

5 Steps to Make Canning Day Easier



Canning day can be a daunting concept for people who haven't canned food before. There is the question about what equipment to buy, where to buy it, and how much to spend. What can be reused from year to year is another question to understand before canning day. Preparing step by step, before the actual work begins, can make canning day much simpler and more enjoyable.

Step 1 (Before Canning Day Arrives)

Shop for equipment. Yard sales are a good place to start if you are on a budget. Another idea is to ask family. Sometimes, older relatives have stopped canning, and may be willing to share or sell canning equipment. Our older generation holds a wealth of knowledge too. Maybe it's a good time to reconnect

with mom, grandmom, or aunt and get a canning lesson, too! For tomatoes, peaches, apples, most other fruits and all pickles, you can use a hot water bath canner. For meat, vegetables and combination meals, you will need a pressure canner. If you are just starting out, I recommend starting with hot water bath canning. It is a less expensive way to try canning.



Pressure canner on the left, hot water canner on the right.

The first thing to look for would be a large stock pot or an actual Hot Water Bath Canner. The canner should come with a rack for the jars to sit on, if you are buying one new. If you find a canner without a rack inside, you can purchase a replacement rack for a few dollars. Another solution is to use a dish towel on the bottom of the canner. This is important so that the jars are not bouncing on the bottom of the canner during boiling, which could lead to cracking. If you decide to can using a large stock pot, keep in mind that the pot must be deep enough so that the jars are completely covered with water when in the canner being processed.

Also, purchase a utensil or tool kit including the tongs, lid lifter, and funnel. These sets are usually available for well

under \$20.

Hot Water Bath Canners are available at most retailers, some hardware stores, farm supply stores, and on line retailers.

Step 2

Shop for your supplies. This includes the jars and the lids. Most new jars will come with new lids. The jars can be reused but the small disc type lids need to be replaced each time the jar is used for canning. If your recipe calls for salt, lemon juice, alum, or any other ingredients, make sure you have them



in your pantry.



Step 3

Have all equipment accessible. Don't be looking all over the house for the tongs, jar lids, etc. when canning. I used to keep the canning and dehydrating equipment, empty jars, and other canning paraphernalia, was kept in a downstairs storage room. It was inconvenient, to have to run up and down stairs, when in the middle of canning a recipe. This year, I emptied out two upstairs cabinets and brought everything upstairs. Canning Day is now so much easier! Everything is nearby and ready for me to grab it when needed.

Step 4

Before the actual canning day, do some preliminary work. Break the job down into two days. This is particularly helpful if you lead a busy life and have lots of other tasks during the day, too. Breaking the canning tasks down into two days, makes it much less exhausting. Wash the vegetables or fruits, and chop if necessary. If the fruit needs to be peeled, this can be taken care of the day before, also. Store the peeled, chopped, prepared fruits and vegetables in the refrigerator overnight. Place the cut up fruit in a container, cover with cold water and a tablespoon of lemon juice to prevent browning. The night before canning day, wash the jars you will need, in the dishwasher and leave them in there.



on canning day, my kitchen quickly turns into a mess!



I quickly run out of counter space and have to use the floor for draining washed dishes

Step 5

Ask for help. Canning can be exhausting. If you garden, there are times when the harvest is coming in faster than you can process it. Asking for help from a family member or friend can make the job easier and more fun. Make some memories while preparing food for the winter. When I get a good buy on produce, I will see if a friend wants to can with me. Then we share the results of the day's work.

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Timber Creek Farm



For more information on canning and preserving the harvest, please read this post. [Canning and Preserving the Harvest](#)

And if you are feeling time crunched, you will love this by Homespun Seasonal Living titled [Canning Beans for the Time Crunched](#)

