

4-H Food Preservation

Intermediate/Senior Level

The Intermediate and Senior age divisions of food preservation are for members ages 12 to 17 years old (as of September 1 of the 4-H year, which begins October 1). This division expands 4-H members' skills in food preservation and adds the use of the pressure canner. Members in these age divisions are encouraged to continue to practice and expand the skills introduced in the junior age division, including boiling water canning, drying fruits and vegetables, and freezing fruits. Members beginning in the 4-H food preservation project as intermediates or seniors are encouraged to begin with boiling water canning processes and then move on to skills introduced in the intermediate and senior level.

Here are some of the possibilities for intermediate and senior age division members in 4-H food preservation. Members in these age divisions may also continue to learn and improve on skills introduced in the junior division.

- Pressure canning a variety of foods, including:
 - Vegetables or tomatoes using a pressure canner
 - Meat, poultry, fish, or combination dishes
- Fermenting pickles or sauerkraut
- Freezing vegetables
- Making jerky
- Using preserved foods in meals
- Developing a family food preservation plan
- Evaluating preserved foods

You don't need to learn all this in one year. It's best to spend multiple years exploring all the opportunities for home food preservation as you learn the procedures and try different methods or foods to preserve. Your leader, parents, or another adult



can help you. **Choose two or more** of the activities listed below to work on during project meetings or at home each year.

- Make fruit juice. Try different kinds of fruits.
- Make a syrup from fruit juice you have extracted.
- Make jam or jelly without commercial pectin or jelly using juice you extracted.
- Make fermented pickles or sauerkraut.
- Can vegetables or tomatoes using a pressure canner. Try different vegetables.
- Can meat, fish, poultry, or combination foods in a pressure canner.
- Freeze vegetables. Try different kinds of vegetables.

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- Make dried meat or poultry jerky.
- Make a family food preservation plan.
- Serve three or more preserved foods.
- Continue to label your products clearly and fully.
- Use the standards to evaluate your preserved foods for quality and safety.

Part of the project includes sharing what you have learned with other people. Some ways of sharing are:

- Preparing meals or snacks for families and friends, using foods you have preserved
- Giving presentations at project meetings, shopping areas, farmer's markets, or outdoor cookery group meetings
- Making displays for store windows, libraries, or schools
- Making a gift package for someone using some of the foods you have preserved
- Becoming a junior leader or helping younger members learn about food preservation
- Participating in the fair by giving a presentation or entering a food preparation contest or exhibit. If you want to exhibit at the fair, check the requirements with your 4-H leader or in the current 4-H State Fair Premium Book on the 4-H website: <http://oregon.4h.oregonstate.edu/state-fair>.

At some of your meetings, your leader will give you handouts and other resource materials for you to take home or print from an approved, reliable source, such as the OSU Extension Service or the United States Department of Agriculture. Current research-tested, food-preservation methods can be found at the National Center for Food Preservation, <http://nchfp.uga.edu/> or the OSU Extension Service, Food Preservation web page, <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-preservation>. These will help you learn how to can, freeze, and dry foods. For safety reasons, it is very important to always use up-to-date methods, including processing times and

temperatures. Your leader will be able to provide you with current information that has been scientifically tested. Keep these materials together so you can find them when you need them. Add your handouts and bulletins to a notebook and be very cautious of recipe sources that have not been tested. Exhibits for county and state fairs are required to be made from recipes and instructions from approved sources located at <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/food-preservation>.

A Note for Parents

The 4-H Food Preservation project is designed so members will have opportunities for a variety of experiences. 4-H members enrolled in the food preservation project will:

- Learn principles of safe food preservation
- Practice food preservation techniques in canning, freezing, and drying
- Use preserved food creatively in meals and snacks
- Share what they have learned in meaningful ways

Some of the specific skills to be learned are listed in the note to members. Your 4-H member may need special help from you or another family member or friend to learn some of these skills. Safety is a critical factor as members work with heavy jars, hot liquids, and pressure canners. For food safety, it is also important that members use the most current processing temperatures and times as recommended by Oregon State University or the United States Department of Agriculture. Leaders have information for locating the most current recommendations.

You can also help by showing interest and enthusiasm in your child's work. Encourage your child when he or she succeeds, and even more when things are not going well. Provide transportation to local meetings. Participate in county activities in which your child and other members are interested and support your local 4-H leaders.