



Turn the Heat Up to Properly Can Vegetables and Meat

Late autumn finds some pantry shelves stocked with row upon row of home-canned food. Foods that are naturally low in acid, such as meat and vegetables, must be pressure canned to ensure safety. Perhaps the pressure canner that you use was handed down to you from your mother or grandmother, or maybe your pressure canner is brand new. Regardless, pressure canners are often confused with pressure cookers, and it is important to understand the difference.

Both **pressure canners** and **pressure cookers** work by trapping steam and building up pressure inside a pot. The steam is trapped because the lid, which is fitted with a rubber gasket, forms an airtight seal once it's locked into position. As the contents of the pot heat up, steam gets trapped and pressure builds. At 15 pounds pressure, water boils at 250°F, almost 40°F higher than in conventional pots. The high pressure and temperature destroy microorganisms more rapidly (pressure canning) or cook foods more quickly (pressure cooking).

Pressure canners are used for canning low-acid foods such as meat and vegetables. The high temperatures created in a pressure canner (240°F-250°F) are necessary to destroy spores of the bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*. If the spores of *C. botulinum* are not destroyed, they can produce a deadly toxin in any low-acid home canned food.

There are two styles of pressure canners, those with a **dial gauge** and those with a **weighted gauge**. Be sure to carefully follow the manufacturer's directions for the type of canner that you have. And remember that a dial gauge canner must be tested annually to ensure that the gauge is reading accurately. Weighted gauge canners do not need to be tested, but it is still a good idea to carefully inspect the canner, and replace worn parts as necessary.

Pressure cookers or **pressure saucepans** are used to rapidly cook meats, sauces, vegetables and other foods for a family meal. Because they heat food rapidly, and help to tenderize tough cuts of meat, pressure cookers are a fixture of many households. However, it is important to remember that pressure cookers **can not** be used to safely pressure can foods because they do not maintain adequate pressure, and they heat and cool too rapidly to ensure a thorough process.

Pressure canners and pressure saucepans come in a wide variety of sizes. **Pressure canners** may hold up to 22 quarts of canned food, and are able to process food at pressures up to 25 pounds. Some popular brands of pressure canners are **Mirro**, **Presto** and **All American**. **Pressure cookers** usually hold no more than 6 quarts, and they often cook food at 'high', 'medium' or 'low' settings.

While some pressure canners are able to double as pressure cookers, pots sold as pressure cookers cannot be used to can foods.

Both pressure canners and pressure cookers that you'll find in the stores today are a far cry from their predecessors. The new 'second generation' pots are lighter in weight, and they have new built in safety features that release steam if the pressure gets too high- features that make them more fun and easy to use. If you are careful to follow the directions that accompany your pressure canner or cooker, you will enjoy using these contemporary pots. For safe home canning recipes using a **pressure canner**, contact your local county extension office.

Try these ideas for canning:

Baked Beans

3 cups dried beans

9 cups water

Cubed ham, bacon or pork

Baked Bean Sauce (see recipe below)

1. Combine water and dried beans in a large pot
2. Soak the beans overnight; or cover and boil for 2 minutes, remove from heat and soak for 1 hour
3. Drain beans, cover with fresh water
4. Boil for 30 minutes
5. Drain and save the liquid
6. Fill hot jars 3/4 full of hot beans and cover with molasses sauce (see recipe below), leaving 1 inch at the top
7. Add 3/4 inch of cubes of pork, ham or bacon to each jar, if desired
8. Remove air bubbles
9. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids
10. Process in pressure canner at recommended pressure*
65 minutes for pints
75 minutes for quarts

***Canner Pressure**

Dial Gauge Canner—11 pounds

Weighted Gauge Canner, up to 1,000 feet—10 pounds

Weighted Gauge Canner, above 1,000 feet—15 pounds

Baked Bean Sauce

4 cups liquid from cooking beans
3 tbsp molasses or sorghum
1 tbsp vinegar
2 tsp salt
3/4 tsp dry mustard

1. Combine ingredients in a pot
2. Heat to boiling
3. Use in the Baked Bean recipe above

Canning Cubes, Chunks or Strips of: Beef, Venison, Veal, Lamb or Pork

High quality chilled meat

Brine: 1 tablespoon salt per quart of cold water

1. Choose a high quality chilled meat, and remove the fat from it
2. Soak strong-flavored wild meats for 1 hour in brine
3. Rinse the meat
4. Remove all bones
5. Cut into cubes, chunks or strips
6. Cover meat and cook to an internal temperature of 150°F in the oven
7. Add 1 tsp salt per quart jar, if desired
8. Fill clean, hot jars loosely with hot meat
9. Cover meat with boiling broth, meat drippings, water or tomato juice, leaving 1-inch at the top
10. Wipe jar rims clean and adjust lids
11. Process in pressure canner at recommended pressure*
75 minutes for pints
90 minutes for quarts

*** Canner Pressure:**

Dial Gauge, up to 2,000 ft.—11 pounds pressure

Weighted Gauge, up to 1,000 ft.—10 pounds pressure

Weighted Gauge, above 1,000 ft.—15 pounds pressure

Canning Ground Meat: Beef, Venison, Veal, Lamb, Pork or Sausage

High quality, chilled meat

For venison: pork fat

Note:

For venison: add 1 part high quality pork fat to 3 to 4 parts venison before grinding

For sausage: use freshly made sausage, seasoned with salt and cayenne pepper

1. Shape ground meat into uniform balls or patties, or cut cased sausage into 3-4 inch links
2. Cook until lightly browned
3. Drain off fat
4. Consider canning in tomato juice or the spaghetti sauce listed below
5. Fill clean, hot jars loosely with hot meat, leaving 1 inch at the top
6. Add 1 tsp salt per quart if desired
7. Cover with boiling broth, water, tomato juice or spaghetti sauce, leaving 1 inch at the top
8. Wipe jar rims clean and adjust lids
9. Process in pressure canner at recommended pressure*
75 minutes for pints
90 minutes for quarts

*** Canner Pressure:**

Dial Gauge, up to 2,000 ft.—11 pounds pressure

Weighted Gauge, up to 1,000 ft.—10 pounds pressure

Weighted Gauge, above 1,000 ft.—15 pounds pressure

Spaghetti Sauce

5 lbs.lean ground beef or venison, or a combination

6 quarts tomatoes, peeled and chopped

1 onion, peeled and chopped

2 cups green sweet peppers, cored and chopped

1/4 cup parsley, chopped (optional)

2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced

1 1/2 tbsp salt

1 tbsp sugar

1 tbsp sweet basil, crushed

1. Sauté beef or venison and onion until all pink is gone from the meat
2. Drain off the fat
3. Add remaining ingredients, and heat rapidly until simmering
4. Simmer until thickened, about 1 hour, stirring often.

Hot pack Bring sauce to a boil. Fill clean, hot jars, leaving 1-inch headspace. Wipe jar rims clean and adjust lids. Process in a pressure canner at recommended pressure.

75 minutes for pints
90 minutes for quarts

*** Canner Pressure:**

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Weighted Gauge, up to 1,000 ft.—10 pounds pressure

Weighted Gauge, above 1,000 ft.—15 pounds pressure

Yields: 6 to 7 pints

Can Poultry: Chicken, Turkey, Duck, Goose, Game Birds, Rabbit

Note:

Chill dressed birds for 6 to 12 hours before canning.

Remove excess fat, and cut poultry into suitable sizes for canning.

Can with or without the bones.

Hot Pack:

1. Boil, steam or bake meat until about two-thirds done
2. Add 1 tsp salt per quart to the jar, if desired
3. Fill clean, hot jars with hot meat and hot broth, leaving 1 1/4 inch at the top
4. Wipe jar rims clean and adjust lids
5. Process in a pressure canner at the recommended pressure*

Cold Pack:

1. Add 1 tsp salt per quart, if desired
2. Fill clean, hot jars loosely with raw meat pieces
3. Do not add liquid
4. Wipe jar rims clean and adjust lids
5. Process in a pressure canner at the recommended pressure*

*** Canner Pressure:**

Dial Gauge, up to 2,000 ft.—11 pounds pressure

Weighted Gauge, up to 1,000 ft.—10 pounds pressure

Weighted Gauge, above 1,000 ft.—15 pounds pressure

Canning Small Game: Rabbit and Squirrel

Brine: 1 tbsp salt per quart of cold water

1. Choose freshly killed and dressed, healthy animals.
2. Soak chilled meat in the refrigerator for 1 hour in brine
3. Rinse
4. Precook by simmering or steaming until skin can be easily removed
5. Discard skin and fat
6. Cut meat into suitable sizes for canning, leaving the bones in
7. Boil, steam or bake meat until about two-thirds done
8. Fill clean, hot jars with hot meat and hot broth or tomato juice, leaving 1 1/4 inch at the top
9. Add 1 tsp salt per quart, if desired
10. Wipe jar rims clean and adjust lids
11. Process in a pressure canner at the recommended pressure*

Note:

1. To can raw meat follow steps 1-6.
2. Fill clean, hot jars loosely with raw meat pieces. Leave 1 1/4 inch at the top of the jar.
3. Do not add liquid.
4. Add 1 tsp salt per quart jar, if desired.
5. Wipe jar rims clean and adjust lids.
6. Process in pressure canner at the recommended pressure*

***Canner Pressure**

Dial Gauge, up to 2,000 ft—11 pounds pressure

Weighted Gauge, up to 1,000 ft—10 pounds pressure

Weighted Gauge, above 1,000 ft—15 pounds pressure

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