

Receiving Food Gifts

Unless you know how the food was processed and current USDA processing times were followed exactly, do not eat the food! This is a touchy situation, but more than one case of botulism poisoning has come from home canned foods received as gifts.

Myth: A sealed jar is a safe jar.

Fact: A sealed jar is only safe if it was prepared using a safe recipe and processed correctly. There are bacteria that grow in sealed jars. A sealed jar is not necessarily a safe jar!

Myth: I know the person who canned the food and they're very safety conscious.

Fact: If the canning instructions are out of date or an untested recipe was used, the product is not safe. It doesn't matter how careful the canner is when the guidelines are faulty.

Myth: The person canning has made this product for several years. It must be safe.

Fact: Bacteria that cause illness are not present in every situation. Using an unsafe recipe is like playing Russian Roulette. It's a matter of time before something happens to your food product.

**Be safe - not sorry!
When in Doubt-
Throw it Out!**

Selling of Home Canned Food Products

Any canned food product that is intended to be sold - either retail or wholesale - must be licensed by the county health department or Washington State Department of Agriculture.

Selling includes anything from gift bazaars to grocery store sales. **It is illegal to sell home canned foods in the state of Washington without a license.**

For information on licensing, contact your local county health department or the Washington State Department of Agriculture.



Master Food Preserver volunteers are available for free information on the most current processing times.

Get into the habit of calling each year before you can to double-check your processing information. Lots of things change over time and canning is one of those things!

**Call: 509-735-3551 or toll free
(866) 986-4865**

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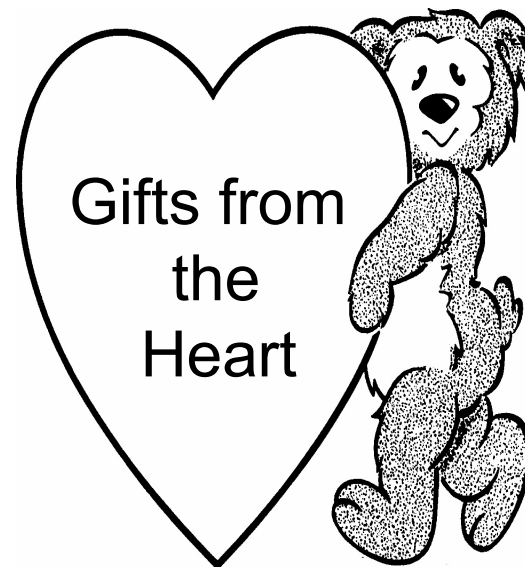
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WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



BENTON COUNTY EXTENSION



**Be Sure They're
Safe**

**A Guide to Giving and
Receiving Home Canned
Foods as Gifts**

Extension programs and employment are available to all without discrimination. Evidence of non-compliance may be reported through your local Extension office.

Giving the Gift of Home Canned Food

Foods preserved at home can make wonderful gifts for family and friends. However, home-canned foods can present problems if not done correctly. When giving gifts of food, be sure they're safe. Nothing would be worse than giving a gift to someone that causes illness, disability or death.

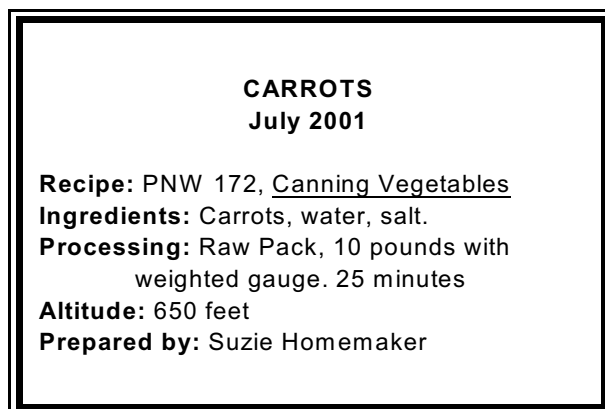
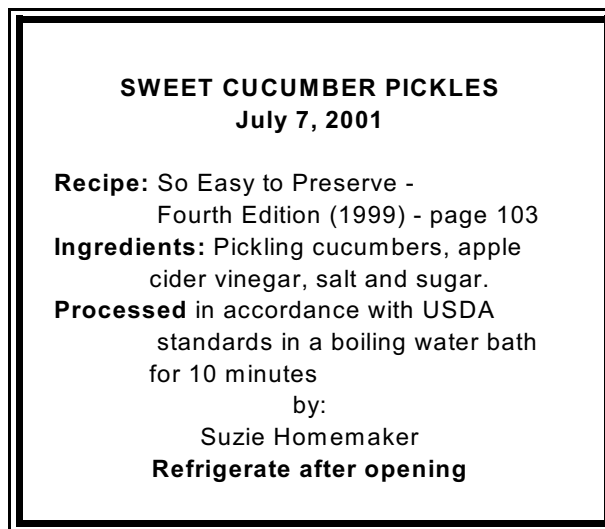


Giving Food Gifts

Following an updated recipe to prepare your foods will assure your product is safe. Reliable canning instructions can be found in recently published materials by the Cooperative Extension Service, the United States Department of Agriculture, or major manufacturers of home canning equipment. Avoid following the canning advice of untrained celebrities, old cookbooks, gardening and "back to nature" publications and out-of-date home canning guides. It is a safe idea to update your canning references every 3-5 years. Old publications, even from a reliable source, can produce an unsafe product.

Labeling Foods

A complete canning label provides the information to assure the recipient of your gift that the food was processed correctly and is safe to eat. Labels should include the recipe source, list of ingredients, and processing information (including altitude) and date.



Checklist To Determine if Home Canned Foods Are Safe to Eat

- ♥ The produce was in good condition.
- ♥ Up-to-date canning instructions from a reliable source were followed exactly.
- ♥ Fruits, pickles and pickle products, sauerkraut, jam and jelly products were processed in a boiling water bath canner or pressure canner. A steam canner was not used.
- ♥ Vegetables, meat, fish, and poultry were processed in a pressure canner. The dial gauge was tested for accuracy this year and the canner was vented for 10 minutes before processing. A steam canner or water bath canner was not used.
- ♥ There are no obvious signs of spoilage such as cloudy liquid, off color, mold growth or bulging lid.
- ♥ The jar is sealed and lid cannot be pulled off with fingertips.

Never taste or use canned food that shows any sign of spoilage!

