

Davy Crocket Grins Down a Bear
By Dick Hall
UCCE El Dorado County Master Food Preservers
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OK. So, Davy Crocket (AKA “Hubby”) goes out with the “guys” to go bear hunting and comes home with a 400 pound bear and announces “look at all the free meat,” more about that later.

Now, different people have different set ups, but 400 pounds of bear meat will not fit in most freezers. What to do? Make bear sausage, bear roasts, bear jerky, and bear stew meat. But it still will not fit in the freezer. Now, there are two choices...purchase another freezer for the garage (PG&E loves that) or see what the Master Food Preservers would do with the excess.

The Master Food Preservers’ 2012 class schedule is posted at: <http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org>
All classes are free to the public.

Some of the classes might stir up the imagination: “*Deli meats*” (make Bear Sausage); “*Meat Preserving*” (canned bear); “*Dehydrating & Freezing*” (bear roasts and bear jerky); “*Pressure Canning*” (for everything that will not fit in the freezer); and, of course, “*Christmas in July*” (how to “dress up” the bear meat as Christmas gifts when the family is just sick and tired of all that free meat. The classes also cover things like jams, jellies, sauces, relishes, whole fruit canning, and, of course, the all-time favorite, food safety.

People often ask what type of *this or that* is best for canning? The usual reply is whatever is free and of high quality, such as food from the garden or meat from Davey Crockett’s recent hunting trip. Here is what that free bear meat really costs.

Hunting license, \$85; Ammunition, \$93; New rifle with scope, \$1,299; Bear Decoy, \$119; Gas for the truck, \$176, Truck tire repair, \$20; Groceries, \$215; Case of beer (maybe 2, depends on the length of the trip), \$22; Hunting dog (already at home, but the cost of training the dog) \$467; Dog food, \$8; Vet bill (getting the stickers out of the dog’s ear), \$110; New four season sleeping bag, \$279; New camp stove, \$129; Propane for the camp stove, \$28; Fire starters for the camp fire (what ever happened to “strike anywhere matches?”), \$8; New woodland camo outfit from Cabela’s (the critters might recognize the old one), \$140; First Aid kit, \$37 (the old one was all used up on last year’s trip); Calamine lotion, \$11 (that really was not poison oak, was it?); and, of course, the taxidermy bill for the bear skin rug that will be in the living room for the next 10 years as hubby relives the story of “*Free Bear Meat*” to friends, \$2,200.

The total cost of \$5,446, divided by the 400 pounds of “*Free Bear Meat*,” makes the actual cost \$13.62 per pound. (*Slightly* more than good porterhouse steak or 3 racks of baby back ribs), but remember... “IT WAS FREE.”

Coming soon, pressure canning for Cousin Billy Bob’s award winning squirrel stew.

Do not forget that the MFPs will be at the El Dorado County fair this year with free tasters. For questions about safe home food preservation, or to schedule a speaker for organizations or clubs on the topics of food safety or food preservation, call the Master Food Preservers at (530) 621-5506. For more information, be sure to go to the Master Food Preserver website at http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.org/Master_Food_Preservers/. Sign up to receive our new Master Food Preservers E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpenews/>.