

INTRODUCTION

Every year in early August when the farmers markets are overflowing with goodies and the garden is producing abundantly, I get overwhelmed. All the ideas I had in late winter and early spring as my husband and I pored over seed catalogues dreaming of what we would grow and “put up” for the following winter somehow disappear in my head.

For years, I’ve collected my ideas and notes and recipes on scraps of paper and digital sticky-notes that have been stuffed into notebooks and have littered my counters. But I finally decided enough was enough - I wanted everything in one place and I wanted easy-to-find information about *any* food that might someday make its way into my kitchen so that when I’m staring down 200 pounds of peaches or our neighbor calls after a fishing trip and offers us a freshly caught salmon, I wouldn’t be left wondering what my options were and none of it would go to waste.

Thus, when I started writing this book, I intended to make it a very specific guide for every food I could think of. But when I passed more than 580 foods and found myself writing the same directions over and over (after all, oysters, clams, abalone, and octopus are treated rather the same and there are hundreds of different types of squashes in the world!), I found that it had become more of a culinary encyclopedia rather than a practical kitchen guide, so I decided to take the book in a different direction.

Because of that you hold in your hands a much more powerful tool for knowing how to preserve any food you can lay your hands on. I’ve purposely not written it as an authoritative tome, but to be an at-a-glance guide to get you going when that abandoned plum tree down the road offers up a bumper crop year.

Thus, I’ve been audacious enough to name this book “How to Preserve ANYTHING.” I’ve compiled the information so that you can (hopefully!) easily use the information contained here and apply it to any food. If you think I’ve missed something, PLEASE feel free to let me know and I’ll do what I can to rectify it in upcoming editions.

On that note, I should also point out what this book is *not*, as with a subject this broad, it could encompass a vast number of books! This book mentions but purposely does not address in-depth long-term food storage for survival, herbal medicine, foraging, charcuterie, cheesemaking, juicing, or brewing traditional fermented beverages. These are gorgeous, lovely subjects that I love talking about, but to address them in-depth is beyond the scope of this book.

This book is to get you started, to help you keep waste in your kitchen to a minimum, and to feed your family frugally through the winter based on the summer’s abundance.

The instructions and methods in this book assume that you will consume the foods within a year so that when crops are abundant again, your shelves will be ready to receive a new batch of freshly preserved foods.

And please note that even though I generally categorize the plant foods here by their botanical families - merely because those families tend to share ease and methods of preservation - there are a few various food items that I’ve categorized according to their *culinary* uses, not their *botanical* ones. For example, botanically speaking, tomatoes and cucumbers are fruits, but in the everyday kitchen, we don’t use them as such - we use them as vegetables. Likewise, botanically, rhubarb is a vegetable, but culinarily, we treat it as a fruit. Thus, in this book, I’ve listed each food in whatever chapter fits it best in a *culinary* setting. If you are a botanist, please don’t hold a grudge against me!

Lastly, I have included a few recipes at the end of each chapter to give a few examples and benchmarks of the preservation methods described throughout the chapter. They’re included to get you started, to inspire ideas, and to give you a firm foundation for developing the recipes that will become your new family favorites.

Here’s to eating well in all seasons!

Kresha
kresha@nourishingjoy.com