

Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Welcome to the old fashioned on purpose podcast. In today's episode we're answering the question, should you even bother with canning since it cooks the food so long? Are there any nutrients left? It's a question I've been getting a lot lately and the answer might just surprise you. Stick around to the end of today's episode to hear the research that proves grandma might just have had the right idea after all, as she stocked her pantry full of green beans and tomato sauce. I'm your host Jill winger and for the last 10 years I've been helping people just like you who feel a little uninspired by modern day life. I'll show you how to leave the rat race, grow your own food, and create the life you really want by mastering old fashioned skills. So my latest project lately has been been creating a canning ebook and video series. Now the goal of this series, we're calling it canning made easy, is to help folks who didn't have a grandma or mom or aunt to show them the ropes of canning in the kitchen.

Speaker 1: [01:24](#) And so it's a step by step, really easy format. Just to help people get started. So I have been knee deep in canning, I've been canning a lot here on the homestead and researching it a lot, talking about it a lot and it's generated in the process a little bit of debate as to whether or not home canned foods are even worth making. Now it's a totally valid question, especially after you consider how long some jars of food must be boiled or pressure canned in order to be safely stored on the shelf. And once you look at that time, it's really easy to assume there's not going to be much nutrition left when it's all said and done. And honestly, I used to really feel the exact same way and I actually snubbed canning for quite a while just because I automatically assumed that dehydrating or freezing where are the superior preservation options.

Speaker 1: [02:30](#) But when I actually dove into the research, I was pretty surprised at what I found. The truth is if the food you're putting into your jars is fresh and hasn't been sitting on a grocery store shelf for weeks and weeks before you get it, it actually maintains a higher level of nutrition than a lot of other preservation options. And a jar home canned food might actually even be better for you than something that's been sitting in the refrigerator for too many days to count. So as I started to compare the different preservation methods, it appears that actually dehydrated food, you know, if you have a food dehydrator, it's the method that causes the most nutrient loss. And after that would come frozen foods that have been in your freezer a long time. So initially freezing foods does a pretty good job of locking in the nutrients at that beginning, but then the longer it sits in the freezer, especially if it becomes freezer burned, you're going to have pretty decent amounts of nutrient

loss. And raise your hand if you're like me and have those lingering bags of green beans in the bottom of the freezer. Those guys probably don't have a whole lot of vitamins left, unfortunately.

Speaker 1: [04:00](#)

Now contrast those two methods with a home canned jar of food that was made with freshly picked produce. That means it came from the market or the farm or the garden is fast as it could and got into those jars. That's actually going to be pretty decent as far as nutrients go. You'll definitely have some nutrient loss when that jar of food is heated in the canner, but after the lid goes on and it's sealed, the loss slows down because no oxygen can get into the jars and so you'll have a little bit of nutrient lost over the years as it sits on the shelf. But actually it will be far less than frozen or fresh food. Now, it's really important to compare apples to apples because when we compare home canned foods to a fresh vegetable out in the garden, it's never going to be equivalent, you know, to a garden salad or to a tomato right off the vine.

Speaker 1: [05:04](#)

That's not comparing the same thing. But when we're looking at being in the dead of winter, when all we can get is either frozen foods or dried foods and the garden is dead and under two feet of snow hit home. Canned foods are actually a really viable option in the absence of fresh vegetables. Like they're actually still nutritious for you. And even with vegetables that are in cool storage, let's say we have a carrot that's been in the fridge for four weeks cause they last a pretty long time. Keep in mind that vegetables began to lose their nutrients and vitamins as soon as they're harvested. So within about one to two weeks they're going to lose about half of their vitamin content. Yeah. And like I said, some of the vitamins are indeed lost during the heating process of canning, but they're kinda captured in there.

Speaker 1: [06:01](#)

And then after the lid goes on, the loss slows to only about five to 20% per year. So in the grand scheme of things, canning is actually a pretty good way to preserve foods and keep nutrient values. Now, just in case you think I'm making all of this up, there is research to back it up and here's what our study from UC Davis had to say. Losses of nutrients during fresh storage may be more substantial than consumers realize. Depending on the commodity, freezing and canning processes may preserve nutrient value while the initial thermal treatment of canned products can result in loss, nutrients are relatively stable during subsequent storage owing to the lack of oxygen. Frozen products lose fewer nutrients initially because of the short heating time in blanching, but they lose more nutrients during storage owing to oxidation. In addition to quality degradation,

fresh fruits and vegetables usually lose nutrients more rapidly than canned or frozen products.

Speaker 1: [07:17](#) Other variables such as storage and cooking conditions will also influence the final nutrient content of a food. Pretty Cool, Huh? I guess grandma had it figured out more than we thought. Now a few little reminders and things to keep in mind. The nutrient value of your home canned food is dependent on the other ingredients you add to your jars. So this is why I skip fruit or jam recipes that use tons of sugar because just because it's made at home doesn't mean it's automatically healthier for you if you add lots of sugar or junky ingredients. So that is something you definitely want to keep in mind as you're picking your recipes. And I have some really cool low sugar or honey sweetened jam recipes available that are a great option just to keep your fruits from being super sugary and overly sweet. Also remember the fresher the produce is that you put in your jars the better.

Speaker 1: [08:24](#) So if you have cucumbers or green beans that have been sitting in your fridge for three weeks before you can them, they've probably already lost quite a bit of nutritional value. Now this is especially important when you're canning things like cucumbers because they get really soft and mushy if you wait too long after you pick them and not to mention the nutrient loss that's involved. So with most of my fruits and vegetables, if I know I'm canning them and it's growing in my garden, I won't even pick them until I know I have a day either that same day or the following day to get them into jars asap. And especially with cucumbers because the sooner I get them in there and the cooler, I keep them while in waiting to can them, the crisper and crunchier my cucumbers will be, which of course is an absolute necessity because nobody likes a mushy pickle.

Speaker 1: [09:24](#) And lastly, there's nothing as good as fresh vegetables and no one's trying to argue that. And if I have a choice between eating a fresh salad from the garden or a jar of canned green beans, I'm going to pick the salad. But when you do have buckets and buckets of vegetables or fruits that you have to deal with and you can't eat it all fresh, you got to preserve it in some way, shape or form. And in the dead of winter when all I have is off season vegetables, the produce section, or fruits, even off season fruits or vegetables in the produce section of the grocery store. I'd still rather have my home canned fruits or vegetables that I knew were fresh when I put them in the jars and I know what's inside with all those ingredients. So all in all, canning is a really viable food preservation method and it's totally worth the effort it takes to learn it.

Speaker 1:

[10:26](#)

It's not hard, just a little bit of a learning curve, but you can master this in just a day or two of learning and you can then produce all sorts of amazing home canned foods for your family all year long. If your head is spinning just a little bit with all the numbers and processes I mentioned and you want to can, but you're not sure where to get started. I have got you covered. I created a full ebook complete with all the details and diagrams and charts you need to start canning safely right away without the overwhelm. Go to www.learnhowtocan.com for all the details, and that's it for this episode. It was a short one, but I hope it gave you some great ideas for canning at home and inspired you to try it out. If you've never done it before. Thanks for listening. I'd love it if you would subscribe and leave a quick review over on iTunes. That's all for now, but I'll see you in the next episode of the old fashioned on purpose podcast.