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## Pack it Hot or Maybe Pack it Raw!



**Carrots and green beans are two vegetables than use either the hot pack or raw pack method to fill the jars.**

Home canning has two methods to pack food into jars. For a majority of foods, the hot pack method is used to fill the jars with food and liquid.

Many fresh foods naturally contain air, from 10 to 30 percent. How much air is removed before jars are sealed can affect the quality of the food during storage. The hot pack method preheats the food in the liquid to be used when filling the jars. The food and liquid are brought to a boil for two to five minutes. This

allows the food tissue to release air, the food shrinks a little, helps keep the food from floating inside the jars, improves the vacuum seal on the jars and improves shelf life. More food can fit into the jars. The food color and flavor during storage is enhanced.

The raw pack method is used for certain foods, not all foods. Prepared food is not preheated, but the liquid must be hot. Fill jars tightly with food, then pour hot liquid into the jars. Raw packed foods tend to float more because air is still inside the food. The food may discolor during storage.

How do you know which method to use? Tested recipes from [reliable recipe resources](#) will guide you as to which method to use. In some cases, both are options, in other cases, only one option is given. Follow these recipes for the best results.

Source: [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#)

## In a Pickle: Top Safety Questions on Home Canning

The Partnership for Food Safety Education invited Dr. Elizabeth Andress, Professor Emerita from the University of Georgia, to participate in a knowledge exchange about home food preservation on July 14, 2021.

Participants were invited to ask questions about a variety of topics. Her expertise is well respected around the country in the science of home food preservation. Food preservation is, in fact, science-driven to preserve

the safest and best quality food at home.

You can watch this recorded session on the [BACFighter YouTube](#) channel.



## September is National Fruits & Veggies Month

As part of the [2021 International Year of Fruits and Vegetables](#), the Produce for Better Health Foundation has designated September as [National Fruits & Veggies Month](#).

Fruits and vegetables are available year around as fresh, canned, dried or frozen. Many Americans do not meet the recommended daily intake of produce.

The goal of this promotion is to raise awareness and benefits in eating fruits and vegetables to have a more diversified and well-balanced diet. It also focuses on the problem of food waste and loss associated with the fact that fruits and vegetables are highly perishable.

How can you help promote fruits and veggies? Resources are available

to share messages via social media, cooking ideas, learning about produce used in different cultures, or create food challenges.

There are educational resources to help consumers include fruits and vegetables into their daily diet plan, not just during September.

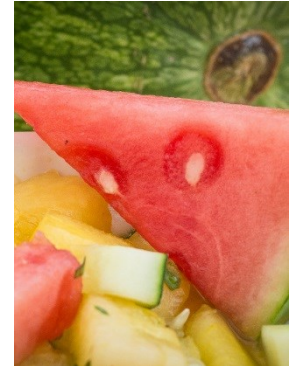


Photo: USDA Flickr

## Watermelon Rind Pickles

Here's a recipe from the [National Center for Home Food Preservation for Watermelon Rind Pickles](#)

Watermelons are starting to populate farmers markets. After eating the tasty fruit, don't throw away the rind! Make Watermelon Rind Pickles! It's a great way to reduce food waste and have a unique treat.

This Southern delicacy is a sweet, yet spicy, treat with the addition of sugar and spices such as cloves and cinnamon. They can be eaten alone or as a compliment to a meal.

When preparing the wa-

termelon rind, be sure to clean the outside surface well, scrub with a vegetable brush and cut out blemishes, to remove any possible sources of contamination.

## Cucumber Pickles Have Added Benefits

Pickling not only extends the shelf life of cucumbers, but it provides added health benefits. According to the USDA Agricultural Research Service and North Carolina State University, lactic acid fermented cucumbers contain a health-promoting compound called  $\gamma$ -aminobutyric acid (GABA). This compound has the potential to reduce blood pressure, improve decision making, reduce anxiety, and boost immunity.

The research also found that pasteurization during heat processing of the pickles did not break down GABA and remained stable over at least 6-months of storage time.

Besides cucumber pickles, other fermented foods that contain GABA include sourdough bread, soy sauce, yogurt, kefir, and certain cheeses.



Photo: USDA ARS

## Why Blanching is Important Before Freezing Corn



Blanching corn helps improve the texture and color during freezing.

Blanching is a process in which vegetables are lowered into boiling water for a specific time. The vegetables are subsequently dropped into ice water to quickly cool, then dried and placed in freezer containers. Freezing slows down enzyme processes, but it doesn't stop them. Blanching is recommended to assure your corn will taste as fresh as possible after they have been frozen.

That's because blanching stops enzyme activity. Enzymes in produce help it ripen, and continue to do their work even after the produce has been picked. By stopping the enzyme action, blanching prevents the produce from becoming overripe. Blanching also helps retain color, flavor, texture and nutrients. Blanching also helps remove dirt and small organisms from the produce.

It is important to look up the specific amount of time corn needs to be blanched and follow those guidelines. If corn is under-blanching, it can actually speed up the enzyme processes. If corn is over-blanching, the nutritional value, flavor, color and texture can be negatively affected.



Learn more in [Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe: Preserving Sweet Corn](#).

## Preserving Eggplant

Freezing is the only way to [preserve eggplant](#). There are no canning instructions.

Use frozen raw eggplant in dishes where it does not need to stay firm such as soups, stews, sauces, and dips.

Cooked eggplant, such as roasting, may be frozen to use in dips or sauces.

Consider the age, size, and variety of eggplant you are using. Small thin varieties may have tender skin and not require peeling. Older

larger varieties with more seeds may have a bitter taste; those slices may be salted to draw out bitter juices.

Source: [Penn State University Extension Food Preservation](#)



Photo: USDA Flickr



Photo: USDA ARS

## Slowing Onset of Alzheimer's Disease

Alzheimer's disease is currently incurable, but ongoing research is showing that tea and berries could reduce the potential onset of the disease. The [USDA study conducted at Tuft's University](#) shows more evidence that a healthy diet can be beneficial.

Flavonoids are plant nutrients known for their antioxidant, antiviral, and anti-cancer properties and are found in berries, tea, dark chocolate, and other foods. The study followed 2,809 people over 20 years showed a positive benefit of increased fruits and vegetables to help slow the onset of Alzheimer's. Those who consumed more plant foods containing flavonoids were more than 50% likely to develop symptoms of Alzheimer's.

So what can it hurt? Eating more fruits and vegetables adds other nutritional benefits too! And now a variety of berries are in season. [Freeze](#) them for later use to add to any meal.

## Knowledge for Life

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## What is *Listeria monocytogenes*?



**Vulnerable populations are most susceptible to foodborne illness. (CDC)**

*Listeria monocytogenes* can be deadly for vulnerable groups of people. A recent [recall of ready-to-eat chicken](#) contaminated with *L. monocytogenes* has included almost 9 million pounds of chicken.

Vulnerable groups of people include the very young, older adults, pregnant women, newborns, and those with poor immune systems to fight off disease.

Prevention is the best defense. Here are some tips from the CDC:

- Avoid eating raw animal products, including raw milk products, uncooked or lightly cooked eggs, and raw fish and meat dishes.
- Wash ALL fruits and vegetables before eating. Avoid eating raw sprouts.
- Avoid hot dogs and other deli-style meats unless they are reheated to steaming temperatures. Also avoid deli-prepared salads, such as chicken or seafood salad.
- Keep your refrigerator at 40 degrees F or lower, and your freezer at 0 degrees F or lower.

Source: [www.cdc.gov/listeria/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/listeria/index.html)



Karen Blakeslee, M.S.

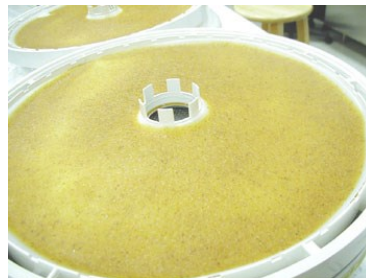


On the Web at  
[www.rrc.ksu.edu](http://www.rrc.ksu.edu)



## Make Fruit Leather for a Sweet Treat!

Looking to add more fruit into your diet? Use fresh berries to make fruit leather for a handy snack. Berries are in season, so now is a great time to make fruit leather.



**Use lined food dehydrator trays to easily dry fruit leather. Photo: NCHFP**

When fruits are dried, moisture is removed which concentrates the

flavor and caloric value. The same is true when the fruit is in the form of a leather. Fruit leather tastes sweet without additional sugar and are a good source of energy. Use as snacks (children of all ages love them) or include with hiking or camping supplies.

For instructions, go to the [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#).

Source: [Penn State University Food Preservation](#)