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Benefits of Food Preservation at Home

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Preparing and preserving your own food is not only a celebration of your mother's traditions, it's a time-tested way to save money, reduce waste, and eat healthy regardless of whether there's snow on the ground. To incorporate food canning and preservation into your eco home, you simply need to invest some time learning about food preservation methods, then find creative ways to preserve your favorite locally-grown, organic foods to eat fresh and [healthy all year round](#).

Quick Facts: Benefits of Home Food Preservation

- **10 pounds of chemical food additives yearly:** That's how much Americans consume every year,^[i] including chemicals of concern like aspartame, partially hydrogenated vegetable oil or trans fat, sodium nitrite, and artificial coloring, which have been [connected to cancer and increased risk of coronary heart disease](#).^[ii]

- **\$12 saved each homemade baby food batch:** Making and preserving your own baby food can save you about \$8 for a 12 pound batch.^[iii] Additional 70% energy savings come from reduced refrigeration costs with preserved foods.^[iv]

- **12 grams of sugar in 1/2 cup pasta sauce?** Packaged foods have significantly higher sugar levels than home-prepared foods.^[v] Bottled pasta: 12 grams/half-cup (equivalent to a Pop-Tart); yogurt: 31 grams/six-ounce serving;^[vi] canned soups: 10 grams/serving.^[vii] Eating home-preserved foods let you lead a low glycemic index (GI) diet which helps prevent insulin resistance, diabetes, and obesity.^[viii]

- **1,221% higher than recommended BPA urine levels:** Bisphenol A (BPA) is a toxin^[ix] used as an ingredient in an epoxy resin for lining metal-based food and drink packaging. ^[x] The BPA levels in the urine of people who consumed canned soup regularly were found to be 1,221% higher than people who ate fresh soup.^[xi] High BPA levels have negative impacts on brain function, prostate gland, and behavior of infants, young children, and fetuses.^[xii]

- **1,500 cans thrown away every second in the US:**^[xiii] Rather than contributing to this waste, food preservation allows you to make use of canning jars that last for up to 13 years if maintained properly^[xiv].

- **Low variety in packaged foods:** Commercially prepared foods rely on a very small pool of food biodiversity. When you preserve your own food, you can incorporate heirloom varieties^[xv] that help protect genetic biodiversity because they ensure the strain that can survive after a disease wipes out the most standard varieties.^[xvi]



Take Action! Planet-Friendly Food Preservation at Home

- Basics of food canning:** Find plenty of comprehensive guides to food canning and preservation such as [The Food Channel](#), [Good Housekeeping](#), and [National Geographic](#) to get you started. The [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#) has a self-paced online course on food preservation.
- Choose heirloom varieties:** Heirloom fruits and vegetables allow you to experience a different taste throughout the seasons. [Eat Well Guide](#) provides a database that lets you search for growers of heirloom produce by state.
- Opt for local, organic produce:** Going local and organic with your food preservation techniques – either from your own home garden or via the local farmer's market – helps you limit your carbon footprint and also maintain a healthier lifestyle. [Local Harvest](#) has a great database that will help you find farmers' markets and family farms for sourcing your organic produce.
- How to care for your canning jars:** Canning jars last for a long time as long as you take care of them properly. Canning jars can break due to internal pressure, dropping, and thermal shock. Proper care tips can be found from The [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#) and [Food in Jars](#).
- Campaigns against BPA:** There are currently several campaigns to get Bisphenol A (BPA) out of consumer goods, especially canned food. The [Breast Cancer Fund's Cans Not Cancer Campaign](#) is one example as BPA has been linked to heighten the risk of breast cancer in women. [Safer States](#) is another organization that is fighting for the government to ban this chemical.



Dig Deeper: Harmful Effects of Packaged Food

- Check out this table from the [Japan Food Chemical Research Foundation](#) to find out the average person's daily intake of certain food additives.
- To find out more on how high sugar levels cause insulin resistance and its connection to diabetes, refer to this report from [Science Daily](#).
- Read this article from [Sustainable Table](#) to find out the Food and Drug Administration (FDA)'s stand on food additives.
- Find out how the [FDA](#) regulates the use of BPA.

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