

The Country Cook

Tried and tested recipes will be welcome for this column. Recipes will be published, on request, for any dish. Address all correspondence "The Country Cook, Grain Growers' Guide, Winnipeg."

CANNING AND PRESERVING

The first thing necessary in canning or preserving is to prepare the bottles. Wash well with soapuds, put on in cold water and bring to a boil, put a rubber on each jar and see that the cover fits. Be sure that jars, rubbers and covers are sterilized and hot.

The terms preserving and canning fruit are often confused. Preserving fruit is cooking it with three-fourths to its whole weight in sugar. By this method much of the flavor of the fruit is destroyed, and the mixture is exceedingly rich.

Canning is preserving sterilized fruit in sterilized glass jars, with or without sugar. The sugar being necessary only for sweetness. The canned fruit is soft and juicy, and more easily digested than fruit cooked in a large amount of sugar.

One recipe will answer for preserving all kinds of fruits: Prepare the fruit, weigh, and to each pound allow one pound of sugar. Add sufficient water to the sugar to dissolve it. Put the fruit in and cook until tender. Seal in hot sterilized jars.

Preserved Raw Strawberries

Someone has said: "Doubtless the Lord could have made a better berry than the strawberry, but doubtless the Lord never did." The cultivated ones are delicious, but the wild ones are the best yet.

Strawberries preserved without cooking are particularly delicious, and make excellent strawberry shortcakes. Have the fruit perfectly fresh, put in a wire basket and wash in cold water, weigh and put in an earthen or enamel dish, crush with a silver fork, add a pound of sugar for every pound of fruit. Let this stand until the sugar is dissolved, stirring often, put in sterilized bottles and seal.

Sun Preserved Strawberries

Mrs. Rorer gives the following recipe for strawberries preserved in the sun. Put strawberries in a wire basket, plunge in cold water and drain well. Weigh fruit and to each pound add one pound of sugar. Select large stoneware or enamel plates, make them very hot either in the oven or on top of the stove, sprinkle a layer of sugar, then one of fruit. Cover with glass and stand in the sun's hottest rays. Move the dish as the sun changes its position. At four o'clock bring them in and set aside in a cool place. Next day put them again in the sun. By this time they will have become clear and thoroughly soft, but whole. Lift each berry carefully into a bottle. Boil the syrup until it thickens, strain, cool and pour over fruit and seal. This recipe will answer for raspberries.

Canning in Hot Bath

Fruits and vegetables are canned by many different methods. Fruit cooked in a hot water bath, fruit cooked in the oven or in a fireless cooker. Have the jars sterilized, the fruit fresh and clean.

To cook in a hot water bath: Prepare the syrup, usually half a pound of sugar to a pound of fruit. Pack the fruit in the jars, cover with syrup and put covers on loosely. Place on a rack in the boiler, add warm water to come four inches above the rack. Cover and cook ten minutes or more, according to fruit. Remove cover and let steam escape from boiler. Remove one jar at a time, fill to overflowing with syrup and seal. Set aside to cool—out of a draught. Screw the tops on tight as they cool and contract.

To Cook in Oven

Cover the bottom of the oven with a sheet of asbestos, or a pan with two inches of water. Prepare the fruit as before, and cook in a moderately hot oven. The above method will answer equally well for the fireless cooker. Place the jars on the heated disc of the cooker instead of in the oven, cook over night.

Rhubarb and Strawberry Preserve

Make a syrup of a pound of sugar to a pound of fruit, the proportions of the fruit being two-thirds rhubarb to one-third strawberries. Boil the syrup, add fruit and cook until fruit is semi-transparent, then bottle and seal.

Pineapple and strawberries are also good. Take an equal measure of pineapple—diced—and strawberries. Cook these in a rich syrup till clear and tender. The pineapple will require a longer cooking than the strawberries, so it should be put in first.

Strawberry Dumpling

One cupful sugar, one tablespoonful butter, two and a half cupfuls fresh strawberries, two cupfuls boiling water, one cupful bread flour, two teaspoonfuls baking powder, one-quarter teaspoonful salt, three-quarter cupful rich milk. Put together the sugar, butter, strawberries and hot water, simmer a few minutes. Mix the flour, baking powder, salt and milk. Drop the batter in eight portions onto the boiling syrup, cover tightly and cook for fifteen or twenty minutes without removing the lid. Serve hot with the strawberry sauce. Raspberries may be made in the same way.

Strawberry Sago

This dessert is a fine hot weather one, and by using the different fruits as they come in-season may be made at any time during the summer. Wash a cup of sago, cover with three cups of cold water and soak for two hours. Cook in a double boiler until transparent. Stem and wash the strawberries, put them in a serving dish. Sprinkle sugar over. When the sago, or tapioca, is cool, not cold, pour over the berries and stand aside until perfectly cold. Raspberries, blackberries or blueberries may be used in place of strawberries.

Black currants and huckleberries are better cooked together than either alone. Use one-third currants to two-thirds huckleberries. Look over and wash the fruit, add a little water and cook slowly until done, sweeten to taste and seal in sterilized jars.

Raspberries and red currants are another good combination, cooked or raw.

Canning Peas

If peas are properly canned they are almost as nice as fresh ones and a great addition to the winter store. Pick the peas just before using, shell, cook half an hour and salt same as for table. Put into sterilized jars and seal. To ensure keeping, cook on three successive days. The first and second days cook and allow to stand in kettle. On the third day have the jars ready, see that the peas are absolutely boiling hot all thru, put in jars and seal.

Rhubarb alone will not make jelly because it lacks pectic. This may be supplied by adding tart apples or the pulp of citron melons.

Rhubarb and Apple Jelly

Wash clean and cut into pieces two quarts of rhubarb and one quart of good cooking apples. Add the grated yellow rind of a lemon and one-half cup of water. Cook until both rhubarb and lemon are soft. Drain thru cheesecloth. Measure the juice, and to each pint add three-quarters of a pint of sugar. Put the juice over the fire—without sugar—boil for twenty minutes. Put the sugar in the oven and heat it thoroughly, being careful not to brown it. Add to juice, boil two minutes and put in glasses.

Rhubarb with Gelatine

Cook red rhubarb, with skin on, in just enough water to cover. When very soft let drip thru jelly bag. Take a measure of sugar to a measure of juice, boil 20 minutes. To every quart of this liquid add one teaspoonful of gela-

tine, dissolved in a little cold water. Stir until gelatine is thoroughly dissolved, pour in glasses and set away to cool.

Strawberry Shortcake

One has to go a long way to find anything more delicious than a strawberry shortcake. Make cake from a one-egg cake recipe, or any other not too rich. Some time before the cake is to be served crush the berries, add some sugar. When the cake is cooked split it, cover the bottom part with the crushed berries, put the other half on top and cover it with berries. Whip two-thirds of a cup of cream, pile on top and garnish with a few strawberries stuck in the cream. This is excellent made with a biscuit crust. Split and butter and cover with berries as above.

The following belongs to the shortcake family and is really very good. Bake any good sponge cake mixture in thin sheets. When cold cut with a sharp knife in thin strips, about four inches long. Pile these log cabin fashion on as many pretty plates as there are people to serve. Heap the centre with whipped cream slightly sweetened and flavored, and put sugared strawberries about the base. Peaches or raspberries may be used instead of strawberries.

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