

Preserving food by:

CANNING



FOOD POLICY  
COUNCIL  
of Buffalo & Erie County

**This online booklet was adapted from a series of social media posts that the Food Policy Council of Buffalo and Erie County launched in the summer of 2023.**



## **Resources**

[United States Department of Agriculture: Complete Guide to Home Canning](#)

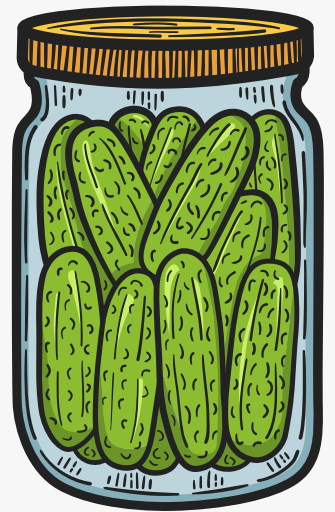
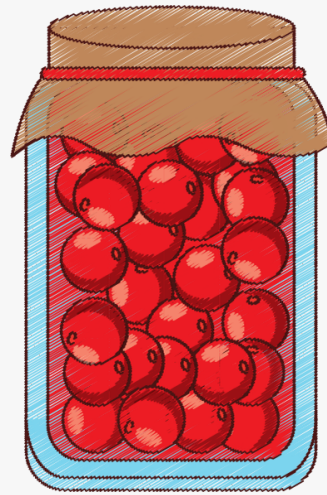
[Cornell Cooperative Extension: Food Preservation](#)

[National Center for Home Food Preservation](#)

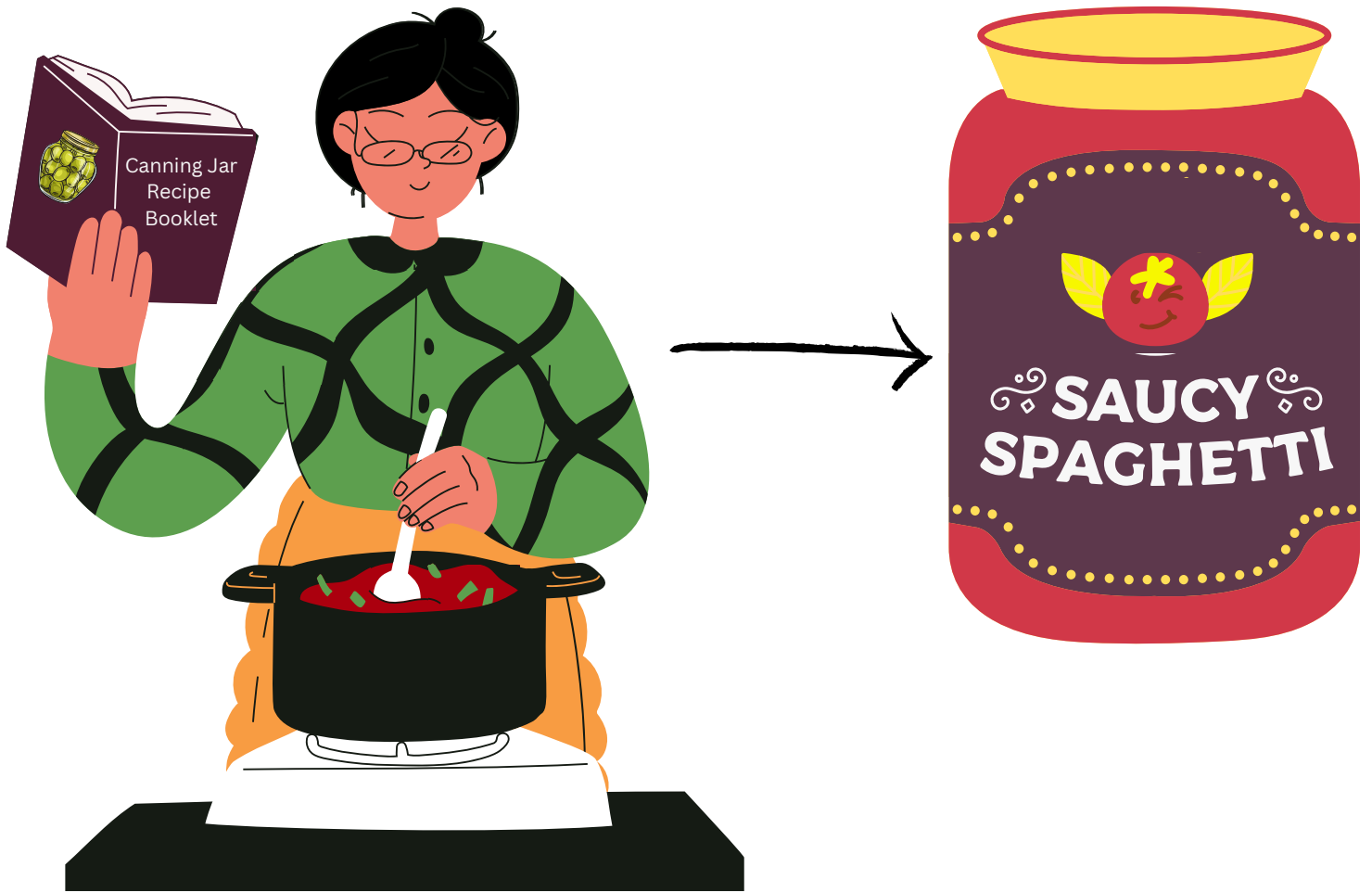
[National Center for Home Food Preservation: Canning](#)

[National Center for Home Food Preservation: Make Jams and Jellies](#)

Click on text that is red and underlined to be taken to a separate webpage.



One way to save the fruits and vegetables that you buy or grow is to preserve them at home. This means turning them into something like jam, jelly, pickles, or tomato/spaghetti sauce. Some companies sell specialized supplies. However, there are also options that are less expensive, such as the boiling water bath method. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Erie County are great resources where you can learn more about the process and keeping your food safe.



If you are new to canning, you might wonder if it is hard or difficult. The answer is no. However, it is important to follow a recipe. These recipes can come from places such as the USDA, the National Center for Home Food Preservation, and CCE Erie County. Recipes must include the ingredients, how to prepare the ingredients, and processing times for acidic and properly acidified foods.



You may have heard or read about adding pectin to jams and jellies. But are you wondering why pectin is important in these foods? Pectin is a natural thickener and is found in many fruits. Most modern jam or jelly recipes include pectin to help the jam or jelly "set" with the right texture. This means less added sugar for the same amount of jam or jelly.

Ping! [sound]



Should look slightly concave, or dip down



Another popular phrase you will hear or read about is "jars sealing." This is simply the popping noise that you may hear after you take your newly canned food out of the canner or boiling water. It may sound like a "ping." This noise is the jar creating a vacuum seal. If you do not hear the sound, look at the top of your canning jar. When the jar is sealed, the lid looks concave, meaning it dips down in the center. This seal preserves your food until you are ready to eat it. You can also find out if the jar is sealed by using one of the three methods described by the [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#).



Shopping at outdoor market stands



Harvesting tomatoes



Family picking apples



Produce aisle at the store with tomatoes, peppers, pears and oranges

Fresh fruit or vegetables that you either picked or purchased at the store or market are the best candidates for canning. Before you can, make sure to check each piece for bruises or rotting spots. Previously frozen food is not the best choice for pickles or jam.