



Preserve It Fresh, Preserve It Safe

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Peas and Asparagus

- 2 tablespoons butter
- ¾ cup green onions, chopped
- ¾ pound green peas, shelled
- ¾ pound asparagus, cut into ¼-inch slices
- ½ cup water

Melt butter over medium heat. Add onions and cook until soft. Add peas, asparagus and water. Cook until tender. Drain. Season with butter.

Source: University of Missouri Extension. Seasonal and simple. n.d. Peas and asparagus. <http://seasonalandsimple.info/recipe/details.aspx?RecipeID=542>



Pass the Peas, Please!

Spring is just around the corner, which means that spring vegetables like fresh peas will soon be available! Peas are a source of vitamins A and C, as well as of vitamin K, potassium, magnesium, folate and fiber. You can eat the shells of both snow and sugar snap peas either raw or cooked. After harvest or purchase, peas should be stored in the refrigerator and used within three to five days. You also may can, freeze or dry peas so you can enjoy the taste of spring year-round.

For all shelled pea preservation methods, select filled pods that contain young, tender, sweet seeds and discard any diseased pods.

Canned peas.

Wash and rinse canning jars, and keep hot until ready to use. Prepare lids according to manufacturer's directions. Shell and wash peas, and add 1 teaspoon of salt per quart to the jar, if you wish. For hot pack, cover the peas with water in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Boil 2 minutes. Fill jars loosely with hot peas and add cooking liquid, leaving 1 inch of headspace. For raw pack, fill jars with raw peas and add boiling water, leaving 1 inch of headspace. Do not shake down or press down peas.

For both raw and hot pack peas, remove air bubbles and adjust the headspace, if necessary. Wipe the rims of the jars with a dampened clean paper towel and apply two-piece metal canning lids. Process in a pressure canner

according to recommendations. Let cool undisturbed for 12–24 hours, and check for seals. Pint or quart jars, whether hot or raw pack, should be processed for 40 minutes at 11 pounds per square inch (psi) (12 psi, if you're at an elevation of 2,000–4,000 feet). If you're using a weighted-gauge pressure canner, you should process jars 40 minutes at 10 psi (or 15 psi, at elevations above 1,000 feet).

Frozen green peas.

Wash and shell peas. Water blanch for 1–1½ minutes; cool and drain. Package, leaving ½ inch of headspace. Seal and freeze.

Frozen edible pea pods.

Select bright green, flat, tender pea pods (sugar, Chinese, snow or sugar snap). Wash, remove stems, blossom ends and any strings. Leave

whole. Note: If peas have started to develop, follow the directions for green beans in "So Easy to Preserve," a book published by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service. If peas are already developed, shell and follow the directions for green peas. Water blanch 2 minutes for small pods, or 3 minutes for large pods. Cool, drain and package, leaving ½ inch of headspace. Seal and freeze.

Source: Andress, Elizabeth, and Judy Harrison. 2006. *So easy to preserve*. 5th ed. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.



Stay Clear of Unsafe Canning Methods

Avoid the following canning methods—all create high risk for improperly processed and sealed foods that are unsafe to consume.

- **Open-kettle canning.** This canning method involves placing and sealing hot packed food and liquid in canning jars with no further heat treatment or processing. It's not recommended for any type of home canning, since the heat it applies does not destroy bacteria. The final product will spoil quickly or cause illness when consumed.
- **Solar canning.** Heat generated by captured sunlight does not reliably process foods, and should never be used to home can any food product.
- **Oven canning.** Placing filled jars in an oven and heating them to 200 degrees F is not a safe canning method for either acid or low-acid foods. It fails to destroy *Clostridium botulinum* spores and can cause the food to become toxic during storage. Also, an oven's intense dry heat may make the canning jars explode and cause serious injury.
- **Microwave canning.** Microwaved food products may reach 212 degrees F, but that's not hot enough to safely process low-acid products like meats and vegetables. The microwave oven also may prompt the canning jars to explode, or catch fire if the metal canning lids deflect the microwaves.
- **Dishwasher canning.** The temperature of dishwasher water during the cleaning and rinsing cycle is far below that which is required to kill harmful microorganisms, so a product canned that way will be underprocessed and unsafe to eat.
- **Multicooker/canner.** This type of appliance DOES NOT meet the appliance standards for home pressure canning, even if it is marketed as safe for pressure canning. This appliance will only hold up to four pint jars, and the National Center for Home Food Preservation's guidelines say a pressure canner must be able to hold four quart jars in order to have the volume necessary to process low-acid foods. The heat-up and cool-down time is much shorter in a smaller appliance (compared to a traditional pressure canner), making the entire processing time in this appliance shorter than required for safe low-acid home canning. Review the National Center for Home Food Preservation's statement on multicooker safety at http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/nchfp/factsheets/electric_cookers.html
- **Pressure cookers.** Pressure cookers have less metal density, are smaller in diameter and use less water than pressure canners, so that their canning heat-up and cool-down times are much shorter than those of standard pressure canners. They fall short of the heat-up and cool-down times used to establish a reasonable margin of safety. See <http://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/nchfp/factsheets/pressurecookers.html> for more information.

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Picking Produce to Preserve

If you are a gardener, you've probably spent time this winter scouring seed catalogs and stores for plants for your garden. Starting with produce that's intended for canning or pickling can improve the quality of the foods you preserve from your garden harvest.

Let's look at cucumbers, a popular vegetable for pickles. Recommended pickling varieties are short and blocky in shape with a firm flesh—such as the Alibi, Bush Pickle, Carolina, Pioneer, Boston Pickling, Francipak and Eureka varieties.

Planning to can salsa? The type of tomato can determine the consistency of your salsa. Roma, Sauce and Paste varieties tomatoes have more flesh and less liquid, and produce a thicker salsa. Suggested varieties include Little Napoli, Plum Crimson, Plum Dandy, Pony Express, Margherita VF, Roma VF and Super Marzano VF.

Catalogs and garden stores typically indicate a variety's best use in the seed description. Find more information at your local extension office or these extension websites:

<http://bit.ly/2t9pwuJ>

<http://bit.ly/2I00Cke> (PDF)

<http://bit.ly/2oJ7Xfm> (PDF)

<http://bit.ly/2teWc66> (PDF)

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