# Chapter Summary – The Home Preserving Bible

**The Home Preserving Bible** by Carole Cancler, New York: Alpha Books, 2012, Paperback, 464 pages, ISBN-13: 978-1615641925 is available nationwide beginning September 4, 21012 from booksellers and canning supply retailers with a suggested retail price of $21.

# Part 1 – Essential Concepts

Part 1 explains the essential steps and available equipment for eight different methods of food preservation. Some methods have many more than one technique or procedure, from the do-it-yourself approach to the latest modern gadget.

## Chapter 1 - Overview of Food Preservation (10 pages)

The introductory chapter provides lessons about how food spoils, safe food-handling practices, and how to avoid food poisoning. The eight fundamental methods of food preservation are described briefly. The methods are: drying, fermenting, pickling, curing, sealing, canning, cellaring, and freezing. The remaining chapters in Part 1 describe each of these methods in detail. Most of the methods have more than one technique, often they range from the do-it-yourself approach to the use of modern tools and appliances.

## Chapter 2 - Drying Foods (16 pages)

The drying chapter describes the technique for six different methods to dry foods of all kinds, and how to properly package and store dried foods to maximize storage life. The six drying methods include warm shade or air, sun, solar, conventional ovens (gas or electric), food dehydrators, and pit-ovens. A comparison chart helps the reader decide which method to use, based on climate and other conditions. In addition, pretreatments and handling for different types of foods are thoroughly discussed, including methods to prevent browning in fruits and vegetables, special techniques for fruits with thick skins, inactivating spoilage enzymes, inhibiting harmful bacteria, and considerations when drying meats.

## Chapter 3 -Fermenting Foods (20 pages)

The fermenting methods chapter discusses four types of food fermentation, lists common foods for each type, and how to successfully control the fermentation process. The four types are: alcohol fermentation (used for cider, wine, beer, and breads), acetic fermentation (for vinegar), lactic fermentation (for dairy products, breads, and vegetables, including brined pickles and salted sauerkraut), and alkaline fermentation (for vanilla beans and other foods). In this chapter, vegetables are treated with low concentration of salt to allow natural fermentation to take place.

## Chapter 4 - Pickling Foods (12 pages)

The pickling chapter discusses several methods for making non-fermented foods using acid, salt, or alcohol. Pickling can extend the shelf life of fresh food from a few days to several months, depending on the specific method used. The most common acids used in pickling are vinegar and lemon juice, however many other types of acids are effective pickling agents, including citrus juices, pomegranate juice, tamarind liquid, verjuice (underripe grape juice), whey (drained from yogurt), soy sauce, and miso (a fermented soybean product). Contrary to salt-fermented foods in the previous chapter, which use a low salt concentration, salt-pickled foods use a very high amount of salt.

## Chapter 5 - Curing Meat and Fish (20 pages)

The curing chapter provides an overview of meat and fish curing methods used the world over. The methods include drying with acid or salt, using modern cures that contain quick-curing sodium nitrites, and slow-curing sodium nitrates. Cures may be applied wet or dry. A brief discussion of supplemental curing techniques describes aging (a drying technique), fermenting, and smoking which are used to extend the shelf life and/or enhance the flavor of cured meats and fish.

## Chapter 6 - Sealing Foods (8 pages)

The sealing methods chapter discusses primarily the age-old method of fat sealing and the modern technique of vacuum sealing. However, there is also a brief discussion on other techniques, including wax, paraffin, and pastry sealing, as well as preserving foods by immersing in oil or burying it in the ground.

## Chapter 7 - Canning Foods (44 pages)

The largest chapter, canning includes a complete tutorial on processing food in specially designed jars. Every aspect of the canning process is detailed and includes safety measures, planning a project, equipment, ingredients, choosing tested recipes, and when to use the boiling water bath (BWB) canning process versus pressure canning. Step-by-step instructions for each of these processes are included.

## Chapter 8 - Cellaring Foods (14 pages)

The cellaring methods chapter discusses climate-controlled storage of food in cold, humid conditions without the use of a refrigerator. The techniques include traditional farmhouse root cellars, solving the problems of modern basement cold rooms, makeshift cellars and buried containers, foods suited for the dry pantry, and techniques for the gardener such as mulching, trenches, pits, cold frames, and hotbeds.

## Chapter 9 - Freezing Foods (16 pages)

The freezing methods chapter includes a primer on preparing, packaging, and storing frozen food, with notes for special handling of fruits, vegetables, meats, and seafood. Included are guidelines for efficiently managing the use of frozen food, dealing with a power outage, and cleaning the appliance.

# Part 2 - Recipes

Each recipe in Part 2 was chosen to demonstrate one or more of the methods and techniques that are explained in Part 1. Many of the recipes include one or more variations in order to showcase the variety of preserved foods used around the world.

## Chapter 10 - Dried Foods (22 pages, 50 total recipes including variations)

The recipes for dried foods include dried fruits, vegetables, herbs, meats, fish, nuts, and seeds.

## Chapter 11 - Fermented Foods (24 pages, 29 recipes)

The recipes for fermented foods include cider, wine, vinegar, yeast starters and flatbreads, fresh cheese, yogurt, cream cheese, and lacto-fermented vegetable pickles using salt, brine, and whey.

## Chapter 12 - Pickled Foods (24 pages, 35 recipes)

The recipes for pickled foods include salted vegetables and eggs; vinegared vegetables, poultry, and fish; and foods pickled or macerated in other acids, including fruit juices, soy sauce, and alcohol.

## Chapter 13 - Cured Meat and Fish (12 pages, 14 recipes)

The recipes for cured meat and fish include dry-cured and wet-cured meat, poultry, and seafood.

## Chapter 14 - Sealed Foods (6 pages, 7 recipes)

The recipes for sealed foods focus on traditional methods for fat-sealing and include rillettes, confit, potted salmon, and pemmican—a native American food.

## Chapter 15 - Canned Fruits (30 pages, 43 recipes)

The recipes for canned fruits include preserving methods for fruits, whether whole, halves, slices, purées, sauces, syrups, or juice. The sauces section includes pie filling, ice cream sauces, and cranberry sauce.

## Chapter 16 - Canned Tomatoes (32 pages, 42 recipes)

The recipes for canned tomatoes include instructions for whole, cut, crushed, puréed, sauced, and juiced tomatoes. The sauces section includes Italian0style pizza and pasta sauces, American and Mexican barbecue sauces, ketchups, and salsas.

## Chapter 17 - Canned Pickled Vegetables (16 pages, 16 recipes)

The recipes for canned pickles include traditional dill and bread-and-butter cucumber pickles, plus recipes for many other favorite vegetables pickles in a range of styles, including sweet, savory, spiced, and hot flavors.

## Chapter 18 - Canned Savory Sauces, Relishes, and Chutneys (14 pages, 17 recipes)

The recipes for canned savory sauce include everything-but-tomatoes in chunky, thick and thin, pickled and spiced preparations that are traditionally served with savory foods.

## Chapter 19 - Canned Jam and Other Sweet Sauces (28 pages, 42 recipes)

The recipes for canned jam and sweet sauces include many old-fashioned spreads prepared without commercial pectin, including a section on making homemade pectin from apples or citrus. A few more recipes provide examples using powered and liquid pectin, as well as low and no sugar jams and jellies.

## Chapter 20 - Canned Low-Acid Foods (32 pages, 28 recipes)

The recipes for low acid foods include pressure canning meats, poultry, seafood, and vegetables, plus mixtures of these foods as soups and sauces.

## Appendix A - Glossary (8 pages, 94 definitions)

The glossary defines many common terms used in home food preservation, such as *Acetobacter*, anaerobic, citric acid, food-borne illness, GRAS, *Leuconostoc*, nitrites (NO2), pickling salt, relative humidity (RH), tallow, wort, and many more.

## Appendix B – Produce Guides (10 pages)

The produce guides include handy charts that define fruits and vegetables by type, estimates their yields, and recommends preservation methods.

## Appendix C - Resources (4 pages)

The resource list includes books, journals, and websites where readers can learn more about some methods of preserving foods or where to buy supplies and equipment.