

Free Public Classes
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UCCE El Dorado County Master Food Preservers
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It's time to get ready for the first public education class of the year, presented by Master Food Preserver Jane Alexander, a ten year veteran volunteer. The class begins with a crash course in food safety and moves along to explanations and demonstrations of basic water bath canning, a preservation method which requires only a few inexpensive tools to master.

Among the many methods of home food preservation, water bath canning allows for safe, easy preservation of high acid foods. Fruits, jams and jellies, sauerkraut and pickles may be water bath canned, as well as most tomato products (if the tomatoes have been acidified according to current recommendations) and fruit butters and marmalades. Recipes for water bath canned foods abound, but be very careful and check the sources. Use only those recipes which have been tested and approved. Tested recipes include those from land-grant universities and from reliable sources such as those published by major manufacturers who have independently tested the recipes. Recipes published before 1988 may be suspect, as the scientific resources for checking for food safety have advanced considerably since then. If in doubt about a recipe, call the local extension office and ask to speak to a Master Food Preserver about the safety of the recipe. Do not guess. The results could be deadly.

Many organisms live and thrive on food. The key to safe home food preservation rests in the knowledge of these organisms and in how to prepare food to prevent the proliferation of the organisms. Different pathogens require different defenses. Water bath canning of high acid foods destroys pathogens which cause food borne illness by using a high temperature for a predetermined length of time. The time and temperature for correct processing varies according to the type of food being canned. In addition, those living above sea level should check an altitude chart to adjust the time and temperature correctly to the particular altitude.

The Master Food Preservers offer the introductory class twice, once on July 9th and again on July 12th. Both classes begin at 10:00 a.m. and end at approximately noon, at the Cooperative Extension Building, 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. All of the public education classes are free to the public, and a good time will be had by all. The instructors volunteer to teach because they genuinely enjoy preserving food and sharing their knowledge on the subject. Each class includes a professional demonstration of the techniques and time for questions and answers. Mark the calendar now and do not miss any of these informative classes. Check the Extension website for additional classes and topics.

Questions about safe home food preservation? Call the Master Food Preservers and leave a message at (530) 621-5506. A Master Food Preserver will return the call. The Master Food Preservers are also available free of charge to speak to organizations and clubs about food safety or food preservation topics. Just call the number above to arrange for a speaker for small or large groups. For more information, be sure to go to the Master Food Preserver website at http://ceeldorado.ucdavis.edu/Master_Food_Preservers/.