

Tips to Safely Can and Freeze Your Fruits and Vegetables

By Hazel Jackson
County Extension Agent for
Family and Consumer Sciences



Many of us are busy canning and freezing the bounty from our gardens and local markets. To safely preserve produce, always follow U.S. Department of Agriculture time-proven canning and freezing procedures. Below are the answers to some frequently asked questions.

* Can food be re-canned if the lid doesn't seal?
If you discover the unsealed jar within 24 hours, the food can safely be re-canned. Remove the lid and check the jar sealing surface for tiny nicks. Change the jar if needed and add a new, washed lid, then reprocess using the same original processing time.

* How long will canned food keep?
Properly canned food will retain optimum eating quality for at least one year when stored in a cool, dry place. Canned food might lose some quality in a few weeks or months if stored in a warm place (near hot pipes, a furnace or in direct sunlight) depending on the temperature. Dampness might corrode cans or metal lids, causing leakage and food spoilage.

* Do I need to exhaust a pressure canner?

Yes. It's very important to allow steam to escape for 10 minutes before closing the valve, or putting the weight on the vent. This allows the inside temperature to correspond to that of the pressure gauge.

* What causes corn to turn brown during processing?
This usually happens when too high a temperature causes sugar in the corn to caramelize. It is especially a problem with supersweet varieties. Discoloration also might be caused by some minerals in water used in canning.

* I've heard canned bread or cake in a jar isn't recommended. Why isn't it safe?

Choose recipes you can freeze, because breads and cakes aren't recommended for canning. Many recipes for quick breads and cakes are low acid and have the potential to support certain bacteria that cause botulism if they are present inside the closed jar. Canning jar manufacturers do not endorse baking in their products. Commercial breads or cakes in a jar are made with additives, preservatives and processing controls not available for home

recip use.

* Why blanch vegetables before freezing them?
Blanching is the process of boiling water or steam for a short time. This slows or stops enzymatic action that reduces flavor, color and texture. It also removes dirt and organisms from vegetable surfaces; helps retain vitamins; and softens vegetables, making them easier to pack in freezer containers.

* How should I blanch vegetables?
Use a wire blanching basket and covered saucepan, or a wire basket into a large kettle with a fitted lid. Use one gallon of vigorously boiling water per pound of prepared vegetables. After putting vegetables into the basket, lower it into the container and begin blanching time as soon as the water returns to a boil, usually within one minute. It takes longer to return to a boil, you're using too much vegetable for the amount of water. Be sure to keep heat high for the total blanching time.

* Why do I need to cool vegetables after blanching?
Quickly and thoroughly cool vegetables to stop the cooking process. Otherwise, they'll be overcooked and lose flavor, color, vitamins and minerals.

* What causes frost or ice crystals on the surface of frozen vegetables?

Inadequate draining before freezing, slow freezing, or temperature fluctuations above 0 degrees Fahrenheit might cause this. It can affect frozen vegetables' texture and appearance.

* How long will food remain frozen if the power goes off?

The food will stay frozen longer if the freezer isn't opened, is full, located in a cool place and is well-insulated. Food in a loaded

freezer usually will remain frozen from two to four days, depending on the freezer size. A half-filled freezer will keep food frozen for

only about one complete day. To help retain integrity, cold, cover the freezer with blankets. Be sure to keep blankets away from the compressor.

* Can thawed food be re-frozen?
Yes, if one of the following two conditions is met: (1) The food has partially thawed and still has ice crystals in the package, or (2) the freezer temperature has remained at 40 degrees F or below. Always check the color and odor before using the food.

* What is freezer burn?
It is drying on the surface of an improperly wrapped frozen food. Although the food is safe to eat, it's poorer quality. To prevent freezer burn, the wrapping or package must be air-free and sealed airtight.

* Does freezing kill germs or improve the quality of food?
It does neither. Although freezing doesn't kill all bacteria, yeasts and molds in food, it does keep them from rapidly multiplying when the food remains at 0 degrees F or less. However, surviving organisms can multiply when the food is thawed.

* Frozen food is only as good as the quality of the fresh food. So choose high-quality products at optimum maturity and freshness.

For more information on canning, freezing and other food preservation topics, contact your Rockcastle Cooperative Extension Service at 256-2403.

Educational programs of the Cooperative Extension Service serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability or national origin.

Upcoming Reunions

McHargue
The McHargue Family Reunion will be held Aug. 10th at Levi Jackson State Park in London. Please come and bring a covered dish.

Dillion Asher Reunion
October 4, 5 & 6th
Fri., Oct. 4th: Buffet dinner available at 5 p.m. Social hour to follow at 6:45 p.m. Pine Mountain State Report Park, Pineville.

Abney
Sat., Oct. 5th: Picnic - Cardinal Inn, Red Bird (Queendale) near Dillon Asher's original homestead. Bring covered dish and arrive early! We will begin eating at noon!

Genealogy exchange after picnic - Pine Mountain State Report Park. Genealogy material available at all functions.

Cameron
Sun., Oct. 6th: Hendrickson Reunion at 2 p.m. Pine Mountain State Report Park in Pineville.

The Dillon Asher Family is one of the oldest and largest families in Kentucky. So come, meet with family and friends, and have a grand time! If making reservations at the state

park, inform them it is for the Asher or Hendrickson Reunion. For more info, contact Janelle Carole Simpson by phone at (606)337-5062 or by email at miskey@ksh.net.

Todd-Gatiff
Todd-Gatiff Reunion will be held Sun., Aug. 4th at Berry-Ramsay Park on Clear Creek. All family and friends are invited to attend. Please bring a lawn chair and covered dish. Lunch around 1 p.m.

The descendants of Morgan and Ida Abney will have their family reunion on Sun., Aug. 4th at the CAP Family Life center, the shelter on the right at the top of the hill. Bring a covered dish.

The Cameron Reunion will be at the William Whitley House in Crab Orchard on Aug. 10th at 12:30.

Nieley
The Nieley family reunion will be held on Aug. 10th at Quail Community Park. All relatives and friends are invited to join us for a covered dish dinner beginning around 11:30 a.m.

Subscribe to the Signal (606)256-2243

We are still family owned -- just relocated



Doug and Jeir (Doan) Bullock would like to invite you to stop in at

Mt. Vernon Florist

located next door to Family Cafe, for all your floral needs. We have a variety of things from potted plants to decorative cherubs and angels, silk arrangements and others.

Call us at 256-2091 or 256-9924 for any information Nikki, Zannie or Shonna will be on hand to assist you

Dr. Robyn Keeling joins Dr. John Parsons Dentistry

Dr. Robyn A. Keeling has joined the dental practice of Dr. John H. Parsons in downtown Mt. Vernon.

Dr. Keeling is a graduate of the University of Kentucky College of Dentistry and a Bowling Green, Ky. native. She is married to Dr. Robert L. Keeling who is a resident physician in Diagnostic Radiology at UK's Chandler Medical Center. The two have one 21-month-old daughter, Avery.

Offices are located at 55 E. Main St. and can be reached Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. by calling 606-256-5123. Please join Dr. Parsons and staff in welcoming Dr. Keeling to the dental practice and to our community.



Sheep Show - Market Lamb

By: John McQueary,
County Agent for 4-H/Youth Development

On Friday, August 2, 2002, there will be a Beef and Sheep show at Brodhead Little World's Fair. The Sheep Show and Market Lamb Show will begin at 6:00 pm. After the show the youth will sell their quality show animals.

Roy Reynolds and Pat Craig are chairmen of the Sheep Show and ask that lambs must be on the grounds by 5:00 pm on Friday, August 2, 2002. Premiums will be \$400 paid to county youth only and on the Danish system. Lambs will be auctioned after the show.

Rules:

1. Market lambs will be shown by weight not by brand.
2. Entries will be weighed and divided into classes of not more than 10 head.
3. Lambs shown in the Market classes cannot be shown in the breeding classes and vice-versa.

4. Lambs should weigh between 70-140 pounds.

5. Weibers and ewe lambs only - ram lambs are not allowed.

*Come out to bid and buy a market lamb.

Mobley's Electrical Service & Repairs
256-0622
Jon Mobley, Owner

Friday, August 2, 2002 - Beef & Lamb Show
Rockcastle County Only
Enter - 5:00
Judging - 6:00
No Admission

Admission \$2.00

Horseshoe Pitching Contest - 1:00 pm
No Admission

Monday August 5, 2002
6 pm Midway Opens
8 pm Truck Pull

Tuesday August 6, 2002
10 am-1 pm Enter Exhibits
2 pm Judging Exhibits
6 pm Midway Opens
6-9 pm Exhibits Open
8 pm Truck Pull

Wednesday August 7, 2002
6 pm Midway Opens
6-9 pm Exhibits Open
8 pm Demolition Derby

107th Annual Little World's Fair Brodhead, Kentucky



August 5th - 10th
Myers International Rides and Shows on the Midway
Nightly Admission: Monday - Saturday
Pay One Price \$7.00
Admits You to All Attractions and Unlimited Rides

Thursday August 8, 2002
12 noon - 4 pm
Special Family Day
No Gate Admission
Rides 25¢
12 noon - 4 pm
Exhibits Open
Admission Begins at 4:00 pm
6 pm Midway Opens
6-9 pm Exhibits Open
8 pm Demolition Derby

Friday August 9, 2002
6 pm Midway Opens
6-9 pm Exhibits Open
8 pm Mud Races

Saturday August 10, 2002
10-11 am . Check Out Exhibits
6 pm Midway Opens
7:30 pm ... Mud Races