



Association pour la santé environnementale du Québec  
Environmental Health Association of Québec

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### How to preserve food over winter

Over the previous articles, we have focused a lot on becoming more autonomous and healthier by producing our own fruits and vegetables or buying local products. However, summer in Quebec is short, and gardening will become impossible in the coming months. Having access to healthy and tasty food with a low carbon footprint is a benefit not only to your health but also to your environment. This time, we will focus on how to preserve your hard-earned labour during the long and cold Canadian winter. Although we cannot go in-depth for all the methods, you will find resources at the end of the article to guide you further!

Jars—Your Masson jars and other empty glass containers are convenient when it comes to preserving food over a long period. Whether it is for jams, stewed fruits or vegetable sauces, the possibilities are endless to save your tasty summer harvest.

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- Jams: they are the easiest to make and are preserved because of all the sugar they contain. Compared to store-bought preservative-heavy jams, homemade jams are tastier and can be tailored to suit your taste. The recipe is straightforward: 1 kilogram of fruits for 1 kilogram of sugar. You can put less sugar if you prefer your jams to be less sweet. In this case, you can use around 700-800 grams, but keep in mind that the less sugar you use, the faster you have to eat it! For more flavours, do not hesitate to add spices or herbs, such as star anise, vanilla or basil.
- Stewed fruits: Quebec's apples and blueberries are starting to be in season! Do not hold yourself back because of their short lifespan: you can stew them. Although stewed fruits cannot be preserved as long as jam, you can still sterilize them in boiling water. That way, you could have delicious stewed fruits throughout the cold winter. The combinations of fruits, spices and herbs are endless, so have fun customizing your sweet snack!
- Vegetable sauces: The most common would be the tomato sauce. Peel them, cut them, cook them with herbs and spices, and trap it in a jar for yearlong consumption. But do not forget your zucchinis or eggplants to feel like it's summer in December. Recipes are up to your imagination and your own taste!

Pickles—Making pickles out of your fruits and vegetables is a great way to preserve food in the long term. Pickles and other fermented food are great for your health and have been used in many cuisines for a long time. The Japanese love pickling their vegetables, and Korean kimchi is now world-famous. This process helps to produce probiotic bacteria, excellent for gut flora and skin health. It also creates antioxidants, vitamins B and A. Pickling



uses vinegar, water, salt and sugar, the proportions and types of which depend on the recipe, your taste and the vegetables.

**Drying**—An easy way of preserving herbs, fruits and vegetables is dehydration. It can produce delicious snacks as well as a technique of creating unique meals. Herbs are the easiest, hang them in your kitchen, and they will dry within a few days. Fruits, due to their high sugar and acid content, can also be sun-dried safely. However, be sure to get a dehydrator if you want to dry vegetables!

**Freezing**—Unlike a dehydrator, we are all equipped with a freezer at home, and it is a fantastic instrument to preserve food. Below the freezing temperature, the process of food spoilage slows down drastically. However, do check which fruits and vegetables can be frozen, as it might not work for some!

### **Online Resources:**

Bustle. 7 Seriously Amazing Health Benefits Of Eating Pickles You Probably Didn't Know About, <https://www.bustle.com/p/7-health-benefits-of-pickles-fermented-foods-you-probably-already-eat-on-the-reg-9254807>

My Recipes. The Beginner Guide's to Pickling, <https://www.myrecipes.com/how-to/beginners-guide-to-pickling>

National Center for Home Food Preservation. <https://nchfp.uga.edu/index.html>

Homestead Dreamer. Unraveling the Mystery: Water Bath vs Pressure Canning, <http://www.homesteaddreamer.com/2016/10/10/water-bath-vs-pressure-canning/>

Pick you own. How to Can Freeze Dry and Preserve Any Fruit or Vegetable at Home, <https://pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm#Canning>



One Green Planet. How to Make Healthy Dehydrated Fruit,

<https://www.onegreenplanet.org/vegan-food/how-to-make-healthy-dehydrated-fruit/>

National Center for Home Food Preservation. How do I Freeze?

<https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze.html>