



Illinois 4-H | Spark Ideas. Ignite Possibilities.

Do you like pickles on your hamburgers? What about chips and salsa, peanut butter and jelly, or jerky? Food preservation is a way to enjoy seasonal fresh-grown fruits, vegetables, and even meats, all year long! The foods mentioned can all be preserved by canning, pickling, freezing, or drying.



Exploring 4-H Food Preservation

Spark Activity: Taste of Summer in a Jar

What is your favorite fruit? Do you like to eat it fresh? Have you ever wanted to eat it on a nice warm biscuit? Look up recipes on how to make freezer jam using your favorite fruit. Once you find a recipe you like, with parents' permission, try to make your own freezer jam. Freezer jam does not require you to have special canning equipment, and it is one of the easiest ways to preserve fruits.

Ingredients:

- 2 cups crushed berries (strawberry, raspberry, or blackberry)
- 4 cups sugar
- 1 package powdered pectin
- 1 cup water

Directions:

- Sort and wash fully ripe berries. Drain. Remove caps and stem, then crush berries.
- Place prepared berries in a large mixing bowl. Add sugar, mix well, and let stand for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Dissolve pectin in water and boil for 1 minute. Add pectin solution to berry-and-sugar mixture; stir for 2 minutes.
- Pour jam into freezer containers or canning jars, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch headspace at the top. Close covers on containers and let stand at room temperature for 24 hours.
- Store uncooked jams in refrigerator or freezer. They can be held up to 3 weeks in the refrigerator or up to a year in a freezer. Once a container is opened, jam should be stored in the refrigerator and used within a few days. If kept at room temperature they will mold or ferment in a short time.



4-H Project Levels and Goals

Beginner

- Learn the 4 most common types of food preservation
- Learn freezing basics - how to freeze and properly thaw fruits, juices, vegetables, meats
- Learn food drying basics for fruits, vegetables, meats, and herbs
- Review basic food handling practices and kitchen safety
- Learn how to properly package and store preserved foods
- Explore how to use your preserved food in recipes

Intermediate

- Explore the science and math of preserving foods
- Understand the basics of canning
- Learn how altitude affects processing
- Learn how food acidity (low or high acid) makes a difference in preservation when canning
- Make jam, jelly, and salsa
- Select the right produce and jars for canning

Advanced

- Learn the basics of pressure cooking
- Learn how to prepare jars and lids for pressure cooking, and how to test lids for a vacuum seal
- Can a variety of foods (vegetables, sauces, beans, meats)
- Develop a taste test

Put Your Project Into Action

Show Your Skills

- Display of how to preserve foods safely showing the different types of food preservation
- Exhibit your canned foods
- Make a recipe book for preserved foods
- Present a food preservation topic at a local public presentations contest

Service and Leadership

- Make jam/jelly for others in your community
- Teach others about how to preserve food
- Volunteer at a community garden
- Volunteer with a local food pantry
- Organize a food preservation workshop
- Share food preservation recipes with others
- Start a food drive for commercially canned foods in your community
- Grow your own garden with vegetables you can preserve

Entrepreneurship

- Create your own food preservation cookbook
- Contact the local health department for local rules on selling your products, then sell your preserved good at a farmer's market or create on online store
- Create a business plan for your preserved food sales

Technology Connection

- Videos of how to properly can foods
- Take virtual tours of canning factories

Connecting with a Mentor

- Master Food Preserver
- Extension nutrition and wellness educators
- Extension Master Gardeners
- Older 4-H members

Events

- Local Illinois Extension workshops and events
- Exhibit opportunities at your county and state fair
- Local taste test
- Local food cookoff
- Local food fairs
- Farmer's markets



Careers Related to Food Preservation

Food Scientist/
Technologist
Food Processing Industry
Field Contractor

Cannery Worker
Food Entrepreneur -
Specialty Preserved Food

Start a Conversation

What preserved foods do you eat? Think about all types of food - canned, dried, frozen, etc.

What kinds of foods would you like to try to preserve? (fruits and vegetables, meats for jerky, fruit for fruit roll ups, etc)

How can we make our own food and save it to eat later? What would we make?

Want to learn more?

go.illinois.edu/4Hfoodpreservation

Explore more at Illinois 4-H!

4-H.extension.illinois.edu



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Credits: National Center for Food Preservation- <https://nchfp.uga.edu/putitup.html> | University of Wyoming Extension 4-H project sheet | South Dakota State University 4-H Project Sheet | North Dakota State University Extension 4-H Project Sheet | 4-H Spark Sheets are a collaborative effort of 4-H staff, volunteers, alumni and teens from across Illinois. A big thanks to the many contributors and reviewers!