

GOURMET RECIPES

Yes, We Can!

What's more perfect than a homemade holiday gift, especially when it's absolutely, delightfully edible and delicious? When it comes to holiday food gifts, just can it!

Never canned? Or don't have the time? Not a problem with our two books; instructions are clear and concise with an explanation at every step. Sure, you'll need a little equipment, but we've got the answers on how to make some wonderful holiday presents or hostess gifts! *The Complete Book of Small Batch Preserving* by Margaret Howard and Ellie Topp is a perfect "first timer" book – simply the best source of recipes and tips for anyone who craves home-made preserves but finds the idea intimidating!

Perhaps you're a more experienced canner, but just don't have the time to spend all day in the kitchen cooking up quantities? *Small Batch Preserving* is just that: you can make a few jars of your favourite jam from the leftover fruit, or, say a couple of bottles of savoury herbed oils for later; do just as many or few, as you like. Warning... the recipes are so good that you will be doubling the amounts next time! Howard and Topp are both seasoned Professional Home Economists who have authored and co-authored many best selling cookbooks.

Another terrific tome is *Preserving: The Canning and Freezing Guide for All Seasons* by Professional Home Economist Pat Crocker. Author of ten cookbooks and three herb handbooks, Crocker also did the stunning



photographs liberally sprinkled throughout the book. *Preserving* is a year-round book, with seasonal recipes using the exceptional reserves. Crocker reminds us to take advantage of our local bounty, whether home-grown or from local farmers' markets. Her wish for the future is a generation with ties to the land and the food that



nourishes us all; her hope is to keep traditional food ways alive. We can all promote this lifestyle; canning and preserving is a perfect way to begin!

But first: You simply *must* do your homework with canning and preserving. It's all fun and easy, but each step must be meticulously followed to insure the finished product is safe and tasty! These books contain specific, detailed instructions, which we are not going to reprint here as it's too long, and you'll want your own copy of the books anyway! Instead, go to the Bernardin Canada website, www.bernardin.ca; in the *Getting Started* section you will find excellent advice and help, plus more great recipes and canning ideas, for everything you need know about how to can is right there! Read and follow the instructions, and make certain that you also take the following steps when canning in jars:

Place 8 clean 250 mL mason jars on a rack in a boiling water canner; cover jars with water and heat to a simmer (180°F/82°C). Set screw bands aside. Heat SNAP LID® sealing discs in hot water, not boiling (180°F/82°C). Keep jars and sealing discs hot until ready to use.

After cooling check jar seals. Sealed discs curve downward and do not move when pressed. Remove screw bands; wipe and dry bands and jars. Store screw bands separately or replace loosely on jars, as desired. Label and store jars in a cool, dark place. For best quality, use home canned foods within one year.

On today's menu:

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Microwave Peach Jam with Orange Liqueur

We're sure the Queen would have this at tea if she could; the intense peach flavour is highlighted with orange in this elegant and attractive jam, and no one needs to know how easy it was to whip up a couple of jars! A great use for those frozen peaches you still have in the freezer from last summer, or any fresh ones still in the market. From *The Complete Book of Small Batch Preserving*.



Makes 2 cups (500 mL)

- 3 cups chopped fresh or frozen peaches (750 mL)
 - 2 cups granulated sugar (500 mL)
 - 2 Tbsp lemon juice (25 mL)
 - 2 Tbsp orange liqueur or frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed (25 mL)
1. Place peaches and sugar in a deep 8–cup (2 L) microwavable container. Stir in lemon juice.
 2. Microwave, uncovered, on High (100%) for 7 minutes, stirring twice. Microwave, uncovered, on High for 12 to 15 minutes or until mixture will form a gel,* stirring every 4 minutes. Stir in liqueur.
 3. Follow instructions for sterilizing jars in introduction.
 4. Ladle into hot jars and process for 10 minutes.

**Tip: if peaches are still frozen, you may need to add 2 to 3 minutes to the total cooking time.*

Tony's wine recommendation:

No wine recommendations for this story!

Lemon Curd

Ah, the classic! This rich spread goes into and on to so many desserts often taking elevating plain to perfection. It's from *Preserving, The Canning and Freezing Guide for All Seasons*, where Pat Crocker suggests enjoying lemon curd as a filling in cooked pastry shells; as a custard substitute in dessert trifles; to replace whipped cream as a topping on fruit or desserts; as a pie filling with egg white meringue. We add that it's sinful on warm, buttery scones or a spread for shortbread...



Makes 6 cups (1.5 L)

- 6 eggs, lightly beaten
 - 6 Tbsp finely grated lemon rind (90 mL)
 - 1 cup freshly squeezed lemon juice (250 mL)
 - 1½ cups butter, at room temperature (375 mL)
 - 2 cups granulated sugar (500 mL)
1. Sterilize three 1 pint (2 cup/500 mL) jars in boiling water, and scald the lids, lifter and tongs.
 2. In the top of a double boiler or a non-reactive bowl, combine eggs, lemon rind, and lemon juice. Set the pan or bowl over a bottom pan of simmering water (top pan should not touch the water). Add butter and sugar and stir until both are dissolved. Cook, stirring constantly for 15 to 20 minutes or until the mixture is thickened. The mixture is thickened when it coats the back of a metal spoon and mounds slightly. Be careful not to boil the mixture because it will curdle.
 3. Follow instructions for sterilizing jars in introduction.
 4. Fill hot jars, leaving a 1/4-inch (5 mm) headspace. Run a thin non-metallic utensil around the inside of the jar to allow air to escape. Add more hot curd, if necessary, to leave a 1/4-inch (5 mm) headspace. Wipe rims, top with flat lids and screw on metal rings. Let cool on a wire rack or towel. Label and store in the refrigerator for up to 1 month.

Apple Cranberry Mincemeat

What a winner: this recipe from *The Complete Book of Small Batch Preserving*, where authors Marg Howard and Ellie Topp confessed that this is one of their favourite recipes because of the fruitiness and freshness, and they add with a warning, it's positively addictive! Oh, no kidding; we discovered that! It's good enough to eat right out of the jar, but you'll want to hang on and use it in a pie or warmed as an ice cream topping. If you can wait that long...



Makes 6 cups (1.5 L)

- 6 cups finely chopped tart apples (about 2 lb/1 kg) (1.5 L)
 - 1 cup sultana raisins (250 mL)
 - 1 cup dark raisins (250 mL)
 - 1 cup currants (250 mL)
 - 2/3 cup lightly packed brown sugar (150 mL)
 - 1/2 cup dried cranberries (125 mL)
 - 1/3 cup water (75 mL)
 - Grated rind and juice of 2 lemons
 - 2 tsp ground cinnamon (10 mL)
 - 1/2 tsp ground cloves (2 mL)
 - 1/4 cup brandy (50 mL)
1. Combine apples, sultana raisins, dark raisins, currants, sugar, cranberries, water, lemon rind, lemon juice, cinnamon and cloves in a large stainless steel or enamel saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20 minutes, stirring frequently. Stir in brandy and return to a boil.
 2. Follow instructions for sterilizing jars in introduction.
 3. Remove hot jars from canner and ladle preserves into jars to within 1/2 inch (1 cm) of rim (headspace). Process 20 minutes for half-pint (250 mL) jars and 30 minutes for pint (500 mL) jars as directed.

Candied Ginger

Ron's hands-down favourite mini-dessert; it's tangy and spirited and an exotic compliment to chocolate... who could ask for anything more? Make up a batch for hostess gifts or holiday giving; this keeps well in the refrigerator for months. From *The Complete Book of Small Batch Preserving*. Come on Ron, let me have just one more, please...



- 1 cup thinly sliced peeled gingerroot (250 mL)
 - Cold water
 - 1/4 cup water (175 mL)
 - 1/2 cup granulated sugar (125 mL)
 - Extra granulated sugar
1. Place ginger in a small saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce heat, cover and boil gently for 15 minutes. Drain and repeat process with fresh cold water.
 2. Combine ginger, 3/4 cup (175 mL) water and sugar in a saucepan. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce heat and boil gently, uncovered, for about 30 minutes or until liquid is evaporated completely. Watch carefully during last 10 minutes to prevent scorching.
 3. Put extra sugar in a flat dish about 1/4 inch (1 cm) thick. Remove a few pieces of ginger with a fork and toss them in a sugar to coat both sides; place on a cooling rack set on a baking pan. Repeat until all slices are done. Dry in a 200°F (93°C) oven for 1 hour or until ginger feels soft and no longer sticky. Let stand at room temperature for 1 day to finish drying.
 4. Place slices in an airtight container and store in the refrigerator.

Put a lock on the box...

Candied Citrus Peel

A lovely, old-fashioned recipe that your grandmother would have enjoyed... and you will too! It's a zesty treat all on its own and will add élan to many desserts and baked goodies... think scones, for starts. Marg Howard and Ellie Topp suggest you can elevate this yummy sweet to divine by dipping the sugary peel in chocolate... oh, my! From *The Complete Book of Small Batch Preserving*.



Makes 2 cups (500 mL)

- Rind from 2 grapefruit or 3 sweet or blood oranges, or 3 lemons, or a mixture of all three
 - Cold water
 - 3/4 cup granulated sugar (175 mL)
 - 3/4 cup water (175 mL)
 - 1/2 tsp corn syrup (7 mL)
 - Extra granulated sugar
1. Cut fruit in quarters lengthwise. Remove the rind from pulp; save pulp for another use. Slice rinds into 1/2 inch (1 cm) slices. You should have about 2 cups (500 mL).
 2. Place rinds in a medium sauce pan and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat, reduce heat and boil gently for 2 minutes, or longer if you do not like the strong citrus flavour. Drain well.
 3. Combine sugar, 1/4 cup (175 mL) water and corn syrup in pan and bring to a boil over high heat. Add rinds, return to boil, cover and boil gently for 15 minutes. Remove cover and continue to boil gently for about 30 minutes or until liquid is reduced to about 2 Tbsp (25 mL). Remove rinds to a cooling rack to drain.
 4. When rinds are well drained, roll a few at a time in extra sugar, being careful to coat well. Place on a baking sheet or wax paper. Repeat until all are done. Let sit at room temperature to air-dry for

24 hours.

5. Pack in airtight containers and store in the refrigerator.

TIP: If you are using lemon rinds, cook them first for 15 minutes before adding remaining rinds; cook 2 minutes longer.

Amaretto Black Cherries

Who among us doesn't love cherries, especially those in sweet syrup? Pat Crocker, in *Preserving: The Canning and Freezing Guide for All Seasons* confesses that as a kid she would eat maraschino cherries straight out of the jar! (So did we...) And neither of us gave any thought to the underlying almond essence that made it all so perfect. Seems that almond comes from the crushed cherry pits, which release the almond taste of the kernels. Well, whatever the source, Crocker has perfected the combination in this easy recipe for the ultimate holiday hostess gift. Try it on top of very good vanilla ice cream and we dare you not to have seconds. Thank you, Pat!



Makes 5 cups

- 4 cups (1L) water
 - 2 cups (500 mL) granulated sugar
 - 1/2 cup (125 mL) amaretto or other almond liqueur
 - 3 lb (1.5 kg) sweet black cherries (Bing, Lambert or Vista)
 - 5 pieces (each 2 inch /5 cm long) or orange rind
1. Heat five 1-cup (250 mL) jars in boiling water, and scald the lids, lifter, funnel and tongs. (Follow instructions for sterilizing jars in introduction.)
 2. In saucepan, combine water and sugar. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring constantly to dissolve the sugar. Boil rapidly for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in amaretto.

3. Pack cherries into hot jars to within 1 inch (2.5 cm) of the top, shaking the jar to pack tightly. Add 1 piece of orange rind to each jar. Pour hot syrup over cherries, leaving a 1/2-inch (1 cm) headspace. Run a thin non-metallic utensil around the inside of the jar to allow air to escape. Add more hot syrup, if necessary, to leave a 1/2-inch (1 cm) headspace. Wipe sealing edge of jars with a clean, damp, lint free cloth. Position flat lids over the tops of jars and hand-tighten screw bands.
4. Return jars to the hot water bath, topping up with hot water if necessary. Bring to a full rolling boil and process jars for 20 minutes.
5. Remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes before removing jars to a towel or rack to cool completely. Check seals, label and store in a cool place for up to a year.

We wish to thank the following for permission to publish material and photographs:

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Harper Collins Publishing Ltd. For *Preserving, The Canning and Freezing Guide for All Seasons* by Pat Crocker. Text and photographs © 2011 Pat Crocker.

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Happily enjoyed by Helen Hatton and Ron Morris.