

Food Thoughts for This Time of Year

Electric Pressure Cookers Still Not Safe for Canning

The message continues. Do not use electric pressure cookers for canning. Research conducted at Utah State University shows that electric cookers do not always reach or sustain safe temperature levels for safe canning. This is even more critical at higher altitudes.

Electric pressure cookers also have faster heat up and cool down time periods. This can affect heat transfer and pathogen destruction.

The Story Behind the Fruit Cobbler

As summer marches on, fresh fruit becomes more abundant and inviting. One popular dish to prepare with fresh fruit is a cobbler. So where did this dish originate?

There are a couple stories about the cobbler. The fruit layer is usually topped with biscuits. Some say this was “cobbled together”. Then baked, the biscuits puff up and the finished product looks like cobblestones on a street.

Another story from New England says it was called a “bird’s nest pudding” or “crow’s-nest pudding.” It is served with custard, but no topping in Connecticut, with maple sugar in Massachusetts, and a sour cream sauce in Vermont.

However you make your summer fruit cobbler, enjoy!

Making Jam and Jelly with Frozen Fruit

The following tips will help create successful jams and jellies from frozen fruit or juice:

***The best frozen fruits for jams or jellies are blueberries, red and black currants, gooseberries and rhubarb.**

***Before freezing fruit, measure the fruit and label the container. Many fruits collapse as they thaw and may create an inaccurate measure.**

***Jams and Jellies from frozen fruit and juice are better if no sugar is added before freezing.**

***When freezing fruit for jelly or jams, use $\frac{1}{4}$ under-ripe and $\frac{3}{4}$ ripe fruit.**

***Thaw frozen fruit in the refrigerator until only a few ice crystals remain. Follow directions for the type of jam you are making and follow the recommended proportions of fruit (measured before freezing), pectin and sugar.**

When making jelly from frozen juice, thaw frozen juice in the refrigerator overnight. Measure juice and use it immediately in recommended proportions with sugar and pectin.

Freezing Foods for the Fair

To help save time and stress at county fairs, prepare food entries early and freeze them. Most baked goods freeze well and can still be of good quality. This includes cookies, yeast and quick breads, and cakes. Here are some tips:

***Bake the product as usual. Cool completely! This helps prevent condensation inside the wrapping and development of ice crystals.**

***Use moisture-vapor resistant packaging. This includes freezer-safe plastic containers or bags, heavy-duty aluminum foil, and rigid containers.**

***Separate layers of cookies with wax paper or parchment paper.**

***If a cake or bread is to be frosted, freeze the product only and frost after it is thawed.**

***Make pie crusts ahead of time and freeze. Freezing whole prepared pies can cause the filling to soak into the crust.**

***Thaw all baked goods in the freezer packaging. The can be thawed at room temperature. Remove from the freezer the night before the fair. Once thawed, repackage into the proper packaging according to your fair rules.**