



Master Food Preserver Top 10 Canning Mistakes

Make sure your canned food is safe and delicious. Follow these tips.

Resist Using Mom's Favorite Recipes



Stick to current, professionally tested recipes and instructions from the **National Center for Home Preservation** or a **State Cooperative Extension Service**. Don't can anything unless the recipe is in an approved guide that was published in the past 10 years.

Don't Tweak Canning Recipes



Tweaking canning recipes may change how fast the food heats during processing, possibly leaving areas where *Clostridium botulinum* spores may lurk. Exceptions: you can add small amounts of seasonings and adjust salt in anything but fermented products. Never reduce the amount of vinegar or lemon juice in a canning recipe.

Don't Double Jam or Jelly Recipes



Products that need to jell can be temperamental. Doubling a recipe can cause the batch not to set up. (Exception: *Pomona Pectin* recipes). Make two batches for best results.

Wipe the Rims Clean



No matter how careful you may be, a bit of food may get on the top edge of the jar. Even an itty-bitty speck can prevent the lid from making a good seal. Wipe each rim with a clean, moistened towel just before placing the lid on.

Remove Air Bubbles



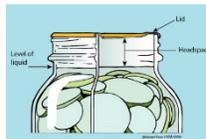
Excess air trapped under or in the food can cause poor seals. Release it before placing lids on. Get the right canning tools. You may even use a chopstick for this.

Don't Use Iodized Table Salt



Most table salt has a de-caking ingredient and added iodine which can cause discoloration and limp final products. This is especially true for pickles. Use kosher or pickling salt.

Don't Over- or Under-Fill Jars



Too much or too little headspace (the space between the food and rim of the jar) can cause lids not to seal properly. Follow the recipe for the correct headspace of the product.

Don't Use a Water Bath Canner for Low Acid Foods



C. botulinum spores are very, very heat resistant. Hours in a boiling water canner will not kill them unless a food is very acidic (pickles) or has loads of added sugar (jam, jelly). Food containing botulism looks and smells fine. Use only current approved recipes and follow the instructions exactly.

Don't Allow Canning Pressure to Fluctuate



Fluctuating pressure during pressure canning processing can flow liquid out of your jars. This makes a mess, wastes food and causes the jars to not seal properly. If the pressure falls below the recommended number, you must bring it back up to the correct pressure and restart the timing from the beginning.

Avoid Storing Canned Foods in Hot, Sunny Places



Yes, canned food is really pretty, but it will fade and soften if exposed to light or heat for extended periods of time. They may be still safe to eat, but won't taste as good. Heat may also cause expansion of the food and break the seal. Keep your canned goods in a cool place without direct sunlight or fluctuating temperatures. Under a bed is good place.