

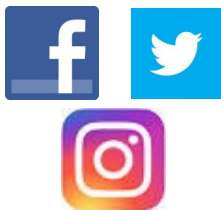


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Better Process Control School for Acidified Foods



This course will be offered via Zoom
Photo: K-State College of Agriculture

Small food processors add value and support for local communities. This includes farmers market vendors. For some food products, such as acidified foods, it is required the food processor be trained to process these foods safely. Acidified foods or formulated acid foods examples are pickles, salsa, BBQ sauce, and others.

The Better Process Control School for Acidified Foods is an FDA-recognized course for operators or manufacturers

who produce thermally processed acidified foods. The course is being offered by Kansas State University and University of Missouri.

Those passing two exams with a grade of 70% or higher will receive a Certificate of Course Completion to fulfill the training requirements of the FDA Acidified Food regulations. Exams will be open book, multiple choice and will be online. Exams generally require no more than one hour to complete. Homework is required.

Topics covered include microbiology of food preservation, formulating acid/acidified food products, containers and closures, record keeping, and FDA process of filing.

Information and Registration at:

<https://foodsci.k-state.edu/extension/extension-events.html>

Cost: \$400

Registration deadline:
October 20, 2023

Safe Flour Handling: Know Your "Roll"

Holiday baking season is quickly approaching! It's important for families to understand the risks of handling raw flour as well as the safety practices they can use to prevent flour-related foodborne illnesses.

On November 1, Noon CST, this [free webinar](#), hosted by the [Partnership for Food Safety Education](#), will highlight the risks associated with raw flour, the perceptions held by consumers in regard to the prevalence of illness, how to safely handle raw flour, and current food

safety resources for health and food safety educators to share with consumers.

Guest speakers will include Fanfan Wu, Ph.D. and Sharmi Das with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Fall Canning Tips

At this writing, the calendar still says summer, but fall is in the air. Gardens may still be producing, so here are some end-of-season tips for food preservation.

- Do not can [tomatoes from frost-killed or dead vines](#). Their pH may be higher than 4.6. Eat or freeze them for later use.
- Can [pumpkin or oth-](#)

[er winter squash](#) varieties safely in cubes. Do not mash or puree any winter squash for canning. Freeze mashed winter squash for later use.

- Apples are here! Preserve them by [canning, drying or freezing](#).
- [Preserve soup](#) for easy meals. Combine

meat and vegetables. Add noodles, pasta or thickeners when ready to serve.

- After the hunt, preserve your bounty with these tips for [canning, freezing and drying venison](#).
- [Jerky](#) can be loaded with flavor! Dry it safely for a tasty treat.



Done canning? [Store your equipment with care for next season.](#)

Photo: K-State Research and Extension

Safer Food Choices

This information is also available in a [PDF format](#) as a handout.

To prevent food poisoning, some foods are safer choices than others. That's because some foods—such as undercooked meat and eggs, unwashed fruits and vegetables, and unpasteurized milk—are more of-

ten associated with foodborne illnesses.

Some people are more likely to get sick and have a more serious illness from food poisoning.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a new resource to help guide consumers in making safer food choices at www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/communication/foodsafety-tips.html.

Preserve the Best Tomatoes

When preserving any food, use the best food possible for the safest results. This includes tomatoes. During the fall, many gardeners still have tomatoes on the vines. But once a frost or freeze happens, these tomatoes are not safe to preserve by canning.

When tomatoes are left on the vine towards the end of the growing season, the pH increases above 4.6. This is the dividing point whether a food is a high acid or low acid food. When the pH is above 4.6, it is a low acid food. These tomatoes are also more susceptible to other microbial damage. Tomatoes that have signs of blight or other fungus related infestations have a higher pH making them a low acid food. All of these are not safe for canning.

For information on preserving tomatoes, see www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF1185.PDF.

A FALL FREEZE IS COMING!

Still have tomatoes on the vine?
Pick them before a frost or freeze to finish ripening.

After a frost or freeze, the **acidity** of tomatoes still on the vine **decreases**. This **increases** the risk for **botulism** if these tomatoes are canned.

Learn more at www.rrc.ksu.edu/preservation

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Do Tomatoes Need to be Peeled Before Canning?



Peeling tomatoes

Photo: K-State Research and Extension

Yes! That extra time is important and time well spent for safely canned tomatoes. This is true for any produce that is canned. For example, potatoes, peaches, and apples are also peeled before canning.

According to the [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#), "Most bacteria, yeasts, and molds are difficult to remove from food surfaces. Washing fresh food reduces their numbers only slightly. Peeling root crops, underground stem crops, and tomatoes reduces their numbers greatly. Blanching also helps, but the vital controls are the method of canning and making sure the recommended research-based process times found in the USDA's Complete Guide to Home Canning are used."

Easily peel tomatoes by dipping them in boiling water for 30-60 seconds or just until the skins split. Then dip in ice water, slip off the skins and remove cores. See how at <https://youtu.be/diZGx8RZAd0>. This method can be used for peaches or nectarines.



Drying and Roasting Pumpkin Seeds

It's pumpkin season! When carving your pumpkins, don't toss the seeds. They make a great snack by drying and roasting.

To dry, carefully wash pumpkin seeds to re-

move the clinging fibrous pumpkin tissue. Pumpkin seeds can be dried in the sun, in an electric dehydrator at 115-120°F for 1 to 2 hours, or in an oven on a very low, warm temperature only, for 3 to 4 hours. Stir them fre-

quently to avoid scorching. Dried seeds should not be stored with any moisture left in them.

To roast the seeds, take dried pumpkin seeds, toss with oil and/or salt and roast in a preheated oven at 250°F for 10 to 15 minutes.

Source: [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#)

Preserving Pumpkins



Sugar or pie pumpkins are best for cooking and baking a tasty pie or bread. They are smaller than pumpkins used for carving festive jack-o-lanterns. They have dense flesh and high sugar content. The flesh is less stringy and the color is usually darker. If using fresh pie pumpkins in place of a 15-ounce can of pumpkin, use 1 3/4 cups of mashed fresh pumpkin.

Home canning is not recommended for any mashed pumpkin or winter squash. The only directions for canning these is for cubed pieces. Mashed products can be safely frozen.

Learn more from these resources:

<https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF1181.pdf>

<https://nchfp.uga.edu/tips/fall/pumpkins.html>

<https://burke.ces.ncsu.edu/2021/11/pumpkins-for-pumpkin-pie/>

<https://blogs.extension.iastate.edu/answerline/2018/10/04/pick-the-best-pumpkin/>

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Color Changes in Home Canned Foods



Pale diced beets

Photo: K-State Research and Extension

Pink, red, blue or light purple discoloration sometimes occurs in home canned apples, cauliflower, pears, peaches or beets.

Keep all produce cool after harvest. When using the hot pack method, do not overcook or heat to too high a temperatures. Excessive heat changes natural food pigments. Use correct processing methods and time to reduce dis-

coloration. Pressure canning can be used to can pears. But it can cause pink discoloration in canned pears. Water bath processing is a better method.

If the fruit grew in dry weather, it often turns pink and cannot be prevented. While the color doesn't look right, the pears are safe to eat.

Other foods may have color changes. Garlic can become greenish or purple if it is immature or not completely dry before canning. Red beets may lose color if overcooked before canning or over-processed.

Sources: https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_02/pear_halved.html and <https://extension.umn.edu/preserving-and-preparing/food-preservation-and-canning-troubleshooting-guide>

ask
an EXPERT



Karen Blakeslee, M.S.



On the Web at
www.rrc.ksu.edu



Updated Electric Water Bath Canner



Photo: ballmasonjars.com

Looking for an alternative to stovetop water bath canning? Newell Brands, makers of Ball® products, has updated their electric water bath canner. The new version is called the Ball® EasyCanner.

This is a freestanding appliance and can be used for any water bath canned recipes. It is not a pressure canning appliance. It

features some technology to help make water bath canning easier. The user must add time to adjust for elevation.

It holds up to 8 pints or 7 quarts. The rack is a bit bigger than the previous model. This appliance can also be used for cooking a meal, soup, or serving a hot beverage. It features a spigot to drain water or dispense other liquids.

Learn more at ballmasonjars.com website. It is now available from major retailers.