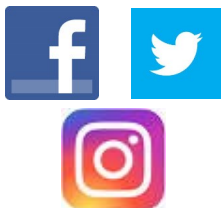


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Shopping Tricks to Reduce Grocery Bills



Plan ahead and make a shopping list to reduce impulse buying for unnecessary items. Photo: USDA

If you've been shopping at the grocery store lately, you know that the cost of many items has gone up. And that can cause us to question what foods you purchase. Here are some tips to save some money on your next grocery bill.

- Shop store brands instead of popular brands. Have you tried a blind taste test to compare? You may find your family will not even notice any difference. Brands name foods are

often selected because of advertising or packaging.

- Check unit pricing. The larger quantity size may not be a bargain. Check the unit pricing located on the tag on the shelf.
- Stretch meat with plant proteins. Adding beans to meat based soup or casseroles can stretch out meat and add beneficial nutrition.
- Properly store fruits and vegetables. Make the most of what you buy and use it in a timely manner. See our guide [Safe Food Storage: The Refrigerator and Freezer](#) and [Safe Food Storage: The Cupboard](#) for more information.
- Use ripe fruit in other ways such as a smoothie, quick bread, cobblers or crisps. This helps reduce food waste.

Source: <https://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/spendsmart/2022/04/11/the-total-is-what/>

BAC(k) to Basics Webinar

The Partnership for Food Safety Education is celebrating 25 years of providing consumer food safety education.

To help celebrate, they are hosting a webinar on May 12, 2022 at Noon

CST called [BAC\(k\) to Basics](#).

The webinar will highlight the scientific research that informs the basic core four messages as well as the latest findings on consumer food handling hab-

its. You'll also see new resources and behavioral health messages to promote safe home cooking practices to consumers.

[Register now!](#)

Canning Cured, Brined or Corned Meat, is it Safe?

The short answer is no. Here's why.

While these products are meat, they have a firmer texture than fresh meat. Therefore, heat penetration through these products will be more difficult than with fresh meat. That would mean longer processing times and could lead to unsafe products.

Curing meat creates a drier texture with a high-

er salt level. This reduces the capability of liquid to absorb into the meat and reduces the heat penetration rate.

Curing ingredients such as nitrite, nitrate and/or antimicrobial agents like nisin can make *Clostridium botulinum* more susceptible to heat and cured meats may need a shorter processing time. But, research has not been conducted on these types of meat products

with the canning process, so it is currently not recommended. There are many types of these processed meats and extensive research would need to happen.

Using canning recommendations for fresh meat is not recommended.

Source: www.clemson.edu/extension/food/canning/canning-tips/55home-cured-brined-corned-meats.html



It is not recommended to can cured ham. The best way to preserve these products is freezing.



Extension agents, please send this information to all food and food preservation judges so they are informed.

Fair Judging Resources

Summer is getting closer which means county fair season is almost here!

Would you like to judge foods or food preservation? There are some tips and tricks to being a judge and an educated

judge can be a benefit to the exhibitor to give tips to improve exhibits. This is a great opportunity for you to teach!

Another important factor is food safety. While there are thousands of

recipes to choose from, not all are appropriate for the fair.

Learn more at www.rrc.k-state.edu/judging/index.html.

Making Sourdough Starter

Want to learn how to make a sourdough starter? Fermentation is a combination of art and science. It also takes time, proper temperature, moisture, acidity, nutrients, and production of carbon dioxide.

Best practices to remember include:

- Safe food handling methods such as clean hands and equipment plus using quality ingredients.
- Flour is a raw food! Do not taste raw sourdough starter.
- Wild yeasts are inactive on their own, but activate with water. Traditional sourdough starter does not use commercial yeast.
- Take care of your starter to survive and grow. This helps stabilize microbial volume and improve the metabolic process.



Sourdough starter
Photo: Colorado State University Extension
<https://foodsmartcolorado.colostate.edu/food-safety/safe-preparation-handling-and-storage/>

Dial Gauge Pressure Canners



Dial gauge
Photo: University of Georgia

How important is it to know if your dial gauge canner is at the proper pressure? It is critical to the safety of any products you can in a dial gauge pressure canner.

Many local Extension offices have the ability to test specific brands of dial gauge canners. They include the brands **National**, **Presto**, **Magic Seal**, and **Maid of Honor**.

Dial gauges need to be tested yearly, and before any canning takes place. This reduces the possibility of using inaccurate pressure which could lead to underprocessed food and the potential of foodborne illness. A 1-pound error in a 20 minute process can cause a 10% decrease in sterilizing value. A 2-pound error can lead to a 30% decrease in sterilizing value. Knowing these differences can allow you to make adjustments, but it is best to replace inaccurate dial gauges.

Please note, we cannot test All American brand gauges. The manufacturer states to use the weighted gauge, not the dial gauge, to measure pressure.

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation



Preserving Fruit Purees

When the term fruit puree is mentioned, most people think of turning apples into applesauce. But, don't forget about other fruits!

Many fruits can be made into fruit puree, such as pears, berries, peaches and nectarines. But there are some that should not

be canned at home.

These include bananas, dates, elderberries, figs, Asian pears, tomatoes, all melons, papaya, persimmons, mango, coconut, white peaches or white nectarines. There are no home canning instructions for these fruits.

Also, if using a food processor or blender, pulse the appliance instead of a constant blending action to keep added air to a minimum. Excess air may not all escape during the canning process. It is best to use a sieve or food mill to puree fruit for canning.

Learn more about canning fruit purees at https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_02/fruit_puree.html.

Don't Forget to Vent!

When pressure canning, a critical step to achieving proper pressure inside the canner is allowing it to vent steam. What does this mean?

After placing jars inside the warm canner and attaching the canner lid, set the stove burner on high. Watch for steam to escape from the vent pipe. It should be a strong blast of steam that is visible in a funnel-shape. Let it continuously steam in this manner for 10 minutes. This allows the steam to build inside the canner and push the air out so that the canner will build pressure properly. After the 10 minutes, add the weight or counterweight to build pressure inside the canner.

Air trapped inside a pressure canner lowers the pressure achieved, but more importantly, it lowers the temperature obtained and will result in underprocessing and unsafe canned food.

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation and USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning



Kansas State
University
Research & Extension

Rapid Response Center
221 Call Hall
Manhattan, Kansas 66506

Phone: 785-532-1673
Fax: 785-532-3295
Email: kblakesl@ksu.edu

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Home Canning with Commercial Jars



Use jars recommended for home canning for best, and safest, results.

Photo: KSRE

The last couple years has pushed home canners to resort to using questionable home canning supplies and methods. One of these questionable supplies is reusing commercial jars. Is this possible?

Commercial jars are not designed to be reused in home canning.

There are many types of glass and not all glass jars are tempered to withstand the home canning process. This could result in broken jars, spoiled food, and food loss.

Because the lids used on commercial jars cannot be reused, home canning 2-piece lids may not fit the mouths of commercial jars properly. Therefore, lids will not seal properly.

The "Atlas" brand shows up on some of today's commercial jars. These jars used to be made by the Hazel-Atlas Company, but they are no longer in business. The "Atlas" name used on commercial jars is for marketing purposes only.

Source: UCCE Master Food Preservations of El Dorado County, University of California
[Facebook page](#)

ask
an EXPERT



Karen Blakeslee, M.S.



On the Web at
www.rrc.ksu.edu



Sand Hill Plum—State Fruit of Kansas

Many native Kansans are familiar with sand hill plums as they grow in pastures and provide wind breaks across Kansas.



Chickasaw plum fruit
Photo: Kansas Wildflowers & Grasses

The sand hill plum, or Chickasaw plum (*Prunus angustifolia*) became the state fruit of Kansas in April 2022. Some refer

to them as the American Plum.

The tart fruit is a popular choice to make jam or jelly. When the fruit ripens, it changes from a green color to an orange-red blush color, then a dark red. Information to make a jelly, jam, fruit butter or just canning the plums can be found in the University of Wyoming publication, [Preserving Food in Wyoming](#).

Source: www.kansasforests.org/conservation_trees/products/shrubs/sandhillplum.html