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**6 essential concepts you need to know to get started with canning food**

Seattle, WA – August 15, 2012 – Canning is a relatively new form of food preservation that many people are afraid to try because it seems complex and overwhelming. However, the basic process involves just a few essential concepts. The fundamentals of canning have not changed since Frenchman Nicolas Appert invented the process in the early 1800s. Once you learn how, canning is a great way to turn fresh food into shelf-stable products that are safe for storage at room temperature.

“People have the most trouble with canning when they don’t understand why a step is necessary.” says author and chef, Carole Cancler “Sometimes inadvertently, they take shortcuts. There are only a few essential concepts that you need to understand and practice in order to can foods successfully. It’s about the same skill level as baking a pie or cake from scratch.”

In addition to her experience as a professional in the food industry, Chef Carole has decades of practice in home canning and preserving, which she shares in preserving classes in Seattle, and in her new book, **The Home Preserving Bible**.

Here are six essential concepts that can get anyone started with the canning method of food preservation:

1. **Use tempered, threaded glass canning jars.** Don’t be tempted to re-use jars from commercially prepared products such as peanut butter or mayonnaise for canning because they are not tempered, can easily crack during processing, and are not designed to accept the two-piece canning lid. Likewise, old jar designs with zinc lids or wire bails, while attractive for food storage, have increased seal failure rates when used for canning. Whether you purchase new jars or scour garage sales for used jars, make sure they are made from tempered glass, have a threaded top that accepts the two-piece closures, and contain no nicks or cracks.
2. **Purchase new flat metal lids for each use.** To ensure a successful, tight, safe, jar seal, you must use new, flat lids every time, which average about $3 per dozen. However, you can reuse the screw bands year after year, provided they are not bent or rusted and still screw easily onto the canning jar. Since you may remove the screw bands after jars have cooled, most people need only 1 or 2 dozen screw bands.
3. **Can only foods that are high in acid.** Because *C. botulinum* do not become active in high-acid environments, canning only high acid foods eliminates the primary concern about botulism poisoning that may be cause by this bacteria. High acid foods include most fruits, fruit products, and acidified vegetables such as tomatoes, quick-process pickles, and relishes.
4. **Prepare the food according to a tested recipe.** Use tested canning recipes published after 2009. Findtested canning recipes online on theNational Center for Home Food Preservation website at nchfp.uga.edu, a federally funded source for current recommendations for most methods of home food preservation. You will find canning recipes from extension agencies across the country, along with free publications such as the downloadable booklet, the *USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning*. Canning recipe books written after 2009 that are based on the latest research and guidelines, such as **The Home Preserving Bible,** are also good sources for tested recipes.
5. **Process canned foods correctly.** A tested recipe gives you the necessary details for processing the food correctly. These details include the type of pack (raw vs. hot), jar size, headspace, and processing time. You must follow these procedures according to each recipe; they are not interchangeable from one recipe to another, even if the products seem similar.
6. **Follow all procedures accurately.** The few recent food botulism cases in home canned foods were caused by improperly home canned low acid foods such as vegetables and fish, and canned tomato sauces using untested recipes. Never use untested recipes or take any shortcuts that may increase the rate of seal failure or create unsafe canned foods.

**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. This practical guide details the techniques for ten essential methods for preserving foods. With over 300 recipes, it is one of the most comprehensive books about food preservation among popular canning and preserving books of today. For each preserving method, Chef Carole provides the latest information on procedures, equipment, and safety issues, giving the reader a range of preservation options, whether she likes the do-it-yourself approach or is interested in the latest in modern technology.

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