaspoon lemon juice

¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons heavy cream.

1. Using a slotted spoon, remove the tomatoes from their cooking syrup (reserving the syrup). Place the tomatoes in a large, heavy saucepan and mash to a fine pulp with a potato masher. Turn the heat to medium and reduce the pulp to the thickness of tomato paste, stirring constantly so it doesn't burn. Measure out 1¼ cups. Reserve the rest for spreading on toast. Return the measured amount to the saucepan.

2. Whisk the cream, half-and-half and vanilla into the pulp and place over medium heat. Stir constantly to prevent scorching. When the mixture reaches a simmer — do not let it boil — turn off the heat. Set aside to infuse for 10 to 15 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, whisk together the egg yolks and the sugar. Whisk about 1 cup of the hot cream into the egg yolks, then return this mixture to the remaining hot cream. Stir over medium-low heat until the custard reaches 180 degrees on a candy thermometer or thickly coats the back of a spoon, then remove from the heat. The custard should be thick and creamy, similar to egg nog.

4. Half-fill a large bowl with ice water. Strain custard into a smaller bowl. Rest the smaller bowl in the ice bath and let cool, stirring often. Chill.

5. Churn the tomato custard in your ice-cream maker, following the manufacturer's instructions. Chill.

6. To serve, make a caramel syrup if you like: In a small saucepan, combine the sugar and lemon juice with 1 tablespoon water. Cook over medium-high heat until the sugar caramelizes to a dark amber color. Remove from the heat and let cool for 1 minute. Whisk in the cream, then 3 tablespoons of the reserved tomato syrup. Scoop the ice cream into bowls and drizzle with a little caramel tomato syrup. Makes 1½ quarts.

Tomato Jam

August 20, 2008

1 ½ pounds good ripe tomatoes (Roma are best), cored and coarsely chopped

1 cup sugar

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice

1 tablespoon fresh grated or minced ginger

1 teaspoon ground cumin

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

⅛ teaspoon ground cloves

1 teaspoon salt

1 jalapeño or other peppers, stemmed, seeded and minced, or red pepper flakes or cayenne to taste.

1. Combine all ingredients in a heavy medium saucepan, Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring often.

2. Reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until mixture has consistency of thick jam, about 1 hour 15 minutes. Taste and adjust seasoning, then cool and refrigerate until ready to use; this will keep at least a week.

Yield: About 1 pint

Cherry Tomato Preserve

October 26, 1986

Ingredients:

1 quart washed and stemmed cherry tomatoes, the smaller the better

1 cup light brown sugar

1 cup granulated sugar

1 lemon cut in two the long way and sliced thin and pitted

1 ½ cups water

2 teaspoons cassia buds or ¾ teaspoon broken stick cinnamon tied in cheesecloth

¼ cup chopped fresh ginger

Preparation:

1. Combine all ingredients, cover and cook 15 to 20 minutes.
2. Uncover and continue to simmer about 40 minutes longer, until it has become pleasantly thick. Test for thickness from time to time by putting some of the mixture on a refrigerated saucer.
3. When done, pour it into very clean jars and seal it up with two thin coats of parafin and a lid.

Yield: 3 eight-ounce jars

Preserved Lemons Brighten a Stir-Fry

By **MELISSA CLARK**

February 17, 2012

A jar of preserved lemons sitting in the fridge is a boon for the busy cook. Chopped up and tossed into salads, stews and sautéés, they add a bright, nuanced burst of flavor in one speedy step — as long as you happen to have some on hand.

If you don't, you could whip up a batch and let it cure for a week. Or you could go out and buy a jar, which, unless you happen to live near a Middle Eastern grocery, could involve a subway, car or bus ride. Both options negate the quick and effortless part of the equation.

There is, however, another possibility that takes 10 minutes: making your own quick lemon preserve, or lemon pickle.

Instead of letting the age-old combination of salt and time tame the bitterness of lemon pith by themselves, heat and sugar speed the process along, pickling the citrus in minutes. Just blanch a thinly sliced lemon to remove some of its bite, then simmer it again in a pot of heavily sugared and salted water. You'll end up with lemon slivers that are at once salty, sweet, sour and bitter — and far more interesting than they should be given the amount of work that went into them. They get even better when you fry them in oil, letting their flavors caramelize and turn honeyed.

This technique works particularly well with Meyer lemons, which are sweeter and milder than regular lemons and generally contain less bitter pith beneath the rind. Regular lemons can work too, but blanch them in plain water twice before simmering them in the sugar-salt mixture. (Instructions for preserving lemons a more traditional way can be found at nytimes.com/dinersjournal.)

You could use the quick-preserved lemon slices as the base of any soup or stew, as long as you let them get good and golden before adding any other ingredients to the pan (otherwise they might steam instead of caramelizing). Or try tossing them with vegetables before roasting.

For this stir-fry, I brown the slices, then mix them with nuggets of chicken, aromatic fresh rosemary and plenty of tender, melting leeks. It makes a hearty dish that takes well under an hour to throw together — pickling time included.

Sautéed Chicken With Meyer Lemon and Rosemary

Time: About 30 minutes

1 ½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs or breasts, cut into 1/2-inch strips

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

2 teaspoons minced rosemary

Kosher salt

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

1 ½ Meyer lemons

2 tablespoons sugar

2 leeks, thinly sliced

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped.

1. Toss the chicken with 1 tablespoon oil, rosemary, 1 teaspoon salt, and pepper.
2. Trim the ends from 1 lemon, quarter lengthwise and remove the seeds. Slice quarters crosswise into 1/8-inch slices.
3. Bring a small pot of water to a boil over high heat. Add the lemon slices, lower the heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Drain under cold running water. Rinse out the pot and refill it with 1 cup water, the sugar and 1 tablespoon salt. Bring to a boil. Drop in the blanched lemon slices and simmer for 3 minutes. Drain under cold running water, pat dry.
4. Heat a skillet over high heat for 5 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons oil. It should start to shimmer immediately; add the lemon slices and stir-fry quickly until golden. Stir in the leeks and reduce heat to medium-high. Cook until leeks are soft and golden, about 3 minutes. Stir in garlic and cook 1 minute. Push the leek mixture to one side of the skillet; stir in the chicken mixture and sear, without moving, about 4 minutes. Mix in the leeks and continue cooking until the chicken is no longer pink, about 3 to 6 minutes more. Drizzle with juice from the remaining lemon half, to taste.

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

Preserving Lemons the Traditional Way

By **MELISSA CLARK**

February 17, 2012

As pantry items go, preserved lemons hold great intrinsic value. Just a small amount stirred into a quick sauté adds an almost otherworldly brightness and cardinal depth. Paired with the bold flavors of their North African and Middle Eastern ancestral homelands, preserved lemons are gorgeous with things like good fruity olives, spicy harissa paste and smoky merguez sausage.

I also love them set against virtually any type of seafood. For a supremely easy addition to something like a seared wild salmon filet, I'll chop the preserved rind nice and fine, and stir it right into the sauté pan with a little butter and chopped cilantro.

Meyer lemons are particularly well suited to preserving because they are sweeter and thinner-skinned than regular lemons. In this week's column, I make them into a quick preserve that can stand in for traditional preserved lemon in pretty much any dish. Though this version lacks the musky depth of flavor you get from the traditional recipe, it hits all the sweet, salty and sour notes.

You can also use regular lemons for the quick preserve. However, since they have a thicker layer of bitter pith, you should blanch them twice in plain water instead of once before simmering them in the pickling solution.

That said, making traditional preserved lemons at home is genuinely easy and well worth the work if you plan ahead. I'll use roughly eight small lemons for one quart-sized jar, with about a cup of kosher salt. And depending on my mood, I may add a stick or two of cinnamon, a bay leaf or some whole peppercorns (or all three, or none at all).

It's important to scrub the lemons very, very clean before quartering them almost all the way, leaving the quarters still attached at one end. Simply rub the insides with salt (about 2 tablespoons salt per lemon), and pack them into your (also very clean) jar, squishing them down into the bottom. Add enough additional fresh lemon juice to cover the lemons completely, cover the jar, and leave it out on the counter for about a week, giving it a turn every so often. Make a good space for the jar in your fridge, and let it sit for another month or so, with an occasional turn and shake. They'll keep perfectly, refrigerated, for at least a year.

Complements for the Chef

By **DAVID TANIS**

November 9, 2012

If you strip back the traditional Thanksgiving menu to its most basic elements, you have turkey, gravy and stuffing. Even if these are perfectly prepared (not the most likely possibility, alas), this relatively neutral, mild-mannered fare could use a little added zip, color and, dare I say, spice.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not anti-Thanksgiving. It's just that the usual add-ons often simply seem to add more richness. A spoonful of sweet potato casserole is lovely, but it doesn't provide any high notes. That's where condiments come in. Chutneys, relishes and pickles can offer some welcome diversion.

And so, since many of us don't have a pantry stocked with them, here are a few simple recipes for brightening up an otherwise one-note meal. All of these condiments can be prepared several days ahead of the holiday and kept in the refrigerator, ready to spoon into bowls. (Even if you don't get around to making them until the actual day, they are still fairly easy to put together.)

We all have favorite Thanksgiving side dishes that we look forward to each year, sometimes more for nostalgic reasons than because they are culinary gems. My Aunt Ruth made her annual quick-pickled peaches, and I still crave them, even though the fruit came out of a can. They looked right at home beside the creamed onions and green beans amandine, but more important, they contributed a sorely needed vinegar-spiked brightness to the dinner plate.

I played around with some classics, tweaking them just enough for my palate's pleasure. In my cranberry apple relish, for example, there's a boost of jalapeño and cayenne, but it still looks and tastes like Thanksgiving. My sweet-and-sour onions employ balsamic vinegar and saffron along with raisins and currant and a hint of lemon. A garlicky spiced brine lends depth to my pickled carrot slices, and a final sprinkling of fresh dill adds spark.

None of these are shockingly out of character for the holiday, but all satisfy the same goal: adding a spoonful of heightened flavor to enhance the experience.

Spicy Cranberry-Apple Relish

Total time: About 15 minutes

Ingredients:

1 cup sugar

1/4 cup cider vinegar

1 teaspoon salt

1 ½ pound tart, crisp apples, peeled and cut in 1/2-inch chunks

1 pound cranberries

1 tablespoon grated ginger

2 teaspoons finely chopped jalapeño or Serrano chile

Pinch cayenne pepper

Preparation:

1. Over medium heat, in wide stainless steel skillet, heat sugar, vinegar and salt, stirring to dissolve.
2. Add chopped apples and cranberries, and increase heat to medium-high. Let fruit cook, uncovered, for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring carefully, until apples are tender but still hold their shape.
3. Add ginger, jalapeño and cayenne, mix gently and cool to room temperature. May be prepared ahead and refrigerated up to 4 days.

Yield: About 4 cups

Sweet-and-Sour Onions

By **DAVID TANIS**

Total time: About 1 hour 15 minutes

Ingredients:

2 pounds small boiling onions, peeled

3 tablespoons red wine vinegar

2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

1/2 cup light brown sugar

1 teaspoon salt

Pinch saffron, crumbled (optional)

1/2 cup raisins

1/4 cup currants

1 teaspoon lemon zest

2 tablespoons lemon juice

1/4 cup pine nuts, lightly toasted

Preparation:

- 1.** Boil onions in well-salted water for 5 minutes, until softened slightly but still firm. Drain and place in baking dish (ceramic or stainless steel) just big enough to contain onions in one layer.
- 2.** In small bowl, stir together red wine vinegar, balsamic vinegar, brown sugar, salt and saffron until dissolved. Add raisins and currants. Pour mixture over onions to coat evenly. Cover tightly and bake for 1 hour at 350 degrees, stirring every 15 minutes or so, until onions are quite tender. Cool to room temperature.
- 3.** Carefully stir in lemon zest and lemon juice. Let onions marinate at least 1 hour. Serve sprinkled with pine nuts. May be prepared ahead and refrigerated up to 4 days.

Yield: About 4 cups

Pickled Carrot Slices

Total time: About 30 minutes

Ingredients:

1/2 cup white wine vinegar

1/2 cup sugar

1 tablespoon salt

4 cloves

1 bay leaf

1/2 teaspoon caraway seed

1/2 teaspoon coriander seed

6 garlic cloves, sliced

6 small dried red hot peppers

1 pound medium carrots, peeled, in 1/4-inch diagonal slices

2 tablespoons freshly snipped dill, for garnish

Preparation:

1. In stainless steel pot, make brine: combine vinegar, sugar, salt, cloves, bay leaf, caraway, coriander, garlic and hot peppers. Add 2 cups water and bring to a boil.
2. Reduce heat to a brisk simmer and add carrots. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes, until still quite firm. Remove carrots and spread out to cool on platter or baking sheet. Let brine come to room temperature. Put carrots in glass or plastic container, and pour brine over them. Let marinate several hours, refrigerated. May be prepared ahead and refrigerated for up to 4 days. Serve sprinkled with fresh dill.

Yield: About 3 cups

Bread-and-Butter Pickles

July 18, 1991

Ingredients:

8 medium cucumbers, sliced into 1/8-inch-thick rounds

1/3 cup kosher salt

4 medium onions, peeled and thinly sliced

1 green bell pepper, stemmed, seeded and cut into 1/4-inch dice

1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded and cut into 1/4-inch dice

3 cups white vinegar

3 cups sugar

1 tablespoon mustard seeds

1 teaspoon celery seeds

Preparation:

- 1.** In a large bowl, toss the cucumbers and salt and let stand for 4 hours or, refrigerated, overnight.
- 2.** Have ready 8 hot, sterilized pint (2-cup) jars and lids. (See pickled peppers for sterilizing instructions.) Place the cucumber slices and their liquid in a large kettle and add remaining ingredients. Place over high heat and bring just to a boil. Remove from heat. Gently pack the cucumbers into the jars, leaving 1/4inch of space below the lip. Pour enough liquid into the jars to cover the ingredients. Wipe rims with a clean, damp towel and screw lids on securely but not too tightly.
- 3.** Fill a large kettle fitted with a rack halfway with water and bring to a boil. Meanwhile, bring a teapot full of water to a boil. Place the filled jars on the rack (do not let them touch — work in batches if necessary) and pour in boiling water from the teapot until jar tops are covered by 2 inches. Bring to a boil and boil 10 minutes.
- 4.** Using tongs, remove jars from the kettle. Using potholders, tighten lids. Allow to cool. Store in a cool, dark place.

Yield: 8 pint jars

Chowchow

July 18, 1991

Ingredients:

4 cups string beans, trimmed and cut into 1-inch lengths

½ head cauliflower, broken into small flowerets

1 ½ cups fresh corn kernels

1 ½ cups fresh or frozen lima beans

6 cups cider vinegar

1 cup sugar

⅓ cup kosher salt

5 tablespoons dry mustard

1 tablespoon celery seeds

1 tablespoon mustard seeds

1 ½ teaspoons turmeric

4 cups green tomatoes, cut into 1-inch chunks

2 green bell peppers, stemmed, seeded and cut into ½-inch dice

1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded and cut into ½-inch dice

2 red onions, peeled and cut into ½-inch dice

Preparation:

1. Bring a large kettle ¼ full of salted water to a boil. Add the string beans, cauliflower, corn and fresh limas (if using frozen limas, do not add yet) and cook until just tender, about 5 minutes. Drain and plunge the vegetables into cold water to stop the cooking. When cool, drain again and set aside.

2. Return kettle to the stove and add the vinegar, sugar, salt, dry mustard, celery seeds, mustard seeds and turmeric. Bring just to a boil. Add the tomatoes, red and green bell peppers and onions. (If you are using frozen limas, add them now.) Simmer for 10 minutes. Add the cooled vegetables to the pot and cook another 10 minutes.

3. Have ready 8 hot, sterilized pint (2-cup) canning jars and lids. (See pickled peppers for sterilizing instructions.) Pour chowchow into the jars, leaving about ¼ inch of space below the lip. Wipe rims with a clean, damp towel and screw lids on securely but not too tightly.

4. Fill a large kettle fitted with a rack halfway with water and bring to a boil. Meanwhile, bring a teapot full of water to a boil. Place the filled jars on the rack (do not let them touch — work in batches if necessary) and pour in boiling water from the teapot until jar tops are covered by 2 inches. Bring to a boil and boil 10 minutes.

5. Using tongs, remove jars from kettle. Using potholders, tighten lids. Allow to cool. Store in a cool, dark place.

Yield: 8 pint jars

Green Tomato Chowchow

August 25, 2004

Total time: 45 minutes

Ingredients:

4 whole allspice berries

1 teaspoon celery seed

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon coriander seed, toasted

2 teaspoons ground turmeric

1 tablespoon kosher salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 quart apple cider vinegar

1 cup light brown sugar

3 cups green cabbage, cut into small dice (from ½ pound green cabbage)

3 cups Spanish onion, cut into small dice (from 1 ¼ pounds Spanish onions)

2 cups red bell pepper, cut into small dice (from ¾ pounds red bell peppers)

6 cups green tomatoes, cut into small dice (from 2 ¼ pounds green tomatoes)

Preparation:

1. Pound the dry seasonings together in a mortar.
2. Bring vinegar, sugar, and ½ cup water to a boil in a large stockpot, stirring to dissolve sugar. Add spices, reduce heat to low and simmer 10 minutes. Add cabbage, onion and bell pepper, return to a simmer and cook 5 minutes. Add the green tomato, stir thoroughly to incorporate, and cook 5 minutes more.
3. With a slotted spoon, transfer the relish to 2 quart jars or 4 pint jars. Fill to ¼-inch from rim with remaining brine, agitate jars, and let stand 1 minute. Top up with brine, close jars and let them cool. Store jars in refrigerator up to 2 weeks.

Yield: 2 quarts

Pickled Swiss Chard Stems

March 13, 2002

Total Time: 20 minutes (plus marinating)

Ingredients:

Stems from 2 bunches Swiss chard

2 cups vegetable stock or water

1 bay leaf

1 ½ tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

½ cup cider vinegar

½ teaspoon sugar

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preparation:

1. Cut stems in pieces ½-inch wide and 2 inches long. Place in saucepan with stock and bay leaf, and simmer 10 minutes, until tender. Drain, and place in shallow glass or ceramic dish with bay leaf.
2. Mix oil and vinegar together, and pour over chard stems. Season with sugar, salt and pepper. Refrigerate, and allow to marinate overnight and up to four days before serving.

Yield: 6 or more servings as a condiment or in salad

Quick Sweet and Sour Cucumber Pickles

April 13, 2010

By MARTHA ROSE SHULMAN

These aren't like any cucumber pickles I've ever tasted. The cucumbers are marinated in seasoned rice vinegar with a small amount of sesame oil. They're great on sandwiches or with cottage cheese, and go well with fish and with Asian dishes.

1 long European style cucumber, or 3 or 4 Persian cucumbers, or 2 regular cucumbers

Salt

1/3 cup seasoned rice vinegar

1 teaspoon dark sesame oil

Pinch of hot red pepper flakes (optional)

1. If you cannot find unwaxed cucumbers, peel them. Slice thin, and toss in a colander with about 1/4 teaspoon salt. Place in the sink, and let sit for 15 to 30 minutes. Rinse and drain on paper towels.

2. Place the cucumbers in a bowl, and toss with the vinegar, sesame oil and pepper flakes (if using). Refrigerate for 15 minutes or longer before serving.

Yield: Serves four.

Advance preparation: The marinated cucumbers will keep for several days in the refrigerator.

Martha Rose Shulman can be reached at martha-rose-shulman.com.

Tarragon Cucumber Pickles

July 1, 2009

Adapted from Josh Eden, Shorty's.32

Total time: 30 minutes, plus 1 to 3 hours' refrigeration

2 large cucumbers (about 1 ½ pounds)

4 large tarragon sprigs, cut into 2-inch pieces

2 tablespoons mustard seeds

2 tablespoons whole black peppercorns

1 tablespoon coriander seeds

2 bay leaves

4 cups plain rice wine vinegar

¾ cup sugar

1. Slice cucumbers crosswise ¼ inch thick, and pack into 2 quart-size jars. Divide tarragon, mustard seeds, peppercorns, coriander seeds and bay leaves between 2 double layers of cheesecloth. Tie into bundles with string.
2. In a medium saucepan, combine vinegar with sugar and bundles of pickling spices, and bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve sugar. Pour brine over cucumbers, pack bundles of pickling spices on top and let cool. Discard spices, close jars and refrigerate at least 1 hour, preferably
3. Serve cold.

Yield: 2 quarts

Pickled Watermelon Rind

July 18, 1999

Ingredients:

7 cups 1-inch-cubed watermelon rind, dark green skin and all red flesh removed

¼ cup kosher salt

4 cups sugar

2 cups white vinegar

1 thinly sliced lemon, seeds removed

1 cinnamon stick

1 teaspoon whole cloves

1 teaspoon whole allspice

Preparation:

1. Place the rind in a large bowl and toss with the salt. Cover with 1 quart cold water. Refrigerate overnight.
2. Drain the watermelon. Bring a large kettle ¼ full of water to a boil and add the rind. Cook until tender when pierced with the tip of a knife, about 15 minutes. Drain and set aside.
3. Return kettle to the stove. Add sugar, vinegar, lemon, cinnamon stick, cloves, allspice and 2 cups water. Bring to a boil. Add the rind and simmer until tender and translucent, about 10 minutes.
4. Have ready 3 hot, sterilized pint (2-cup) canning jars and lids. Gently pack the hot rind into the jars, leaving ¼ inch of space below the lip. Pour enough liquid into the jars to cover the rind. Wipe rims with a clean, damp towel and screw lids on securely but not too tightly.
5. Fill a large kettle fitted with a rack halfway with water and bring to a boil. Meanwhile, bring a teapot full of water to a boil. Place the filled jars on the rack (do not let them touch — work in batches if necessary) and pour in boiling water from the teapot until jar tops are covered by 2 inches. Bring to a boil and boil 10 minutes.
6. Using tongs, remove jars from the kettle. Using potholders, tighten lids. Allow to cool. Store in a cool, dark place.

Yield: 3 pint jars

Spiking Summer Fruit in Order to Preserve It



Pomegranate gin preserve takes three weeks to mature. (Andrew Scrivani for The New York Times)

By **MELISSA CLARK**

September 21, 2010

At the end of every summer, as the heaps of fresh fruit start to dwindle at the farmers' markets, the urge to preserve it all pulls strong.

Usually, I suppress it.

As much as I love the idea of a pantry full of homemade jams, jellies, pickles and syrups, I rarely have the patience for serious canning, with its macerating, simmering and sterilization of jars.

But there is another, easier way: boozy fruit. There are many incarnations but the basic premise is the same — simply mix fruit and sugar with enough hard spirit to keep the fruit well soured, and let it sit. You can sip the liquid as a cordial and eat the sweet, spiked fruit over ice cream or cake. Apart from freezing, it is about the simplest preserving method there is.

And not surprisingly, it's lately become somewhat of a trend among the legion of D.I.Y. canners, locavores and fervent gardeners looking to make the most of seasonal produce.

For Amy Pennington, a professional gardener in Seattle and the author of “The Urban Pantry” (Skipstone, 2010), using booze to preserve fruit is just one more “branch in the preservation tree.”

“There’s drying, salting, canning and using alcohol, which kills bacteria, meaning you don’t need to futz around with creating an anaerobic environment,” she said, adding that preserving with alcohol is the “lowest rung of entry for beginning canning enthusiasts” because it’s hard to mess up.

She’s used the technique to preserve raspberries in vodka, which she plans to churn into sorbet, and greengage plums in brandy, to bake into an upside-down gingerbread cake as soon as they are ready — in, oh, about three months.

That’s the downside to putting up boozy fruit. Unlike making jam, which you can eat right off the stove, putting up fruit in alcohol is the slow road to dessert. The raw spirit and fruit need some time to get acquainted, traditionally from the end of summer harvest until Christmas.

Perhaps the best example of following seasons in a boozy fruit mix is rumtopf — a German preserve that spans the entire growing season. Classic recipes have you start in June by mixing strawberries with sugar and rum. As other fruits ripen, they are added in layers, then the whole thing is left to mellow until Christmas.

Although the fruit mix is usually laid down in one large crock, Kelly Cline, a food stylist, photographer and fourth-generation rumtopf-maker in Seattle, likes to put up small batches of single-fruit rumtopfs, like nectarines or blackberries, often laced with spice.

“I know I’m bastardizing the tradition of my great-grandfather, but sometimes I like to celebrate the flavor of just one fruit,” she said.

When it’s ready, she serves the fruit in a large bowl and lets her guests nibble the rum-imbued pieces as they please.

“They’re like edible cocktails.” she told me. “People get smashed.”

The delight of a tipsy buzz is yet another reason to make rumtopf instead of jam. After moving to Berlin, Luisa Weiss, a former cookbook editor and blogger at The Wednesday Chef, received several serving suggestions for the rumtopf she is currently making, including mixing it into yogurt for breakfast — an idea bestowed by her friend, a surgeon.

Arguably, boozy fruit also makes a more exciting homemade gift than other preserves. That’s one of the things that lured Amy Cleary, a canning aficionado and a publicist at University of California Press, into the process.

Over the years, she's made boozy fruit out of cherries, peaches, plums, apricots and cranberries and given much of it away to impressed friends.

"You can go to the store and buy pretty good jam, but you're not going to find brandied apricots," she said. The low-labor, high-value gift factor persuaded me to finally give it a try.

I went to the farmers' market and gathered peaches, nectarines, raspberries, plums, Concord grapes and even late strawberries. Then I swung by the liquor store and stocked up on brandy, rum and gin. (Any high-proof spirit will work, but these appealed to me the most.)

Finally, I stopped by the supermarket to buy jars. On my way out, I snagged several pomegranates, which a friend told me her mother used to preserve with vodka or Korean soju.

Then I got it all home and filled jars with fruit, sugar and spirits, mixing and matching as I saw fit, topping the grapes and plums, separately, with brandy, the pomegranate with gin, and tossing the rum and the rest of the fruit together into a rumtopf-manqué.

By December, if everything turns out as well as I hope, I will have gifts for my friends. But there is a chance I might go the way of Julia Sforza, who blogs about making preserves at *What Julia Ate*.

"I got tiny apricots from my local orchard and preserved them with brandy," she said. "They were delicious; each one was like a shot. They were going to be Christmas presents, but were so good, I couldn't bear to give them away."

Instead, her friends got jam.

When It's Time to Put the Fruit to Work

Fruit preserved in alcohol makes a marvelous dessert topping, spooned over ice cream, poundcake, panna cotta or ricotta, and it has other uses:

BOOZY FRUIT TART: Line a tart pan with sweet tart dough and fill with frangipane. Top with pieces of fruit and bake until golden.

CAKE GLAZE: Mix the liqueur with enough confectioners' sugar to make it thick and creamy, but still runny enough to pour, then spoon it over simple cakes.

CLAFOUTIS: Use preserved Concord grapes in place of cherries.

COBBLERS, CRISPS AND PIES: Add pieces of boozy fruit to fresh fruit.

DRUNKEN FOOL: Purée the fruit and gently fold into whipped cream, to taste. Chill before serving.

FRUITY APERITIF: Put a piece of fruit and a little of its liqueur in the bottom of a flute and top with sparkling wine.

HAIR OF THE DOG MUFFINS: Add diced fruit to your favorite muffin recipe. If you are planning to serve these for breakfast, note that much, but not all, of the alcohol will evaporate.

ROASTS: Warm brandied plums or Concord grapes and serve with roasted pork, chicken, duck, quail or venison.

TIPSY TRIFLE: Use pieces of fruit in a traditional custard-and-cake trifle.

UPSIDE-DOWN TIPPLE CAKE: Sprinkle a well-buttered cake pan with brown sugar, then layer with slices of drained fruit. Cover with your favorite butter cake batter and bake until done. Serve with cream whipped with a little of the fruit liqueur.

Brandied Plums With Cinnamon and Vanilla

Total Time: 10 minutes, plus at least 6 weeks to macerate.

1 pound small plums

½ cup sugar

1 ½ cups brandy

2-inch cinnamon stick

1 vanilla bean, halved lengthwise.

1. Wash plums and prick them all over with a needle. Place them in a 1-quart jar with a tight lid and stir in the sugar. Pour in brandy, covering plums by at least an inch. Add cinnamon and vanilla, cover and shake a few times.
2. Let jar sit in a dark, cool place (but not the refrigerator) for at least 6 weeks and preferably 3 months. If the fruit floats to the top, turn the jar over.

Yield: 1 quart

1951: Brandied Peaches

August 16, 2009

This recipe appeared in an article in *The Times* by Jane Nickerson. Updated canning instructions were added by Eugenia Bone. You will need two pint-size wide-mouthed Ball or Kerr jars with bands and new lids, available at many hardware stores or at freundcontainer.com.

3 pounds ripe peaches

3 cups sugar

About ½ cup brandy

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Using the tip of a paring knife, make a shallow “X” in the bottom of each peach. Add the peaches, one at a time, to the boiling water and cook for 1 minute. Remove the peach from the water and plunge into a bowl of ice water. Repeat with the remaining peaches. Peel off the skins, then pit the fruit and quarter the flesh.
2. In another large pot, combine 3 cups water and the sugar and bring to a boil. Add the peaches and simmer until just soft.
3. Have the jars, bands and new lids scalded and ready. (To scald, dip the jars and rims in boiling water. You don’t need to sterilize the jars, as you will be processing them for more than 10 minutes.) Simmer the lids in hot water to soften the rubberized flange. Gently pack the peaches into the jars.
4. Boil the leftover syrup until it thickens slightly, then spoon it over the fruit, filling the jars ¾ full. Use a butter knife to release any air bubbles caught in the jars. Pour in enough brandy to fill the jars, leaving ¼ inch of headroom. Wipe the rims, cover with the lids and screw on the bands fingertip-tight. Place the jars on a rack in a big pot and cover with 2 to 3 inches of water. Cover the pot and bring to a boil over high heat, then lower the heat to medium and gently boil for 20 minutes. Remove the cover and then, after about 5 minutes, remove the jars. Allow them to cool, untouched, for 4 to 6 hours. Check the seals and store in a cool, dark place for up to a year. Refrigerate after opening.

Yield: 2 pints

Poached Blood Oranges in Clementine Ratafia

February 13, 2005

Adapted from June Taylor

Ingredients:

6 clementines, rinsed

15 ounces vodka

14½-inch stick cinnamon, in pieces

1 teaspoon coriander seeds, crushed

7 ounces sugar, plus 2 1/2 pounds

13 pounds blood oranges (about 20)

1 ½ cups lemon juice (from about 5 or 6 lemons)

Preparation:

- 1.** To make the ratafia: halve and juice the clementines. Remove the pulp. Thinly slice the peels of 5 clementines. In a jar, combine the clementine juice, peel, vodka, cinnamon, coriander and 7 ounces sugar. Stir, then refrigerate, shaking once a day for the first few days to dissolve the sugar. Store for 2 months (that's not a typo), then strain through cheesecloth. The ratafia may be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 years.
- 2.** Cut 5 pounds of blood oranges into 1/3-inch-thick slices, discarding the ends. Juice the rest of the oranges until you get 6 cups of juice. Layer blood-orange slices and remaining sugar in a container. Pour in blood-orange juice and lemon juice. Refrigerate overnight.
- 3.** The next day, transfer slices and juice to 2 large pans. The fruit should be just covered with juice. If not, add a little more juice. Cover with parchment paper. Place over low heat and very slowly bring to a simmer. Simmer until the peel is tender, 30 to 60 minutes.
- 4.** Meanwhile, put 10 sterilized 8-ounce canning jars and lids on a baking sheet and place in an oven preheated to 225 degrees. When orange slices are done, remove jars from the oven. Add a little cooking syrup to the bottom of a jar, then lay in 3 orange slices and pour in 1 tablespoon of clementine ratafia. Fill the jar to the top with more slices and cooking syrup. Add another tablespoon of ratafia. Clean off the rim and tighten the lid. Repeat with the remaining orange slices. (Leftover ratafia may be served as an after-dinner drink with a wedge of clementine.)

Yield:9 to 10 jars

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