



Food Preservation Series: Course 2 Canning with Christa Bandringa

About Christa – a practicing artist and photographer who enjoys exhibiting locally, Christa has a Masters in Art Education from UCSB with a B.F.A in printmaking and photography. Having taught visual art for over 13 years from ages 5 to college level, Christa teaches the art and science of creating. Her curriculum has varied from beginning design skills to most 2-D mediums such as photography and screen-printing.

Christa grew up on a farm where her parents grew fruit trees, luscious gardens of vegetables, and large patches of black berries organically. With this abundance of homegrown produce, Christa's mother would can till the pantry was filled.

About Canning Course and Canning – now Christa would like to pass on her knowledge of canning with an intro-level workshop. This workshop will demonstrate how to can jam using traditional methods with fruit and calcium based pectin, along with various low-glycemic approaches. Each participant will take home a small jar of jam and sample 'canned' goods made by professionals from around the Ojai Valley.

Home canning might seem more like an activity your grandparents did than something busy people in our day would embrace. But canning homegrown and local foods is undergoing a revival, and many people now see canning as a key element of eating local, sustainable, healthy food. Here are some reasons you might like to join the ranks of modern canners:

1. Keep it local, year-round

If you don't preserve food when it's in season, you generally have to rely on grocery store, out-of-season produce that was shipped from far away. By canning local or homegrown foods when they're in season and at the peak of their nutrition and flavor, you can enjoy those foods through winter. This is a smart choice for personal and environmental health.

2. Avoid additives

By canning your own foods, you know exactly what you're adding to those jars. Foods from the store—whether processed foods or commercially canned foods—can contain a whole host of additives, from artificial colorings and flavorings to loads of added salt.

3. Avoid BPA in can liners

If you do like using canned foods in your kitchen, note that most of those metal cans at the grocery store have a liner inside the cans that contains a controversial chemical called BPA. Tests show that BPA—because it is in constant contact with the foods in the cans—does leach into the foods. Tons of evidence shows that BPA is a dangerous and potent endocrine disruptor linked to several serious conditions.

4. Supplies are pretty inexpensive and easy to find

Get a basic water-bath canner—new or used—some jars and lids, and a few other simple utensils, and you're all set to start the process of home canning.

5. Have fun!

Canning can easily become a way to connect with friends or neighbors. A lot about our modern food system is isolated—consumers are almost completely isolated from growers and food processors. Growing your own food—or getting it directly from a farmer at a local farmers market—and canning it with friends' breaks down such isolation and create more meaningful connections.