

When it comes to storing fall produce, canning is where it's at. Well-canned produce lasts longest, tastes best, and makes excellent holiday gifts. But home canning also strikes fear into the hearts of newbies because when it goes wrong, it ruins food and invites deadly botulism—both nasty outcomes. No worries new canners! Good canning is easily done, with the right steps, and by following this easy guide you'll be ripe with its rewards.

What one can may make or break initial success and canning confidence. Canning truly crispy gherkins, for

example, can be tricky, while fully cooked chutneys, jams, and fruit butters are easy to get right. They allow new canners to work on basic technique while ensuring end products will be texturally correct.

Good equipment is crucial too. All the essentials must be laid out, prepped, cleaned, and ready to go before canning can commence. Sterile technique is at the heart of good canning. That means keeping everything hot and germ-free, especially food stuffs and jar interiors. This is laid out in just seven basic steps that will put you on the path toward preserving your harvest.

Fall Canning Joy

BY JESSIE KEITH



Last of the Green Tomatoes Chutney

An English favorite, green tomato chutney is easy to make and the perfect way to use all those late-season green tomatoes hanging on the vine. This slightly spicy recipe tastes great on sharp cheese sandwiches and burgers.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 1/2 lbs. green tomatoes, seeded and chopped
- 1 large Spanish onion, finely chopped
- 1 cup sultanas (golden raisins), lightly chopped
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1 tsp. freshly grated ginger
- 1/2 tsp. ground allspice
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1 cup malt vinegar
- 1 large cayenne pepper quartered and seeded (spicier or milder peppers can be used)

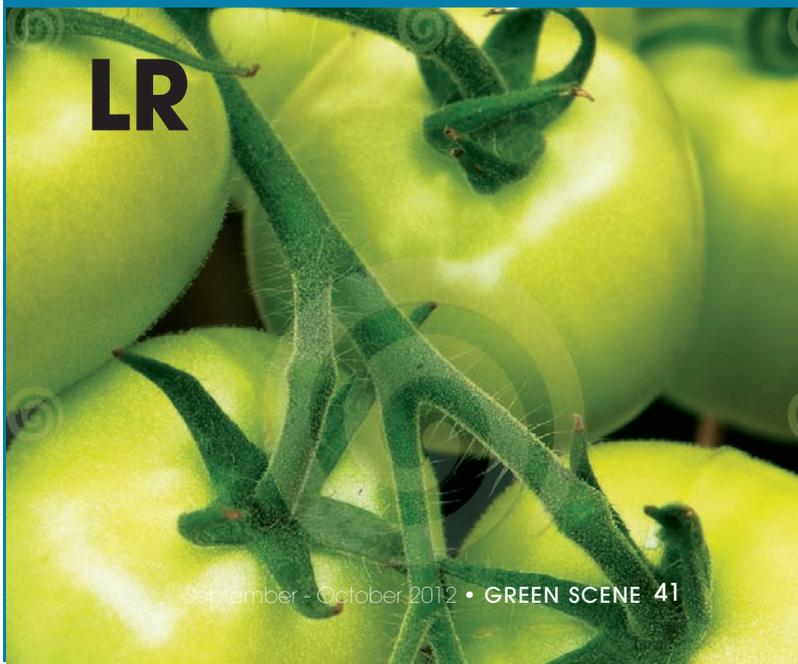
Thoroughly mix all ingredients in a bowl and transfer to a large saucepan set to medium heat. Simmer and occasionally stir for 30 to 45 minutes, until the chutney is well-caramelized and has cooked down to a moderately thick consistency. The chutney becomes thicker as it cools. Keep warm on low heat until you are ready to divide and can the chutney. This recipe should make around five 4-oz. jars.

Materials:

- canning pot
- 4 oz. quilted crystal jelly jars
- canning jar rack or canning jar lifter
- canning lids and screw bands (new)
- labels and permanent marker
- ladle, wide-mouthed funnel, and tongs with good grip

Steps:

1. Wash your hands and workspace before starting.
2. Sterilize jars by filling a large pot with water to a depth that will cover them. Submerge as many jars as you can in the pot. Bring the water to a rolling boil and boil for 10 minutes. Remove the hot jars with clean tongs while gently pouring the hot water out before removal. Place the jars upside down on a clean towel and avoid touching their interiors. (Keep the water in the canning pot simmering.)
3. Using a clean ladle and wide-mouthed funnel, fill jars with hot prepared chutney, jam, or butter. Fill to a level that allows around an inch of headspace from the top of the preserve to the top of the jar. Wipe messy jar rims with a clean damp cloth and gently tap the base of the jars to remove any internal bubbles.
4. Place lids and screw bands on the jars. Manufacturer's instructions may vary, so follow those on the box. Lids can be added one by one if you're concerned about leaving open jars exposed for too long.
5. Place the jars on the jar rack and lower them into the pot of hot water. If you have no rack lower the jars in with a canning jar lifter, being sure to keep jars from touching. Cover the canning pot and keep at a low boil for 10 minutes.
6. Remove the jars from the pot and place them on towels to cool. Once cool, dry outside thoroughly and apply labels. Include the name of the preserve and date made. Store in a cool dry place.
7. After jars have set for 12 to 24 hours, check for success. If the lids are tight, air free, and cannot be pressed down, they're fine. If they pop down, they are improperly sealed, but don't throw them away. You can either put them in the refrigerator for immediate use or try to re-cap them following steps 4 through 6. As a general rule, canned food is best used in the first year. 🌿



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