



Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe

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Now en Español!

To help reach Hispanic audiences, all of the K-State Research and Extension Food Preservation publications are now translated into Spanish. They include the following publications:

- How-to Guide to Pressure Canning
- How-to Guide to Water Bath Canning and Steam Canning
- 10 Tips for Safe Home-Canned Food
- Sassy Safe Salsa at Home
- What's Your Elevation?
- Dry Meat Safely at Home
- Preserving Apples
- Preserving Cherries
- Preserving Cucumbers
- Preserving Beans
- Preserving Peaches
- Preserving Peppers
- Preserving Strawberries
- Preserving Sweet Corn
- Preserving Tomatoes
- Preserving Vegetables



All of the above publications—in both English and Spanish—can be found at <http://www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/index.html>. A special thanks to the Kansas Health Foundation for funding to help update and translate these publications.

It's apple season!

As fall approaches, apples are starting to ripen and soon will be harvested. Today, there are over 2,500 varieties of apples grown in the United States. To help enjoy that variety of fresh apple flavors year-round, consider preserving them to add to your menu.

Apples can be preserved in a number of ways: dried or made into applesauce or apple butter, a delicious apple-pear jam or a tasty pie filling. Choose the preserving method that is best for your apple variety. Some examples include:

- Freezing - Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Jonathan, Rome Beauty and Stayman
- Applesauce and apple butter - Golden Delicious, Gravenstein, Jonathan, McIntosh, Rome Beauty and Stayman

To select apples at peak maturity, look for these signs:

- **Color change:** As apples mature, the skin color at the stem and the calyx basin at the bottom of the apple turns from an immature green to a light yellow color. Some apples will develop a red skin color before they are ripe, so that's not a reliable indication of maturity.
- **Flavor:** This is a good guide if you are familiar with the apples you have and know how they should taste. Even if you do not know the characteristic flavor of the kind of apple you have, you can still sample slices of a few apples and decide if they have a sweet flavor. If the apples are not ready to harvest, they will taste starchy or immature. If apples have already fallen and taste a bit starchy, store them for a period to see if they become sweeter.
- **Flesh color:** As apples mature and starches change to sugars, the flesh changes from a very light green to white. You can see the difference when you cut a thin slice and hold it up to the light.
- **Days from bloom:** The number of days from bloom is a reliable guide for general maturity time, though weather conditions will have some influence. Some kinds of apples and approximate days from bloom to maturity are Jonathan- 135, Delicious- 145, Golden Delicious- 145 and Winesap- 155.
- **Seed color:** The seeds of most apples change from light green to brown as the fruit ripens. This indicator should be combined with other changes, since it is not absolute.



It's apple season! (continued)

Preserve apples as soon as possible after harvest. If any apples must be stored, keep them in a cool, dark place. They should not be tightly covered or wrapped up; a perforated plastic or open paper bag, basket or wooden crate are good choices. If kept in the refrigerator, apples should be placed in the humidifier compartment, in a plastic bag with several holes punched in it or in a zipper-type vegetable bag to prevent loss of moisture and crispness. Apples should not be placed close to foods with strong odors.

See <http://nchfp.uga.edu/tips/fall/apples.html> for more information and recipes to preserve apples.

Safely preserving chocolate sauce

During the months of fall, many home food preservers give thought to delicious holiday gift-giving ideas. Recipes for home canned chocolate sauces abound, and what could possibly say “Happy holidays” more than chocolate, right? Unfortunately, home canning chocolate sauce can be dangerous!

According to the National Center for Home Food Preservation, home canning chocolate sauce is unsafe. Chocolate sauces are low-acid recipes, and have been linked to botulism poisoning. Recipes that use the boiling water canning process for chocolate sauce are risky, and there are no science-based, tested recipes for chocolate sauce canned in a pressure canner. So what options do you have?

Freezer chocolate fudge sauce

- ½ cup margarine or butter
- 3 squares (3 ounces) unsweetened chocolate
- 2 ½ cups sugar
- Pinch salt (optional)
- 1 can (12-ounce) evaporated milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Melt the margarine or butter in the top of a double boiler. Add the chocolate and melt it, stirring constantly. Add the sugar gradually, ¼ cup at a time, while stirring, followed by the salt, if desired. Then stir the evaporated milk in gradually, and add the vanilla.

Cook the sauce about one hour or until it reaches your desired thickness, stirring occasionally. Pour it into clean, warm jars, or similar freezer-safe container(s). Allow the sauce to cool at room temperature for one to two hours. Seal and freeze. The sauce should remain soft enough to spoon out portions while frozen.

Sources: National Center for Home Food Preservation, “Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving”

Fruit leather is a tasty fall treat



Fruit leather is essentially a homemade fruit roll. Try this pumpkin leather recipe for a treat that includes the amount of sugar you choose.

- 2 cups of fresh pumpkin, cooked and pureed
- ½ cup honey
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ⅛ teaspoon nutmeg
- ⅛ teaspoon powdered cloves

Place the pumpkin in a bowl. Add the honey, cinnamon, nutmeg and powdered cloves, and blend all of the ingredients together. Spread the mixture evenly—about ⅛-inch thick—on a tray lined with plastic wrap or a nonstick drying sheet that fits on a dehydrator tray.

Dry at 140 degrees F. If you're drying the leather in a dehydrator, it will take six to eight hours; if you're using an oven, it'll take up to 18 hours. The leather will dry from the outside in. It's ready to peel from the sheet when you touch the center and it's not shiny or tacky. Peel the leather from the tray while it's still warm and flexible, and make roll-ups the size you want to serve. Wrap in plastic wrap once they have cooled.

Fruit leather can be stored up to one month at room temperature, or up to one year in the freezer.

Local contact information:

University of Missouri Extension

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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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