

Memories of Canning

There was a knock at the door. There stood my Pap with a plastic bag full of veggies.

“Hey honey! Now, I’m not going to stay, but I wanted to drop these off to you. I thought you could use them.” He was always bringing me produce. How my Pap, Floyd Liddick, loved to garden. I remember snapping beans on their back porch like it was yesterday. We would talk about how him and Gram, Lois Liddick, canned anything they could to help feed their five children over the years. I was intrigued. I wanted fresh fruits and veggies in the dead of winter for my family, too.

That following week I went over to help them can peaches so I could watch them do it and learn. They taught me the ins and outs of how the lids work, how to cold pack, hot pack, and all of the above. The dos and don’ts of canning 101. In that day, I learned more about canning than I ever thought possible. I mean, after all, Gram and Pap were pros at this now.

I thought it was so cute how they did it together.

A week or so after that, I went to Marshalek’s fruit farm, and bought my very first bushel and a half of peaches. I was so excited to do this. Now, Gram and Pap knew I went and bought these, but they were going to be out of town the day I planned on canning them.

My phone rang that morning, it was Gram. “Honey, I couldn’t sleep good last night. I was so worried about you canning these peaches without me and Pap. Why don’t you wait for us to come help you tomorrow?”

They were so worried if they didn’t seal, all that money for the sugar and peaches would be down the drain and my time into it would be a waste.

“Gram, I’ll be fine! I learned a lot and I’m excited to see how I do.”

That day I was all smiles! Canning my little heart out. I was ready to start hearing those POPS start coming from my jars. As my peaches cooled, it started – Pop. POP. PoP. PoP!

“Yesssss!! They are sealing!”

I was so excited!

Gram came over the next day to check my jars. I had done just about 30 quarts of peaches. They were all sitting on my bar for the 24 hours of leaving them be.

All my peaches were floating to the top and gram took her finger and pressed down on the lids checking the seals. All but one jar sealed!

“Andrea, I can’t believe it. You did wonderful!” she said.

“Well I learned from the best, so it was inevitable Gram.”

Canning and freezing is something I really enjoy. From homemade tomato sauce that my momma taught me, to freezing corn, applesauce, and jellies, to canning peaches, pears, carrots and more! The possibilities are endless. Peaches and pears are not hard to do, and taste so delicious when the snow is falling. Here is the recipe my grandparents gave me. Dipping your tastes buds into fresh produce in January is just about the best thing ever.

Cinnamon Pears

- 1/2 bushel of pears
- 4 cups sugar
- 6 cups water
- Bag of Cinnamon Imperials
- 5-6 1-quart canning jars & 5-6 pint jars

Peel, core, and quarter or half the pears.

In a large (5 or 6 quart) pot, add the sugar and water. Bring to a boil.

Meanwhile, while you wait for your sugar to boil, place your pears into your jars. FIRST, place as many cinnamon imperials as you like onto the bottom of your jar. Add some more pears, then place some more in the middle of the jar. I usually do at least 20-25 pieces of imperials for a quart, and 10-15 for a pint. It depends on how "cinnamony" you like them! Mine are a nice hint of cinnamon and not too over powering. (You don't even have to do the cinnamon candy if you don't want to.)

When you are done packing your jars, pour the syrup over the pears to cover, leaving 1/2-inch of headroom from the tops of the jars. Wipe the rims with a paper towel. You don't want anything that can cause your lid not to seal. Boil your lids first (just a few minutes). Then, put on the lids with the rim on at the same time. (You don't need to boil the rims)

If canning for long term shelf storage, place in a water bath.

* Quarts boil for 20 minutes

* Pints boil for 10 minutes

A 1/2 bushel can be a little bigger or a little smaller than what I have here. When I made mine I got 6 qts. and 6 pints – exactly. And had a 5 qt. saucepan filled with syrup.

Let sit for 24 hours before picking up jar.

Canned Peaches

Peel and slice peaches and place in pint or quart jars.

Bring 2 quarts of water and 2 cups of sugar to a boil.

Fill the peaches up with the syrup you just made till it's $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the rim.

Clean off rim well before placing lid and seal. If the

smallest speck is on the rim, it won't seal correctly! Boil lids first (Just a few minutes)

Place jars in a canner.

Boil 10 minutes for pints.

Boil 20 minutes for quarts.

Let sit on counter top for at least 24 hours before moving.

*Makes about 1/2 bushel of peaches. Make more syrup as needed.