

Canning is Getting Popular Again

When I was a little girl, I remember spending a number of summer days sitting and watching my mother load scores of garden tomatoes into jars and plop them into a steaming canner. Later, I would hear her banter with an older neighbor, “I have 30 quarts so far, Bob! How many do you have?”

Over the years, my mother canned various jams, pickles, and of course, more tomatoes, while simultaneously training me in the art and receiving numerous requests to train others.

This demand for her canning expertise signaled an important fact. Like other crafts like [knitting](#) or [cooking at home](#), canning has become a lost art in our increasingly busy modern world.

But if reports from the [last several years](#) are true, canning is enjoying a bit of a resurgence. This is due to several factors including:

- Health – If you’re making it yourself, you know what you’re putting in your food. As a result you can avoid all those lovely things like Polysorbate 80, high fructose corn syrup, and other curious and unpronounceable ingredients which run a mile long at the end of store-bought food items.
- Savings – Besides the personal cost savings canning may provide (have you ever noticed how much a family can spend on pickles?!), canning can turn into quite the cash crop if marketed and managed correctly. According to a [recent article](#), canners can make “up to \$12 per jar” since “homemade jams sell at a premium in fancy country stores.” The article goes on to say that lemon curd, tomato sauce, and apple pie filling are also hot

sellers.

- Education – As one mother [put it](#), learning to can with her children has provided a range of educational experiences:

“While I don’t [homeschool](#), I do appreciate the opportunities that canning has offered for exploring a whole range of intellectual questions and pursuits with my kids. We have learned what makes jam gel and what to do when it doesn’t. We have explored flavors that go together well and badly. We have talked about the [fallacy of composition](#) as a way to explain why blueberry jam is great, and dill pickles are great, but blueberry and dill pickle jam is awful. We do math every time we double a recipe or divide our pickling spices among three jars. We talk about the importance of not wasting food, of eating things that are healthy and delicious, and of cooking for people we love.”

And of course, it’s just my humble opinion, but it sure seems like any home-canned item tastes 10 times better than any canned item you can buy at the store!

As studies have shown, knowledge of [basic skills](#) related to canning – such as cooking, sewing, and even reading a map – are fast disappearing in today’s society. Would we be wise to re-instill these basic skills in the next generation?