



Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe

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Canning in a Modern Kitchen

Not that long ago, stovetop choices were limited to gas or exposed coil burners. Today, the simple cooktop has evolved into a state-of-the-art system. However, some of these new stovetops aren't safe for canning. Also, some canner manufacturers say to not use their canners on certain cooktops. So what are you to do?

If you have a smooth cooktop and the manufacturer says canning is allowed, be sure the canning equipment is appropriate. Boiling water canning on smooth top ranges requires either canners specifically designed for that purpose or large, deep, flat-bottomed stockpots no larger than the cooking surface.

If your stovetop's manufacturer says not to can on it, your alternatives for canning are either to install a permanent set of electric coil or gas burners as a second range top, or to purchase a portable electric coil or gas burner. Important decisions now come in to play. An installed range top requires the utilities to support it and can be quite expensive. As for portable burners, not all models are appropriate for canning. First of all, check the burner manufacturer's specifications or contact their customer service department for information about the appropriate use of a particular model for canning.



Here are a few basic guidelines for you to keep in mind when selecting a portable burner for canning purposes:

- The burner must be level, sturdy and secure. Look for enough height to allow air to flow under the burner, but not such that it will become unsteady with a full, heavy canner resting on it.
- Look for a burner diameter that is no more than four inches smaller than the diameter of your canner. In other words, the canner should not extend more than two inches from the burner on any side.
- For electric burners, the wattage should be about equal to that of a typical household range large burner, which is 1750W or higher.
- The burner needs a housing that will hold up to high heat for long heating periods and not damage counter tops with reflected heat.
- Do not use higher BTU burners (over 12,000 BTUs) as they could produce so much heat that the recommended come-up time for canning could be altered, potentially producing an unsafe final product. It could also damage your canner.

If contacting the burner manufacturer about canning, specify whether you are asking about pressure canning (much more heat concentration) or boiling water canning. If the manufacturer's directions have been followed, and canning problems occur, then you must take it up with the manufacturer.

Source: http://www.clemson.edu/extension/food_nutrition/canning/tips/19smooth_top_alternatives.html

Are Two-Piece Lids Really Necessary?

Home canners have been reusing one-piece lids from pickle and jelly jars for years. You can even buy new one-piece, screw-on lids! Yet, food preservation research continues to recommend and support the two-piece lid system....does it really make that much difference?

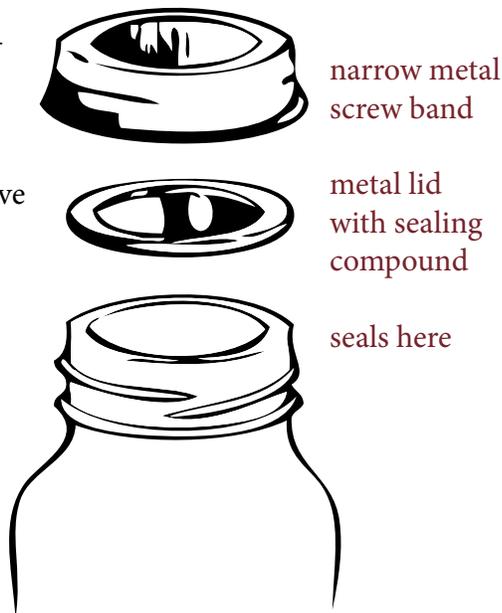
It does! Commercial canners fill containers to the top, then a device sucks all the air from the jar before the lid is quickly attached. Home canners don't have those vacuum-sealing machines. What we do have is the two-piece lid, which works well if users follow research-based guidelines.

This self-sealing system consists of a flat metal lid held in place by a metal screw band during processing. A trough around the edge of the lid holds a rubber-like, colored gasket. While the jars are being processed, the lid gasket softens and flows slightly to cover the jar-sealing surface, yet allows air to escape from the jar. The gasket then forms an airtight seal as the jar cools.

Buy only the quantity of lids you will use in a year. Carefully follow the manufacturer's directions for preparing lids to make sure you get a good seal. Check all metal lids carefully. Don't use old, dented or deformed lids or lids with gaps or other defects in the sealing gasket.

In home canning, one-piece lids allow air to be trapped within the sealed jar. This can permit bacteria to thrive and spoilage to occur, and that spoilage can make you ill and even lead to death. So why take the chance?

Source: <http://extension.missouri.edu/p/GH1452>



Can I sell my canned foods?

Many people sell home-canned foods at places such as farmers markets and craft fairs, but is it legal? It depends on the type of product and where and how it is sold. In Kansas and Missouri, any canned goods sold to grocery stores or other distributors require a food processors license and cannot be produced in a regular home kitchen. Also, if selling products across state lines, FDA or USDA regulations need to be followed, which will not allow for production in a normal home kitchen.

In Kansas, fruit jams, jellies and canned fruits sold directly to consumers, such as through a farmers market, do not require a license and so can be made in a home kitchen. Selling other products such as sauerkraut, pickles, canned vegetables and most salsas will require a license, so cannot be made at home. In Missouri, if selling less than \$50,000 worth of products per year and selling direct to consumer, fruit jams and jellies do not require licensing for sales, so can be made at home. However, check with your local public health inspector as regulations may vary in different localities.

More information on Kansas regulations for selling canned foods are available in: <http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF3138.pdf> and Missouri regulations: <http://extension.missouri.edu/p/N1304>



Local Contact Information:

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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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