

What is Canning?

Canning is a method of preserving garden vegetables by sealing them in airtight jars, which allows them to last for months without refrigeration. The process involves heating the jars to destroy bacteria and create a vacuum seal and offers a great way to enjoy your garden harvest all year round.

Benefits of Canning

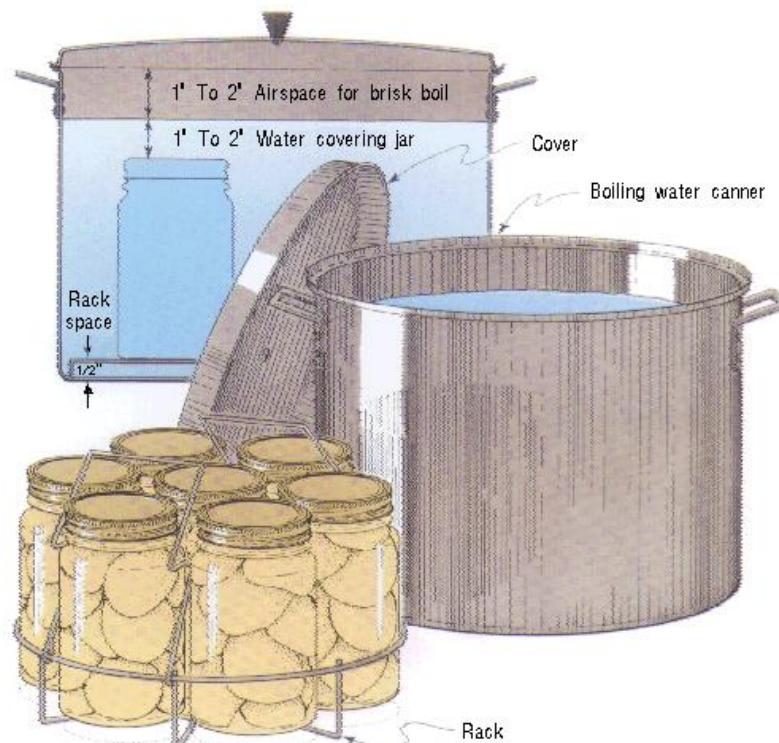
- Enjoy fresh-tasting vegetables year-round.
- Reduce food waste by preserving excess produce.
- Control the ingredients in your canned goods (low sodium, no preservatives).
- Save money by preserving your own food.

Equipment You'll Need

1. Canning Jars & Rack

Use glass jars designed for canning. These come with two-piece lids (flat metal seal and a screw band).

A steel, circular drying rack can be used in place of a canning rack. Place it in the bottom of the pot before you boil the water. Make sure that when placing the jars in the pot of boiling water that the jars are not touching the pot.



Tip: Make sure jars are free from cracks or chips. Lids can be reused so long as there is no gunk or buildup on the rims.

2. Jar Lifter



A tool for safely removing jars from boiling water.

3. Large Pot

For water-bath canning, a large pot works well.

A rack to move multiple jars in and out of the pot is helpful, otherwise the jar lifter can be used to move jars one by one.

4. Tongs, Ladle (steel), Funnel, and Oven Mitts (preferably the full-waterproof kind)

These tools make filling jars with your veggies easier and cleaner.

Basic Steps for Water-Bath Canning (for high-acid vegetables)

1. Prepare Your Veggies

Wash and chop your vegetables as needed. Some vegetables may need to be peeled or blanched (boiled briefly and cooled).

TIP: Blanching is the easiest approach to removing tomato and beet skin

2. Sterilize Jars

Before filling, boil jars for 10 minutes to sterilize them. Keep them warm until you're ready to use them.

3. Prepare the Canning Liquid

Depending on the recipe, this could be water, salt brine, or a vinegar solution for pickling.

4. Fill Jars

Use your funnel to carefully add vegetables and liquid, leaving about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of space at the top (called "headspace"). Remove air bubbles by running a spatula around the inside edge of the jar.

5. Seal Jars

Place the sterilized lids on top and screw the bands on finger-tight.

6. Process the Jars

Submerge the jars in boiling water (for water-bath canning) or use a pressure canner for low-acid vegetables.

Processing times vary depending on the vegetable, but usually range from 10 to 40 minutes.

Pickles: 5 minutes

Carrots: 6 minutes

Jalapenos: 2 minutes
Beans: 2 minutes

7. Cool and Check the Seal

After processing, allow the jars to cool. Once cool, check that the lids have sealed by pressing the center of the lid—it should not flex. If the lid pops up and down, it hasn't sealed and the jar should be refrigerated and used within a few days.



Safety Tips

- Use tested recipes for canning. Not all vegetables can be safely canned using the water-bath method.
- Low-acid vegetables (like beans, carrots, and corn) must be canned using a pressure canner to prevent botulism.
- Check that all jars are sealed properly before storing.

Storage

- Store your sealed jars in a cool, dark place. Properly canned vegetables can last up to a year!

Valuable Online Resources for Canning Garden Vegetables

1. **National Center for Home Food Preservation** www.uga.edu/nchfp

A comprehensive resource for safe home canning and food preservation methods. Offers free guides, recipes, and safety tips.

2. **Ball® Canning** www.freshpreserving.com
A trusted source for canning products, recipes, and canning tutorials. Includes step-by-step guides for beginners.
3. **Health Canada – Home Canning Safety** www.canada.ca
Provides information on food safety and proper techniques for home canning, tailored for Canadian home canners.
4. **The Old Farmer's Almanac – Canning and Preserving** www.almanac.com
Offers a collection of canning guides, recipes, and tips for preserving a variety of vegetables and fruits.
5. **University of Saskatchewan – Food Preservation** www.gardening.usask.ca
Saskatchewan-specific advice for canning and food preservation, including workshops and local resources.
6. **Bernardin Canning** www.bernardin.ca
Specializes in home canning supplies and provides free online tutorials, troubleshooting tips, and recipes for successful canning.
7. **Penn State Extension – Home Food Preservation** www.extension.psu.edu
A trusted source for learning more about the science of canning, ensuring safe methods, and accessing beginner-friendly instructions.

These resources will help you further your understanding of canning, ensuring that your garden vegetables are preserved safely and deliciously.

Sample Pickling Supplies and Recipe

Supplies:

- 2 x 4L jugs vinegar
- 2x pickling salt boxes
- 3 large bundles dillweed (tops of dill plants where the seeds are; ~ 8L loosely packed tops)
- 9 bulbs garlic
- Bulk food store:
 - 2 cups mustard seed
 - 2 cups pickling spice
 - 1 cup chili flakes
- 20lb pickling cucumbers (makes 22 big jars)
- 10lb carrots (makes 14 medium-sized and small-sized jars)
- 3 small jars of jalapenos (~10 jalapenos)
- 2 small jars of garlic

Brine Recipe:

8 cups vinegar
8 cups water
1 cup pickling salt
1 cup sugar

In each jar:

1 tablespoon pickling spice
½ tablespoon chili flakes
½ tablespoon mustard seed
2 florets dillweed

Source: Kate Fraser. Any questions reach out kate@nciaf.ca.