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From Farm to Pantry

Canning and Food Preservation Resources

Deborah Lee

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“Foodways” generally refers to the “study of what, how, and why we eat with emphasis on food events as much as the food itself,” according to *Lexicon of Food*.¹ Canning is definitely a “food event.” I recall watching my mother spend hours in the kitchen, tending large enameled pots full of Mason jars containing beets, tomatoes, dill pickles, and more. With that, I am pleased to introduce “From Farm to Pantry: Canning and Food Preservation Resources” by Deborah Lee. She has gathered a great list of items for any selector seeking to support both the budding home canner and academic programs in food science and foodways. This is obviously a topic that Lee is passionate about and she has helpfully broken the resources down into comprehensive guides to canning, “small batch” canning, specialized guides, and web resources. As this is my first column as editor of the Alert Collector, I would be remiss in not explaining what I hope to accomplish. I daresay it is not that different from past editors: to select topics that are useful to libraries of all types and which are timed to align with current events. I also hope to offer a wide range of topics. My first call for columns, sent out to several different email lists and posted online, exceeded my expectations with more than twenty topic ideas. I am grateful that my library colleagues are willing to contribute to a popular column.—*Editor*

It is July and you are at the local farmer’s market. You see the bounty of summer tomatoes and wish you could somehow preserve that wonderful flavor for a meal next January. You are not alone. Home canning and preservation, once the domain of rural farm wives, has become a major part of the “do-it-yourself” movement. A recent study commissioned by Jarden Homes, parent company of the line of canning products known as Ball and Kerr in the United States, found that 49 percent of millennials were interested in canning.² Canners may be recapturing a lost culinary art practiced by older family members, “locavores” looking to extend their local eating options, or concerned consumers trying to more carefully manage the content of their food.

There are a host of resources hitting the market to assist these new canners. Cookbook content ranges from the tried and true (including the ubiquitous blueberry jam) to new recipes that incorporate innovative flavors or an international flair. Old cookbooks can be a treasure trove of culinary and cultural history, but they are not an asset for a contemporary canning collection. Resources published before 1990 may have out-of-date instructions for home food processing, especially for tomatoes. The wealth of new resources, based on accepted United States Department of Agriculture

(USDA) home food preservation practices, makes building a safe and useful canning collection easy and fun. This guide introduces just a few of the resources published since 1990. A cross section of resources has been chosen to illustrate both general canning guides and more specialized resources.

COMPREHENSIVE CANNING GUIDES

Comprehensive canning guides usually provide step-by-step instructions for both water-bath and pressure canning. Most also provide basic recipes for jams, jellies, and tomato products. Some provide additional information about other preservation techniques and this has been noted in their descriptions.

The All New Ball Book of Canning and Preserving: Over 350 of the Best Canned, Jammed, Pickled, and Preserved Recipes. New York: Oxmoor House, 2016 (ISBN: 978-0-8487-4678-0).

This updated classic, edited by the leading canning company in the United States, includes more than 350 recipes. Major topics include both water-bath and pressure canning, fermenting, dehydrating, curing, and smoking. Extensive advice for the novice canner is provided but this new classic also provides new interpretations of traditional recipes that would be of interest to more advanced cooks. While most recipes focus on food preservation, a subset focuses on using the preserved item to prepare a dish. For example, “Citrus-Glazed Roast Chicken” uses “Blood Orange-Marmalade.” The “Ball Book,” as this edition is often known as, augments the 2006 edition but does not completely replace it. A strong collection would keep both editions.

Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving, 37th ed. Daleville, IN: Hearthmark, 2014 (ISBN: 0-9727537-4-5).

Published since 1909, this classic work is often simply referred to as the “Blue Book.” Providing more than five hundred recipes and detailed canning instructions, it is often the first introduction to canning for many cooks. While other guides push the boundaries of conventional canning with new combinations or unique flavors, the recipes provided in the Blue Book represent the traditional foundation of canning. Detailed instructions, rivaled only by other Ball publications, guide the cook through every step of both water-bath and pressure canning. Quantities tend to be larger than newer recipes: some relish recipes yield six to eight pint jars. Ball’s focus on USDA-approved methods and detailed instructions make this inexpensive guide a good introduction for the home canner.

Hood, Sarah B. *We Sure Can! How Jams and Pickles Are Reviving the Lure and Lore of Local Food.* Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 2011 (ISBN: 978-1-55152-402-3).

Sarah Hood is an award-winning Canadian food writer who has written extensively about food preservation and canning. Her guide focuses solely on water-bath canning

and she eschews the use of commercial pectin. This makes her collection of canning recipes different from others in this section. Many of the recipes presented are used (with permission) from the extensive community of food bloggers and writers that contribute to the discussion of contemporary canning. While there are some of the traditional recipes you would expect (really, everyone has a blueberry jam recipe), her unique collection contains some surprising combinations, such as “Pickled Fiddlehead Ferns” or “Rose-Petal Jam with Cardamom.” Her unique take on canning and discussion of the role of canning in building a local food culture make it a useful addition to a canning collection.

Kingry, Judi and Lauren Devine, eds. *The Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving.* Toronto: Robert Rose, 2006 (ISBN: 978-0-7788-0131-3).

Often referred to as the “bible” of home canning, this classic guide has taught the newest generation of home canners the basics of both water-bath and pressure canning. While the 2016 edition updates and duplicates a portion of this work, there is enough unique content to warrant keeping both editions in a contemporary canning collection. Unlike other guides that broaden their focus to include a range of preservation techniques, this guide focuses solely on canning. It includes more than four hundred recipes and detailed, step-by-step instructions for both types of canning. One useful addition to this work is the home canning problem solver, which is a large table of common canning problems and possible solutions.

Krissoff, Liana. *Canning for a New Generation: Bold, Fresh Flavors for the Modern Pantry.* New York: Stewart, Tabori, and Chang, 2010 (ISBN: 978-1-58479-864-4).

Krissoff presents 150 canning recipes plus 50 recipes that use the canned goods. She uses water-bath canning for these recipes; there are no pressure canning recipes included. While the basics are well covered, the collection presents some fresh, unique recipes that are arranged by season. The combination of canning and main dish recipes helps cooks incorporate their canned goods into their meals. Krissoff is one of the canners who does not use commercial pectin. Her jams and jellies rely mostly on cooking and the natural pectin in fruit for the gel. This approach allows for recipes that use less sugar than traditional recipes.

Lindamood, Rebecca. *Not Your Mama’s Canning Book: Modern Canned Goods and What to Make with Them.* Salem, MA: Page Street, 2016. (ISBN: 978-1-62414-261-1).

Lindamood writes the blog “Foodie with Family” and has made numerous appearances on cooking shows. She provides simple and complex recipes for water-bath and pressure canning. She does not provide the extensive introduction to the techniques of canning found in the other guides in this section, nor does she provide the traditional recipes found in most comprehensive canning guides. For this reason, Lindamood’s work serves as a good supplement to other

THE ALERT COLLECTOR

guides that provide this type of information. Lindamood's strength is in the unique nature of the recipes provided, such as "Maple Bourbon Pecan Pie in a Jar," and "Tikka Masala Sauce." Approximately half of the book is dedicated to recipes that utilize the canned goods created in the first half of the collection.

West, Kevin. *Saving the Season: A Cook's Guide to Home Canning, Pickling, and Preserving*. New York: Knopf, 2013 (ISBN: 978-0-307-59948-3).

This large guide (more than five hundred pages) to canning is an example of how a cookbook can be more than merely a collection of recipes. West draws on his Tennessee childhood and current west-coast life to build a fascinating perusal of culinary history and culture. Arranged by seasons, the 220 recipes are accompanied by 300 photographs and stories that relate the history of food and food preservation. Most of his recipes are built on the water-bath method of canning but he does provide a few recipes that use pressure canning. Like most comprehensive guides, he provides instruction on both methods. West places an emphasis on eating, cooking, and canning seasonal, local produce and provides a handy guide to the peak season for produce by region.

SMALL BATCH CANNING

Small batch canning generally refers to traditional and new recipes that have been sized to produce a smaller quantity. As interest in canning has shifted from storing food for the winter to providing unique flavors and local ingredients, the interest in small batch canning has grown. Typically, these recipes focus on half-pint or pint jars.

Foolproof Preserving: A Guide to Small Batch Jams, Jellies, Pickles, Condiments, and More. Brookline, MA: America's Test Kitchen, 2016 (ISBN: 978-1-940352-51-0).

Formatted like many other publications from America's Test Kitchen, this guide focuses on water-bath canning preservation recipes. A surprisingly high percentage of the recipes are not shelf stable and rely on refrigerator or freezer storage. However, the more than one hundred recipes each have step-by-step instructions (often with accompanying photographs). The work would be especially beneficial for beginning canners.

McClellan, Marisa. *Food in Jars: Preserving in Small Batches Year-Round*. Philadelphia: Running, 2011 (ISBN: 978-0-7624-4143-3).

McClellan is a food writer and maintains a blog by the same name (see below). Her focus on small-batch urban canning has helped to popularize canning with new audiences. While many of the recipes in her book can also be found on her blog, the work is a handy compilation of basic small-batch recipes. The recipes primarily use water-bath canning as a preservation technique; there is a brief discussion of pressure

canning but the work does not provide in-depth instruction or recipes for this preservation technique. The work provides a basic introduction to jams, jellies, and pickles but there are some modern interpretations, such as "Mimosa Jelly." A section that extends the use of jars to mixes suitable for gift giving distinguishes this work from others in the field. This is the first of three cookbooks authored by McClellan, all of which focus on small batch canning. The other two titles are *Preserving by the Pint* and *Naturally Sweet Food in Jars*.

Southern Living: Little Jars, Big Flavors: Small Batch Jams, Jellies, Pickles, and Preserves from the South's Most Trusted Kitchen. Birmingham, AL: Oxmoor House, 2013 (ISBN: 978-0-8487-3952-2).

From the test kitchen at *Southern Living* comes this guide to small batch jams, jellies, and pickles. The focus is on water-bath canning and the recipes are often accompanied by photographs. An extensive introduction to water-bath canning and the art of jelly making is provided. One chapter is devoted to freezer recipes. Both traditional recipes and fresh adaptations are included. There are also recipes that use the canned items. For example, the "Fiery Peach Salsa" is used in the "Seared Duck Tacos."

Vinton, Sherri Brooks. *Put 'Em Up! A Comprehensive Home Preserving Guide for the Creative Cook, from Drying and Freezing to Canning and Pickling*. North Adams, MA: Storey, 2010 (ISBN: 978-1-60342-546-9).

Vinton provides step-by-step instructions for 175 recipes. Her focus is on small batch processing and focuses on water-bath canning, along with refrigerator and freezer recipes. She does not provide recipes or information about pressure canning. Chapters are arranged by ingredient and recipes that can be preserved multiple ways are identified. For example, "Classic Strawberry Jam" includes both refrigerator and canning instructions, as well as a variation with vanilla. Other recipes, such as "Ginger-Carrot Slaw," are suitable only for refrigerator storage.

SPECIALIZED GUIDES

The interest in canning has led to specialized resources that focus on just one aspect, such as jellies or pickles. The application of these types of preparations (especially fermenting or pickling) to international cuisines can also be of interest to a new generation of canners.

Better Homes and Gardens Jams and Jellies. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016 (ISBN: 978-0-544-71555-4).

From the Better Homes and Gardens test kitchen, this collection of more than one hundred jam and jelly recipes provides a specialized collection for the canner looking exclusively for water-bath jam and jelly recipes. Every recipe includes a color photograph but readers are cautioned that not all food illustrated in the photographs can be found in the

recipe collection. All the classic jam and jelly recipes are here but the work also includes some unique and innovative combinations that will challenge even more experienced canners. For example, the “Carrot Fennel-Fig Chutney” offers a fresh take on chutney and the freezer-only recipe “Cowboy Bacon-Shallot Jam” is a unique approach to savory jams.

Duffy, Allison Carroll. *Preserving with Pomona's Pectin: The Revolutionary Low-Sugar, High-Flavor Method for Crafting and Canning Jams, Jellies, Conserves, and More*. Beverly, MA: Fair Winds, 2013 (ISBN: 978-592-33559-6).

The pectin utilized in jam and jelly recipes is not interchangeable, making different resources necessary to meet the needs of canners who have a pectin preference. This official book, produced for the Pomona Pectin company, uses their product exclusively. Pomona pectin is calcium activated and uses less sugar than traditional commercial pectin. The collection also provides recipes that allow for honey and maple syrup substitutions. With more than seventy recipes that provide step-by-step illustrations, the collection will be of use to both the novice canner and the more experienced canner looking for a low-sugar canning option.

Marchetti, Domenica. *Preserving Italy: Canning, Curing, Infusing, and Bottling Italian Flavors and Traditions*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016 (ISBN: 978-0-544-61162-7).

While not dedicated solely to canning, Marchetti's work has many canning options with an Italian twist. In addition to the expected recipes like giardiniera (a mixed-vegetable pickle), the author includes a nice mix of tomato and jam recipes. Each section also includes additional recipes that incorporate the preserved food. Unique among regional canning books, Marchetti ends the work with a section on syrups, liqueurs, and fruits preserved in alcohol. Most are used immediately but a few recipes, such as “Three-Citrus Liqueur” or “Crema di Limoncello” lend themselves to longer-term storage in the refrigerator or freezer.

Shockey, Kirsten K. and Christopher Shockey. *Fermented Vegetables*. North Adams, MA: Storey, 2014 (ISBN: 978-1-61212-425-4).

While not a canning guide, this work extends any food preservation and cooking collection. The focus is on fermented foods, prepared primarily with crocks. The authors provide detailed instructions for the basics of fermenting. They subdivide the recipes by vegetable, herb, and fruit. Additional recipes provide guidance on using the fermented foods in meals. For example, “Smokey Kraut Quiche” illustrates an unusual way to use the “Smokey Kraut” (made with cabbage and smoked salt).

Solomon, Karen. *Asian Pickles*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed, 2014— (ISBN: 978-1-60774-476-4).

Providing recipes from Japan, Korea, China, India, and of Southeast Asia, Solomon's innovative work provides a fresh and new perspective on pickles. Most of the recipes are not

appropriate for long term storage (Solomon clearly identifies this in each chapter) but cooks interested in expanding their pickle repertoire will find the work of interest.

Ziedrich, Linda. *The Joy of Pickling*, 3rd ed. Beverly, MA: Harvard Common, 2016 (ISBN: 978-1-558-32860-0).

Now in its third edition, this is considered one of the classic guides to pickling. Linda Ziedrich is a certified Master Food Preserver and Gardner as well as a noted teacher of food preservation techniques. The three hundred recipes introduce all types of pickling and fermentation. Topics include fermented pickles, chutneys, kimchi, and other fermented cabbage products. While most canning guides provide pickle recipes, Ziedrich goes into much greater depth, discussing every aspect of the process: vinegars, salts, and types of cucumbers. This work also includes unique content often not found in other pickling guides, such as the pickling of meat, fish, and eggs.

WEB RESOURCES

National Center for Home Food Preservation (<http://nchfp.uga.edu>)

The National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP) is a joint project of the United States Department of Agriculture and the University of Georgia. It supports the cooperative extension program throughout the United States and home canners through the provision of information and research related to home preservation techniques. The website is a gold mine of information, including lesson plans, a self-paced online course, and numerous instructional publications. Information provided by the NCHFP and the USDA represent the benchmark for safety in home canning. All other resources should be compared to their recommended methods.

USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning (http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/publications_usda.html)

This large, complete guide to home canning is produced by the United States Department of Agriculture. The online file is divided into seven parts plus the introduction and is available for free download in PDF format. Print copies may also be purchased. The guide provides the latest canning recommendations on the basis of USDA research. The guide includes step-by-step instructions and numerous recipes for both water-bath and pressure canned methods. It is available from the National Center for Home Food Preservation and through most state cooperative extension websites.

Food in Jars (<http://foodinjars.com/>)

Marisa McClellan, food writer and canning teacher, runs the popular Food in Jars blog. McClellan regularly highlights products of interest to canners and tests out recipes that often appear later in a cookbook. McClellan helped to popularize the concept of small batch canning and canning

THE ALERT COLLECTOR

in an urban setting. Many of her recipes are for four or five half-pints, a considerably smaller quantity than more traditional, comprehensive canning guides. McClellan is the author of three canning cookbooks.

Punk Domestics (<http://www.punkdomestics.com/>)

Originally founded by professional writer and amateur foodie Sean Timberlake, this site is now populated by community members and includes information on recipes, techniques, and tools. The site often connects readers to other blogs and web pages maintained by community members. The eclectic mix of personalities involved in the site lead to

some new and innovative recipes (for example, Yam Chutney with Mustard) but readers are cautioned that not all canning recipes strictly follow USDA guidelines.

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