

Autumn

Canning is a delightful way to preserve tradition, even for beginners.

IN A JAR

BY DENISE GEE / PHOTOGRAPHY CHARLES WALTON IV

At just a pink slipper heel above 5 feet, my grandmother would stand at her steaming stove for hours. Dressed in a faded gingham housecoat hugging decades of good eating, she'd make any number of sweet preserves, jellies, chutneys, conserves, and relishes.

There among sticky pots, ladles, labels, jars, lids, and fresh seasonal fruits and vegetables, she'd stand on her tiptoes to stir a gargantuan pot of preserves as if she were a child reaching deep into a cookie jar. Perhaps she was. "Get over here, girl," she'd say when I'd drift in. "Come see what you've been missing."

My grandmother, "Aunt Freddie" Bailey, made a name for herself selling hot pepper jellies and fruit preserves via mail order, and from her preserves cookbook, *Aunt Freddie's Pantry*. And though she's no longer with us, her Natchez, Mississippi, jelly business carries on (but on a much smaller scale) through my brother. Now I'm also warming to the idea of preserving this family tradition. I know she'd be pleased.

SPICED APPLE JELLY

- 4 pounds cooking apples
- 2 cups water
- 1½ cups apple cider vinegar
- 2 (3-inch) sticks cinnamon
- 2 teaspoons whole cloves
- 3 cups sugar

- **Remove** stem and blossom ends from apples. Cut apples into large slices. (Do not peel or core.)
- **Combine** apples, 2 cups water, and next 3 ingredients in a Dutch oven, and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 25 minutes or until

apples are tender. Cool slightly.

- **Pour** apple mixture through a jelly bag or a colander lined with 4 layers of cheesecloth into a bowl, reserving apple liquid in bowl. (Do not press or squeeze mixture through bag or colander.) Add water to apple liquid to equal 4 cups.

- **Combine** apple liquid and sugar in a large saucepan; bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring until sugar dissolves. Boil 30 to 35 minutes or until thermometer registers 220° and jelly mixture sheets from a spoon. Remove from heat, and skim off foam with a metal spoon.

- **Pour** jelly into hot, sterilized jars quickly, filling to ¼ inch from top; wipe jar rims. Cover at once with metal lids, and screw on bands.

- **Process** in boiling-water bath 5 minutes; cool. **Yield:** 3 half pints.

*Anna Robinson
Oak Ridge, Tennessee*

NANNIE'S CHOWCHOW

- 5½ pounds green tomatoes, cored and chopped
- 2¼ pounds onions, chopped
- 2 pounds green bell peppers, seeded and chopped
- 1 pound red bell peppers, seeded and chopped
- 1 (5-pound) head cabbage, shredded
- ½ cup salt
- 1 quart water
- 1½ quarts white vinegar (5% acidity)
- 1½ cups sugar
- 2 cup mustard seeds
- 2 tablespoons celery seeds
- 1 tablespoon whole allspice

- **Combine** first 5 ingredients in a large nonmetallic container. Com-



Spiced Apple Jelly, Apple Pie Filling in a Jar, Pear Chutney, and Nannie's Chowchow capture the season's fruits and vegetables to be enjoyed throughout the year.

bine salt and water, stirring until dissolved; pour over vegetables. Cover and refrigerate 8 hours or overnight.

- **Drain** vegetables; discard liquid.
- **Combine** vinegar and next 4 ingredients in a large stockpot; add vegetables. Bring mixture to a boil over medium heat; reduce heat, and simmer 10 minutes.
- **Pack** hot mixture into hot jars, filling to ½ inch from top. Remove air bubbles; wipe jar rims. Cover at once with metal lids, and screw on bands.
- **Process** in boiling-water bath 10 minutes. **Yield:** 12 pints.



APPLE PIE FILLING IN A JAR

- 2 quarts cold water
- ¼ cup ascorbic-citric powder
- 10 pounds cooking apples
- 2 quarts water
- 5½ cups sugar
- 1½ cups ClearJel*
- 1 tablespoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2½ cups water
- 5 cups apple juice
- ¾ cup lemon juice

- **Combine** 2 quarts cold water and

ascorbic-citric powder in a bowl.

- **Peel**, core, and cut apples into ½-inch slices; immediately add slices to ascorbic mixture.
- **Bring** 2 quarts water to a boil in a large Dutch oven. Remove 6 cups apple slices from ascorbic mixture, and add to Dutch oven; return to a boil. Boil 1 minute. Remove apples from boiling water; keep warm. Repeat procedure 3 more times with remaining apple slices; keep warm. Discard ascorbic mixture.
- **Combine** sugar and next 3 ingredients in a Dutch oven; gradually stir

- in 2½ cups water and apple juice.
- **Cook** over medium-high heat, stirring constantly, until mixture thickens and boils. Add lemon juice, and boil 1 minute, stirring constantly. Add apple slices, stirring to coat.
- **Pack** hot fruit into hot jars, filling to 1 inch from top. Remove air bubbles; wipe jar rims. Cover at once with metal lids, and screw on bands.
- **Process** in boiling-water bath 25 minutes. **Yield:** 6 quarts (enough for 6 double-crust pies).

*Elizabeth Andress
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Note: For ascorbic-citric powder, we used Fruit-Fresh.

*ClearJel is available from Sweet Celebrations, Inc.; 1-800-328-6722.

PEAR CHUTNEY

- 1 pound onions, quartered
- 9 cloves garlic
- 5 pounds firm pears, peeled, cored, and chopped
- 1 quart white vinegar (5% acidity)
- 6 cups sugar
- 1 (24-ounce) package raisins
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard
- 1½ cups chopped crystallized ginger
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- 3 tablespoons mustard seeds

- **Position** the knife blade in food processor bowl; add half of onion quarters and garlic. Pulse 4 or 5 times or until onion quarters are chopped. Transfer to a Dutch oven; repeat procedure with remaining onion quarters and garlic.

- **Add** chopped pear and vinegar to onion mixture; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, and simmer 20 to 25 minutes or until chopped pear is tender.

- **Add** sugar, stirring until dissolved; cook over medium heat 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add raisins and dry mustard; cook 20 minutes.

- **Dray** crystallized ginger, ground ginger, and mustard seeds; cook over medium heat 10 minutes or until mixture thickens.

- **Pour** hot mixture into hot jars, filling to ½ inch from top. Remove air bubbles; wipe jar rims. Cover at once with metal lids, and screw on bands.

- **Process** in boiling-water bath 10 minutes. **Yield:** 7 pints.

*Jean Graham
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PHOTO STYLING: ASHLEY J. WYATT