

Canning

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Canning

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1. Understanding Canning Basics

Canning preserves food by heating jars to destroy microorganisms and enzymes, then sealing them to prevent recontamination. Two primary methods:

- **Water Bath Canning:** For high-acid foods (pH $\leq$ 4.6) like fruits, jams, pickles, and tomatoes (with added acid) [1](#).
- **Pressure Canning:** Required for low-acid foods (pH $>$ 4.6) like vegetables, meats, and seafood to kill botulism spores [2](#).

Safety Note: Never substitute methods—low-acid foods *must* be pressure-canned [3](#).

2. Essential Equipment

- **Jars & Lids:** Use tempered glass jars (e.g., Mason jars) and new two-piece lids [4](#).
- **Canners:**
 - Water bath canner for high-acid foods [5](#).
 - Pressure canner (with gauge) for low-acid foods [6](#).

Pro Tip: Test pressure canner gauges annually [7](#).

3. Preparing Food

- **Select Fresh Produce:** Avoid overripe items [8](#).
- **Acidification:** Add lemon juice to tomatoes for safe water bath canning [9](#).

Packing Methods:

- **Raw Pack:** Fill jars with uncooked food [10](#).
- **Hot Pack:** Pre-cook food to shrink it [11](#).

4. Step-by-Step Canning

Water Bath Canning:

1. Sterilize jars (if processing <10 minutes) [12](#).
2. Leave proper headspace (½ inch for fruits) [13](#).

Pressure Canning:

1. Process at 10–15 psi per food type [14](#).

Storage: Label jars and store in a cool place [15](#).

5. Safety & Troubleshooting

- **Botulism Prevention:** Follow USDA recipes [16](#).
- **Spoilage Signs:** Discard bulging lids [17](#).

6. Resources

- **USDA Complete Guide:** [18](#).
- *So Easy to Preserve:* [19](#).