

# Canning Is Hobby



While Jarrod, 2, and Meghan, 1, nap, Lynette delves into her favorite hobby — canning.

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said of the need for the dry run.

People unfamiliar with canned meat often question the reason behind the process. Lynette explains that not only is the meat more tender and ready to use immediately, canned meat is also convenient when preparing many kinds of casseroles.

"When canning meat, never add liquid," Lynette stresses. "Meat forms its own liquid."

She adds salt to the meat before canning but does not recommend adding pepper and other spices because they float to the top. Pepper and spices also tend to intensify in flavoring when canned.

Lynette uses whole, boneless chicken and turkey breasts for canning poultry. She also has canned some boned chicken. She said, "It falls off the bone when you remove it from the jar, which makes it easy to use but I prefer using boneless."

Although some fruits are still considered safe to process with a boiling water bath method rather than a pressure canner, Lynette said that she prefers pressure canning just to be safe.

Growing up, Lynette retains fond memories of helping her mother, Linda Nolt, can food. Lynette now cans many items that her mother never tried. In addition, proper canning methods have changed to protect against botulism and other food safety concerns.

"But Mom often helps out," Lynette said. In fact, Lynette keeps her garden at her mother's Manheim farm.

One of Lynette's most memorable canning experiences happened last summer, when she canned seven baskets of peaches. The last batch of jars was finished processing at 10 p.m. At 2 a.m., Lynette had her first contraction, and by 4:30 a.m., the Steagers had a new baby daughter.

Jars of peaches filled the countertops and kitchen table. Lynette's mom came to her rescue and put everything back in order for the family's return from the hospital.

With two children under two, Lynette did not cut back on her canning projects this season. Organization is her key. She picks the produce in the morning and processes during her children's afternoon naptime.

During the winter months, one of Lynette's favorite things to do is read the "Blue Ball Canning Book" (available at county extension offices).

"I get ideas of things I haven't tried before, and make plans to try it," Lynette

said.

This includes growing the items in her garden.

This past year for the first time, she canned zucchini and tomatoes together, carrots with a glaze, and taco sauce.

Also new this year were an Amish sweet pickle and a hot pickle, resulting in nine varieties of pickles for her.

After an extension workshop on canning pie fillings, Lynette did several successful batches of blueberry and apple pie fillings.

She cans many different varieties of jellies and jams for gift giving. Another favorite for gift giving is watermelon rind, which many older relatives appreciate because it is not available to purchase.

In addition to canning, Lynette has some other hobbies. She sews, plays the piano, and volunteers at the Lancaster County Prison, where she plays volleyball with women prisoners. She also volunteers at a local nursing home, where she plays the keyboard to entertain dementia patients.

In addition to the enjoyment of eating home-processed foods, Lynette gains lots of pleasure in rearranging the processed jars on the basement shelves.

"I feel so much satisfaction admiring all the jars," Lynette said of the full shelves.

Here are some recipes Lynette recommends. The recipes were distributed in a pressure canning meats and poultry workshop taught by Wiker.

## Beef Stew With Vegetables

4-5 pounds beef stew meat  
1 tablespoon oil  
3 quarts cubed, peeled potatoes  
2 quarts sliced carrots  
3 cups chopped celery  
3 cups chopped onions  
1½ tablespoon salt  
1 teaspoon thyme  
½ teaspoon pepper

Cut meat into ½-inch cubes; brown in oil. Combine meat, vegetables, and seasonings; cover with boiling water. Bring stew to a boil. Ladle hot stew into hot jars, leaving 1-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Adjust two-piece caps. Process pints one hour, quarts one hour and 15 minutes, at 10 pounds pressure in a steam pressure canner. Yield: about 14 pints or 7 quarts.

Use a jar of this canned beef stew to prepare the following recipe.

## Encrusted Beef Stew

1 quart jar beef stew with vegetables  
2 tablespoons flour  
3 tablespoons cold water

¼ cup flour  
1 tablespoon minced herbs, parsley, basil, thyme  
½ teaspoon baking powder  
¼ teaspoon salt  
¼ cup butter  
2 tablespoons heavy cream or milk

To make stew: Drain liquid from beef stew, reserving ½ cups. Combine flour and cold water, stirring to dissolve. Add reserved liquid. Cook until thickened. Stir in beef stew, set aside.

To make crust: Combine flour, herbs, baking powder, and salt. Cut in butter. Stir in cream. Form into a ball. Roll to ¼-inch thickness. Cut into a shape one-inch larger than casserole dish. Cut vents in the center to allow steam to escape.

Place stew mixture into a one-quart casserole dish. Top with crust. Decorate as desired. Place casserole on a baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 minutes or until crust is golden brown. Cool 10 minutes on a wire rack. Serve warm. Serves 2-4.

## Chicken A La King

2 (3½-4-pounds) stewing chicken, cut into pieces  
2 stalks celery, quartered  
1 onion, quartered  
1 carrot, quartered  
4 peppercorns  
2 whole allspice  
1 bay leaf  
2 teaspoons salt  
½ cup chicken fat or butter  
½ cup flour  
5 cups chicken broth  
¼ cup chopped celery  
¼ cup chopped pimento  
1 tablespoon chopped parsley  
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine chicken, celery stalks, onion, carrot, peppercorns, allspice, bay leaf, and salt in large saucepan. Cover with water. Bring to a boil; reduce heat; simmer 2 to 3 hours or until chicken is tender. Remove and discard vegetables. Allow chicken to cool in broth. Remove chicken. Skim off excess fat; strain broth. Remove skin and bones from meat. Cut meat into 1-inch pieces. Melt fat or butter; add flour, stirring until smooth. Gradually stir in chicken broth and cook until thickened, stirring constantly. Add chicken and remaining ingredients. Simmer 5 minutes. Pack hot meat and sauce into jars, leaving one-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Adjust two-piece caps. Process pints one hour and 5 minutes, quarts one hour and 15 minutes, at 10 pounds pressure in a steam-pressure canner. Yield: about 4 pints or 2 quarts.

To serve: Brown mushrooms in butter; add mushrooms to Chicken a la King, if desired. Heat until hot throughout.

To prepare, roll out pie crust. Cut into squares. Bake in 375-degree oven until slightly browned. Remove from oven. Place on serving dish and top with heated Chicken A La King.

## Harvest Roundup Festivals At Cherry Crest Farm

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) - Fall is a great time of year at the Amazing Maze at Cherry-Crest Farm. First there is the maze - the world's corniest planetarium with the sun and nine planets carved into a five-acre field of corn.

Each Saturday through Oct. 28 visitors can also enjoy the annual Harvest Roundup Festivals - down-on-the-farm celebrations with pumpkin slinging, face painting, pumpkin painting, plus guided

tours of a working dairy farm that is home to 125 registered Holsteins.

The maze is now surrounded by four acres of pumpkins, a field of popcorn, and 27 different varieties of mums - to pick and take home. Plus, on a hillside adjacent to the maze, the spectacular Sun, Moon, and Stars floral artwork created out of 16,000 petunias and marigolds is in full bloom.

Maze is open Friday-Saturday through

October 28 from 10 a.m. to dusk. Annual Flashlight Maze Oct. 20-21 and Oct. 27-28 from 7:30 to 11 p.m. Admission: \$7 adults, \$5 kids age 5 to 11, free for kids under age 5.

Cherry-Crest Farm is located in Paradise Township at 150 Cherry Hill Road, Ronks, (a few miles east of Lancaster). Long onto www.amazingmaze.com. Phone (717) 687-6843.

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