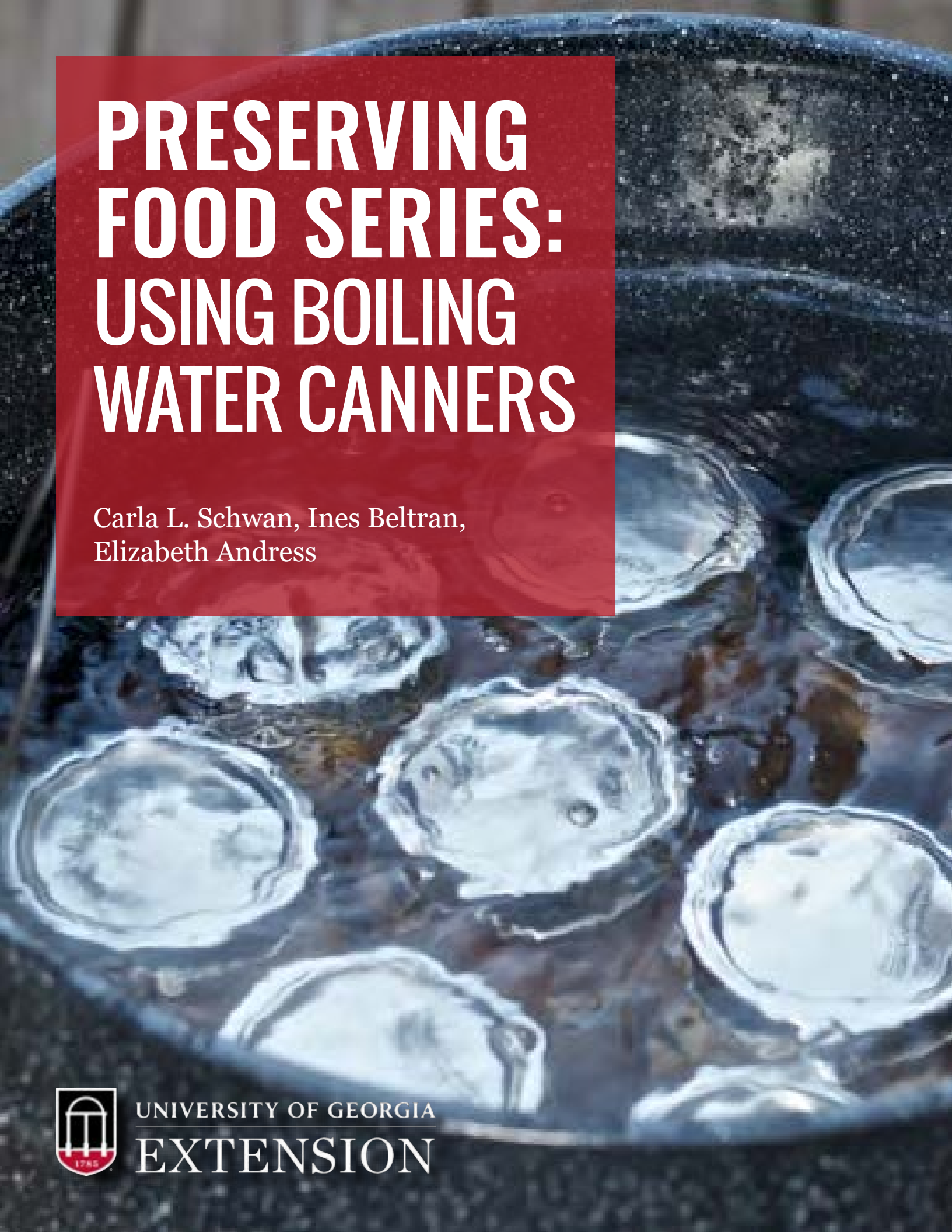


PRESERVING FOOD SERIES: USING BOILING WATER CANNERS

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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
EXTENSION

A ***water bath (boiling water) canner*** is a large cooking pot with a lid and a rack inside. Most boiling water canners are made of aluminum, enamel-coated or porcelain-covered steel, or stainless steel. Boiling water canners have fitted lids and removable racks that are either perforated or shaped wire racks. The rack keeps the jars from touching the bottom of the canner and allows water to circulate freely under the jars, promoting even heat distribution during the processing time.



The canner must be deep enough so that at least 1 in. of briskly boiling water will be over the tops of jars during processing. Some boiling water canners do not have completely flat bottoms; these will not work well on smooth-top ranges. The canner bottom should also be fairly flat for use on electric burners. Either a flat or ridged bottom may be used on a gas burner.

To ensure uniform processing of all jars, the canner should be no more than 4 in. wider than the diameter of the stove's burner. In other words, when centered on the burner or element, the canner should not extend more than 2 in. beyond the edge of the burner on any side.



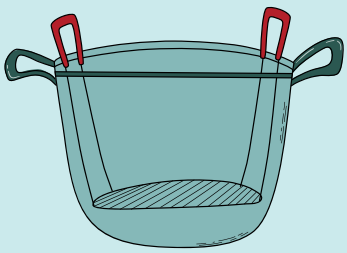
Using a wash kettle that spans over two burners is **not** recommended, as the jars in the center do not get enough heat. Before canning on a smooth-top range, check the range manufacturer's advice on its suitability for canning and the recommended maximum canner size for specific burners.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL BOILING WATER CANNING:

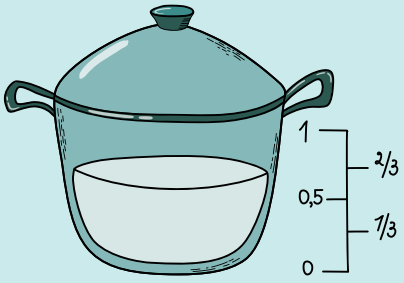
Read through all the instructions before beginning the canning process.

1

Before you start preparing your food, place the canner rack in the bottom of a boiling water canner.



For a canner load of pint jars, fill the canner half-full with clean warm water. For different jar sizes or quantities, adjust the water level so that it is 1 to 2 in. above the lids of the filled jars.



2

Center the canner over the burner and use a food thermometer to measure the water temperature, preheating it to 140 °F for raw-packed foods and 180 °F for hot-packed foods.

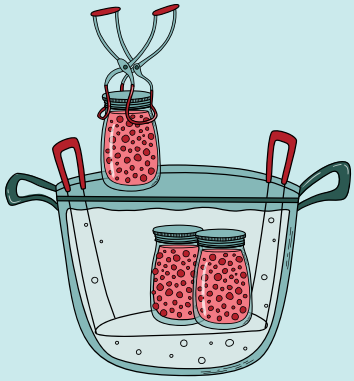


You can begin preparing food for your jars while this water is preheating.



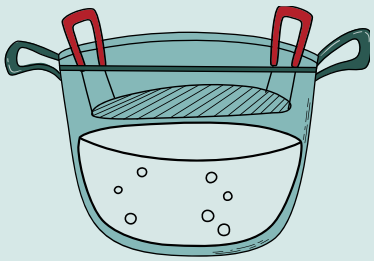
3

Load your labeled filled jars, fitted with lids and ring bands, into the canner one at a time, using a jar lifter. When moving jars with a jar lifter, make sure the jar lifter is securely positioned below the neck of the jar (below the ring band of the lid). **Always keep the jar upright**. Tilting the jar could cause food to spill into the sealing area of the lid, potentially leading to unsealed jars.



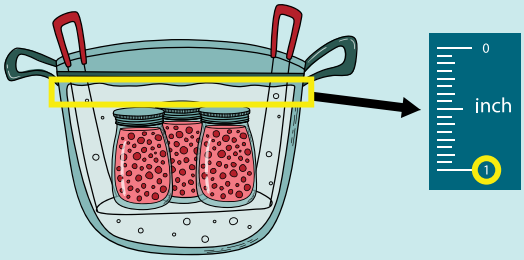
4

If you have a shaped wire rack that has handles to hold it on the canner sides, above the water in the canner, you can load jars onto the rack in the raised position and then use the handles to lower the rack with jars into the water. Make sure the rack is steady before adding all the jars, as the weight of the jars can cause the rack to drop or become unstable as you add more weight.



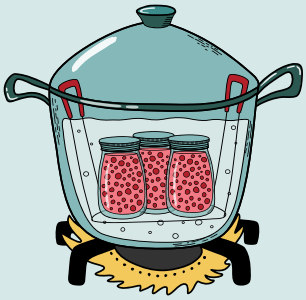
5

Add more hot water, if needed, so the water level is at least 1 in. above the jar tops. Pour the water around the jars and not directly onto them. For process times over 30 min, the water level should be 2 in. above the jars.



6

Turn the heat setting to its highest position, cover the canner with its lid and heat until the water boils vigorously (roiling boil).



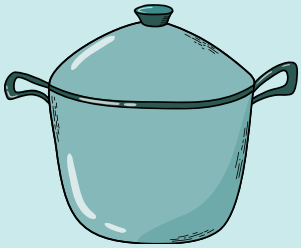
7

After the water begins boiling, set a timer for the total minutes required for processing the food.



8

Keep the canner covered for the whole processing time. The heat setting may be lowered as long as a gentle but complete boil is maintained for the entire processing time.



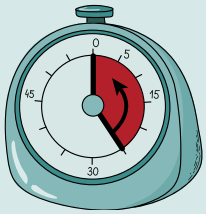
9

Add more boiling water during the process, if needed, to keep the water level above the jar tops. Pour the water around the jars and not directly onto them.



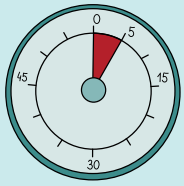
10

If the water stops boiling at any time during the process, turn the heat on its highest setting, bring the water back to a vigorous boil, and begin timing the process again from the beginning (in other words, using the total original process time). This may affect the final quality of the product, but it is extremely important for the safety of the food.



11

When the jars have been processed in boiling water for the recommended time, turn off the heat and remove the canner lid. Wait 5 min before removing the jars to allow the canner contents to settle. This waiting period is not required for the safety of the food when using USDA or University of Georgia processing times, however.



12

Using a jar lifter, remove the jars one at a time, being careful not to tilt the jars. Carefully place them directly onto a towel, cake cooling rack, or a padded surface, leaving at least 1 in. of space between the jars during cooling. Avoid placing the jars on a cold surface or in a cold draft.



13

Let the jars sit undisturbed while they cool, from 12 to 24 hr. Do not tighten the ring bands on the lids or push down on the center of the flat metal lid until the jar is completely cooled.



14

Remove the ring bands from the sealed jars. Place any unsealed jars in the refrigerator and use them first or follow recommended reprocessing guidelines.



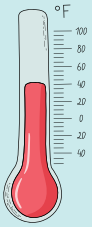
15

Gently wipe down the jars and lids with a damp, clean towel or paper towel to remove any residue, moisture, or stickiness left on the surface.



16

Store in a cool, dry place out of direct light.



17

Wash the boiling water canner with warm, soapy water and dry it thoroughly.



To absorb any remaining moisture and odors, store it with crumpled newspapers or paper towels at the bottom and around the rack.



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