

UC MASTER FOOD PRESERVER PROGRAM SAN DIEGO COUNTY



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
Agriculture and Natural Resources

UC Master Food Preserver Program



WHAT IS A UC MASTER FOOD PRESERVER?

The University of California Master Food Preserver Program extends UC research-based information about home food safety and preservation to the public. The UC Master Food Preserver Program is a public service and outreach program powered by trained and certified volunteers.



UPCOMING EVENTS

9/27: Celebrating Farm Life at
Bates Nut Farm, Valley Center

10/11: Workshop: Apple Pie Filling
Brick and Barn, Valley Center

10/18: Workshop: Apple Pie Filling
County Operations Center, Kerney
Mesa

SEE OUR CALENDAR ON OUR
WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS:
[HTTPS://UCANR.EDU/SITE/MASTER-
FOOD-PRESERVER-PROGRAM-SAN-
DIEGO-COUNTY](https://ucanr.edu/site/master-food-preserver-program-san-diego-county)

WHY USE TESTED RECIPIES?

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The primary mission of the UC Master Food Preserves is food safety. One of the recommendations given for preserving food at home is to use a tested recipe. What is a tested recipe? Why is using one so important?

According to the University of California, home food preservation is the “The process of treating and handling food to slow down or prevent spoilage and foodborne illness, while maintaining its nutritional value, texture, and flavor. It involves techniques like canning, drying, freezing, and fermenting, which help extend the shelf life of perishable foods, reduce food waste, and provide access to a variety of foods year-round.”

Tested recipes have gone under extensive evaluation using scientific standards to determine various food preservation variables such as acidity, water and oxygen content that impact the safety of the food. These tests determine the exact time, temperature and food combinations that will ensure that long term storage, when using the correct preservation methods, will kill bacteria, molds and yeast while retaining quality, tastefulness and shelf life.

FIND MORE TESTED RECIPES
HERE:

[HTTPS://UCANR.EDU/PROGRAM/
UC-MASTER-FOOD-PRESERVER-
PROGRAM/UC-MASTER-FOOD-
PRESERVERS-RECIPES](https://ucanr.edu/program/uc-master-food-preserver-program/uc-master-food-preservers-recipes)

NOT following a tested recipe has consequences. Changing the ingredients, processing time, using a larger jar and size of the food in the jar all affect the heat penetration necessary to eliminate worrisome pathogens.

- Adding additional low acid vegetables changes the acidity of the food. Never change the food or spices added to the product. Reducing vinegar in salsa or pickled products may result in the contents in the jar being low acid. (Vinegar and lemon juice are the high-acid ingredients, making them safe for water bath processing.)

- Density of the food. Starchy foods such as lima beans take longer to process than more porous food like green beans.
- Size and shape of pieces of food in the jar. The processing time for whole versus crushed tomatoes is different due to the size of the pieces being processed.
- Water activity. The amount of water in food varies: Some of the water is attached to food ingredients. Some are free-roaming and susceptible to microbial growth. Water activity describes water available for microbial growth. Tested recipes reduce the water activity thereby making the food safer.
- Rate of heat penetration. Do not add extra starch or thickeners to a recipe. That changes the rate of heat penetration into the product and can result in undercooking. Additionally, thickeners density varies adding risk to ensuring that the heat penetrates throughout the jar.
- Size of the jar. Use the size jar specified in the recipe or smaller. It is okay to use a jar smaller than the one in the recipe but not larger.

If you have a family recipe that is untested, be aware that the safety of that recipe cannot be assured. The recommended solution is to find a similar tested recipe, from a reliable source that scientifically tests their recipes. These would be:

- Universities with Master Food Preserver programs. Call or email their hotline for advice.
- Links that end in “.edu”.
- Publications such as
 - National Center for Home Food Preservation
 - USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning 2015 edition
 - So Easy to Preserve, 6th edition, 2014
 - Pectin manufactures
 - Ball Blue Book, 2014, 2020, 2024
 - Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving 2012, & 2020 editions

If it the family recipe is a pickling recipe, find a similar one and then use the spice mix used in the family recipe.

As Sgt. Phil Esterhaus said in the TV show Hill Street Blues, “Let’s be careful out there”. Practicing safe food preservation will help keep you and those close to you safe.



**IF YOU HAVE
QUESTIONS ABOUT
PRESERVING FOOD,
ASK US! EMAIL US AT
MFPSD@UCANR.EDU**