



**Ontario Home Economics Association**

# **C O M M U N I Q U É**

*Ask A Professional Home Economist*

**For Immediate Release**

## **Cool Tips for Easy Preserving**

When most of us think of preserving, visions of a steamy kitchen come to mind where endless jars were processed to last through the long winter months. Today, few people have the desire to follow that path. But what many families desire is a few jars of a tasty spread or condiment which can be made in short order, taking advantage of fresh fruits and vegetables as they become available.

Professional Home Economist and cookbook author Ellie Topp, of Ottawa, offers some helpful hints for successful preserving of your favourite fruits and vegetables. With market gardens brimming with colourful tomatoes, peppers and juicy peaches and plums, summer is the ideal time to transform them into jams, salsas and chutneys for adding wonderful flavour and interest to meals. Look for recipes that make small batches for fast preparation. And make several different ones to give variety to your meals.

- Choose the freshest ingredients. Many fruits are fully ripe when you purchase them. But if not, allow a few days for them to develop their best flavour. Misshapen fruit is fine to use, but avoid any that is bruised or mouldy.
- Use a reliable recipe and measure amounts exactly using only the ingredients specified. Altering either the kind of ingredients or the amounts can change the acidity which is critical for making a safe product.

- Time both the cooking times and processing times carefully. Overcooking can result in a very soft product and undercooking may make a product that will not store safely. Time processing precisely, beginning when the water has returned to a boil.
- To achieve the desired gel formation for jams and jellies, include some slightly under-ripe fruit to ensure there will be enough pectin to give a set. Cook jams rapidly and never make a double batch at one time. The longer cooking time required for large batches may allow breakdown of the pectin.
- Use new metal sealing discs and apply the screw band just until it is finger tip tight. Tightening it too much will prevent the air in the jar from ‘venting’ during processing’ and result in a failed seal.
- Once the jars are removed from the canner, do not disturb them. When they are cool and the seal has formed, remove the metal band and allow to dry. Then either replace loosely on the jar or store separately. Never invert the jars.
- Label jar with contents and date. It is surprising how easy it is to forget what is inside and when it was made.

Putting that tantalizing sauce in a jar and processing it will preserve it on your shelf to be ready at a moment’s notice for adding interest and spice to your meals. But if you will use it within three to four weeks, there is no need to process it. Simply store it in a covered container in the fridge. The advantage of small batches means you can have variety with several jars to choose from. **Happy preserving!**

- 30 -

*EllieTopp, P.H.Ec., is the co-author of several cookbooks including "Put a Lid on It", "More Put a Lid on It" and the latest release "The Complete Book of Year-Round Small-Batch Preserving" by Ellie Topp and Margaret Howard, Firefly Books, 2001.*

*The Ontario Home Economics Association, a self-regulated body of Professional Home Economists, promotes high professional standards among its members so that they may assist families and individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life.*

For more information, please contact:

**Ontario Home Economics Association:  
Box 45, R.R. #5, Dundalk, ON N0C 1B0  
Tel/Fax: (519) 925-9684  
Website: [www.ohea.on.ca](http://www.ohea.on.ca)**