

# Meat Canning



Brought to you by  
The Huntington WV TEA Party

## Testimony

Almost a year ago, I told a friend that one of the biggest hang ups I had in my food storage was protein. She, being in an advanced state of preparedness herself, said it was an issue for her, too. Fortunately, she knew just who could help us. A little over a week later we were canning chicken like pros! I'm so grateful to her and her friend for passing this wonderful skill onto me and this is why I'm passing it along to you.

I admit I was scared to eat it at first! What would it taste like? Would we get sick? I also had concerns about the cost effectiveness of the whole adventure. After all, if it was cheaper to buy cans of chicken at the store,,, why go through all this?

I'm happy to report that it tastes wonderful and no one died! Best of all, the more I do it, the better I get at it which makes it not only economically advantageous but requires less and less effort from me.

I can't really say what prompted our family to start concentrating in earnest on our food storage. It was probably quite a few things. Food prices were rising at

the store, the economy was beginning to go south, and we've always had a desire to be self sufficient. I don't even have to mention the divine nudge we kept feeling!

Recently we learned first hand how valuable food storage can be. My husband discovered that he had cancer and we were facing him being out of work for an extended amount of time. Having a high quality, well stocked pantry meant we didn't have to go food shopping. This more than made up for the reduction in pay that came with short term disability. We lived quite comfortably and could concentrate on him getting better.

*"Being prepared means never having to beg or borrow to feed your family"*

## Supplies

- Pressure canner
- Wide mouth jars
- Rings and NEW seals
- Meat (pork, chicken, beef, etc)
- Salt
- Water
- Rubber spatula
- Canning tongs
- Canning magnet
- Clean cloths and a towel
- Sharp knife
- Cutting board
- Stock pot

*Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime*

*~Chinese Proverb*

## Before you Begin

- Make sure your work area is clean and sanitized to the best of your ability.

The less bacteria that enters your canned goods the higher quality and safer your product will be. Please don't stress over this TOO much. You have to remember that we're cooking this meat at high pressure for up to 90 minutes and that kills the bacteria but clean is GOOD!

- Make sure you have all your tools and supplies handy, clean and ready to use.

This goes without saying. You don't want to be hunting for the salt with raw chicken on your hands! You also don't want to be missing something during a time sensitive part of the process.

- Check your Canner.

It is imperative to give your pressure canner a "preflight" check before each use.

- Check the seal- Make sure there is no dry rot or cracking. The seal should be flexible and fit into the lid easily without buckling.
- Check the gauge if you have one. Make sure it's firmly in place.
- Make sure the petcock is free of deposits.
- Make sure the pressure release valve moves easily.
- Make sure your canner is clean.

## Jars, Rings and Seals

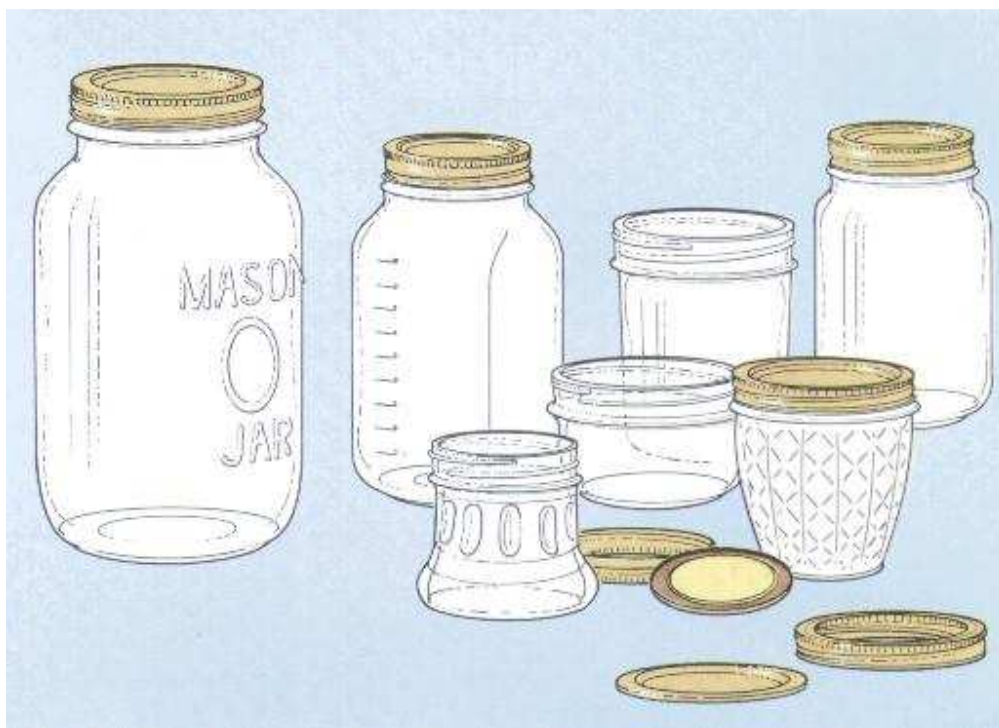
Use only jars approved for canning. As you inevitably talk to people about their canning, you will hear legends of people re-using mayo and pickle jars. PLEASE DO NOT do this. They don't make jars (an many other things) like they used to!

The most commonly seen brands are Kerr, Mason, and Golden Harvest. When you buy new jars, they usually come with rings and seals. You should also

purchase extra seals for later use or in the event that a seal fails.

When canning meat, **ONLY USE WIDE MOUTH JARS**. It doesn't affect the meat but it does influence your ability to get the meat out of the jar. Wide mouth jars are also easier to clean. Canned meat can sometimes leave a stubborn film on the inside of the jar. I use wide mouth jars for just about everything.

\*Boil jars and allow them to remain in hot water until ready to use.



**Rings-** The reason that the ring and the seal are separate on a canning jar is two fold.

The first reason is function. Certain canning techniques require different degrees of tightness. I found this out the hard way! The rings are also temporary. After your canned goods have cooled and you are sure they've sealed, you can remove the ring and store it separately to use again. So the second reason is purely economical. You can use the rings over and over as long as they are not warped and they are rust free.

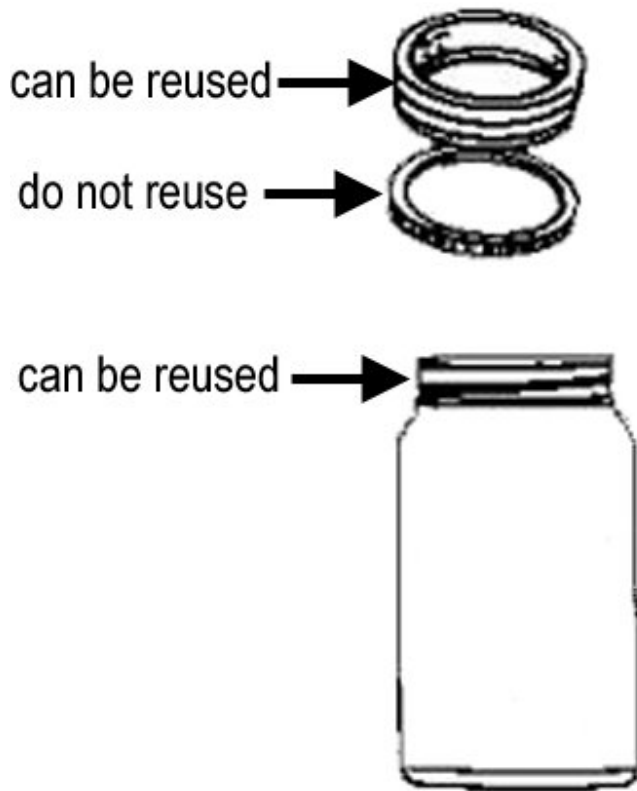
**Seals-** Some folks call them "seals" and some call it the "lid". Either way, it's the little disk that goes under the ring and the key to a good canned product.

Remember to buy extra seals for the size jar you use most. Seals are a great part of your preparedness and food storage! If lots of people start canning, they could become hard to find.

**NEVER RE-USE SEALS**

**DO NOT BOIL SEALS**

**DO WASH SEALS IN HOT SOAPY WATER**



Some people keep their seals warm in a crock-pot of hot water while they wait to use them. I toss mine in the hot water that I used to boil my jars in after it has cooled somewhat.

### *Let's Talk Meat!*

You can “can” just about anything. Fish, turkey, sausage, hamburger, venison, chicken (even WITH the bone!) and pork.

I can whatever is on sale cheap. This usually means chicken breast or pork tenderloin. I've also done sausage

patties. Hamburger can be done but I don't care for the flavor. Maybe I just haven't found the magic recipe!

Canning meat requires high pressure and a long processing time because it is considered a low acid food. It's not really any more difficult, just more time consuming. A good supply of protein in your food storage will enable you to make quick casseroles, stews, soups, and much more!

Raw pack vs. Hot pack

Raw pack or cold pack means that you put the food in the jar raw or cold. This method is good for seafood and tender meats like chicken. Hot pack means that you brown it or cook it first. Hot pack is good for beef cubes, hamburger or sausage.

Processing time

Processing time depends on the size of your jars.

**DO NOT MIX JAR SIZES IN YOUR CANNER.**

Meat in ½ pints require 45 minutes of processing time at 10lbs of pressure.

Meat in pint jars require 75 minutes of processing time at 10lbs of pressure.

Meat in quart jars require 90 minutes of processing time at 10lbs of pressure.

\*\*Some seafood requires 100 minutes of processing time for ½ pints and pints. Please check USDA guidelines or your Ball Blue Book.

\*\* You must follow these time and pressure guidelines regardless of your packing method.

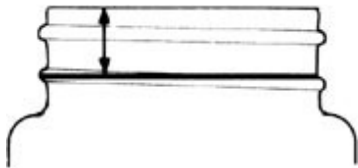
Ok! We're ready to get down to business! I know it seems like a lot of information but trust me, after you've done it a few times, you'll be a pro and all of this will seem unnecessary to you!

Once you have all of your meat prepared like you want it, browned for hot pack or cut up for cold pack, lay down a towel on your counter and carefully remove a hot jar from your water with your canning tongs, draining the water. **Be careful to not let the hot water run down your arm!**

Pack meat into the jars so there is a 1 inch headspace. Add a little bit of water to fill in the air space. Use a wooden spoon or rubber spatula to “burp” the jar of air by sliding it down the sides and pressing gently.

NEVER use a metal utensil. When you’re packing cold meat in a hot jar it can crack if you tap it the wrong way with metal!

Use the threads on the jar to judge the 1 inch headspace mark.



Add a little more water if you need to.

Add one tsp of salt to each jar.

Wipe the rims of the jars with a clean soft cloth. This step is crucial to a good seal!

Assemble the two piece lids and tighten them medium tight. It was explained to me as “screw it down, then add one more little twist”

Fill your canner with 2-3 inches of water and bring to a simmer.

Place jars inside your pressure canner being careful not to hit the jars together as much as possible.

When all the jars are in the canner, look at the water level. About half way up the jar is about right.

Lock the lid down on the canner.

Watch the vent pipe. When steam has escaped evenly and consistently for 10 minutes, place the weight over the vent pipe.

Now you will watch the gauge and adjust the heat on your canner until it remains at the recommended poundage. i.e. if the gauge falls, turn the heat up a bit, if it gets too high,, turn it down a bit.

When your canner has reached the recommended poundage, you may begin to time the processing.

75 minutes for pints

90 minutes for quarts

When the processing time is up, turn off the heat on your stove.

Wait until the gauge has returned to zero before you  
**EVEN CONSIDER TOUCHING IT!**

Ok- sidenote.

Everyone's heard of people who've had a pressure canner explode on them. It DOES happen and it's very dangerous but it CAN be prevented with an ounce of care and precaution.

- Make sure your canner is in good working order
- Make sure your pressure stays within the safety range.
- Allow it to cool completely before you bother it.
- Never ever ever open it or move it while it's pressurized.

Ok- that's out of the way. Let us proceed without fear.

After the gauge returns to zero, tap the weight on the vent pipe. If it "hisses", give it some more time to cool. If you hear nothing, remove it and give it another 5 minutes or so.

Now you may carefully unlock the lid and remove it towards you so as not to burn yourself from any escaping steam.

You will see and smell that some of the broth created from cooking the chicken in the jars has escaped. This is perfectly normal. It escapes with the steam during the cooking process. The depressurizing process is what pulls the seal down onto the jar rim.



When you remove your jars with your canning tongs, be sure to set them down on a towel in a place where they can cool preferably over night.

If you listen, over the next hour you will hear the delightful “pings” of a successful afternoon of canning! The ping come from the cooling jar pulling down on the center button of the lid.

After your jars have cooled completely, wipe them down with a hot, damp cloth. Remember, chicken broth escaped during processing and if you don't clean your jars you'll find that they'll be greasy and sticky when you find them next. You may also remove the rings now if you choose.

Now you can mark the tops of the jars with the date that you canned it. I use a sharpie or a permanent marker. Grease pencils are nice but they can wear off over time.

Store your canned meat in a place in your house that is not prone to drastic temperature changes. For instance.. your unfinished attic is a BAD place. Your pantry or cellar is fine.

When serving home canned meat, the USDA recommends that it is heated thoroughly for 15-20m. I've never found this to be necessary but you should always err on the side of caution. Most dishes more than adequately accomplish this goal.

## Crystal's Quicker Chicken and Dumplings

- 4 cups of broth (canned or frozen from chicken canning day!)
  - ½ up celery (dehydrated works fine if you're in a food storage situation)
  - ½ cup carrots (fresh or dehydrated)
  - 1 or 2 bay leaves
  - 1 tsp dried parsley
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### Dumplings

- ¾ cup all purpose flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1 egg lightly beaten
- 1 tbsp veg oil

OR

- 2 cups baking mix (such as bisquick)
- 2/3 cups of milk
- ¼ tsp thyme
- ½ tsp parsley

Last but not least, 1 quart jar of canned chicken.

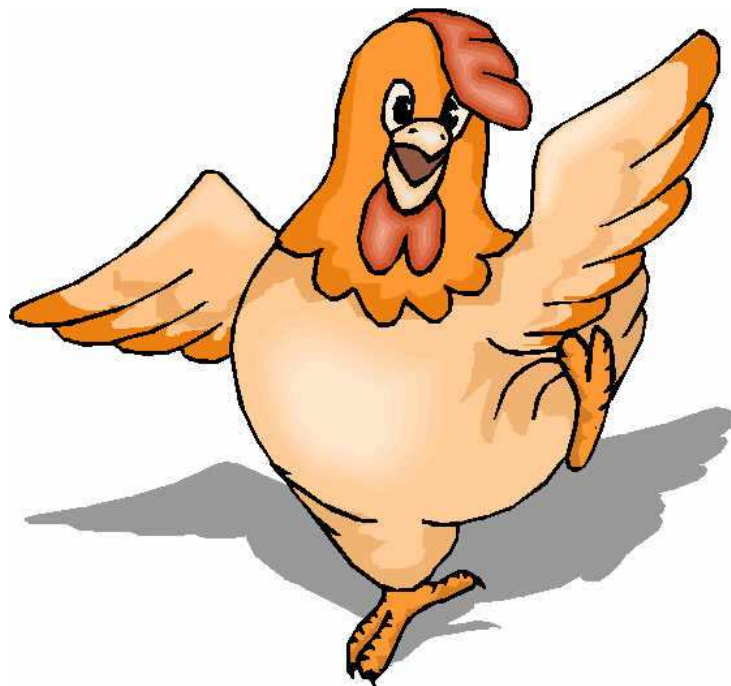
In 5 qt. dutch oven combine broth, celery, carrots, bay leaf and parsley. Bring to a boil. Add chicken.

Combine ingredients for dumplings and drop by spoonfuls into boiling broth.

Cook 10 minutes uncovered

Cook 10 minutes covered.

Enjoy!



# Notes