

Storing Locally Grown and Wild Food Syllabus

- I. Preserving food is one of the most important aspects of keeping a pantry filled with local food.
 - A. Foods are seasonal
 - 1. In order to enjoy local foods year round, we have to preserve foods.
 - B. Different foods can be preserved in different ways
 - 1. this can affect how you cook with them, how they taste, and their texture.
 - C. Sometimes people preserve foods because they like the preserved form better than the fresh form.
 - 1. Pickles
 - 2. Ham
 - 3. Jerky
 - 4. Sauerkraut
 - 5. Yogurt
- II. Main methods of preservation:
 - A. Freezing
 - B. Dehydrating
 - C. Canning
 - D. Fermenting
- III. Freezing
 - A. Pros - keeps vegetables and fruits closest to their fresh taste and texture
 - B. Cons - Storage uses electricity, freezer space is limited.
 - C. Greens
 - 1. blanching
 - D. Berries - generally can be frozen as is. Sometimes raspberries and strawberries need to be frozen on a tray and then repackaged in bags or containers to keep them from becoming a solid lump.
 - E. Meat
 - 1. Avoid oxygen.
 - F. Pre-prepped foods
- IV. Dehydrating
 - A. Pros - lasts a long time, doesn't take freezer space, dehydrated food also takes up less space in general.
 - B. Cons - changes taste and texture (but sometimes this can be used to our advantage). Depending on the food, it may take time and technique to rehydrate.
- V. Canning
 - A. Pros - preserve food without using freezer space - with meat, especially it's tenderizing. With fish, bones dissolve, so you get more of those nutrients if you eat the juice too.

- B. Cons - with fruit and veggies, can compromise taste and texture, slightly fewer nutrients. Can't let your canned goods get frozen. Also, need to be careful of botulism.
- C. <https://extension.umn.edu/preserving-and-preparing/home-canning-basics>
- D. https://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/publications_usda.html

VI. Fermenting

- A. Pros - Fermentation involves propagation of probiotic Lactobacillus bacteria which greatly aids in digestion (similar to yogurt), makes some nutrients more bioavailable and actually adds new vitamins and nutrients due to the fermentation process, pretty easy to do. The safest way to preserve veggies (Lactobacillus keeps other bacteria from being able to grow).
- B. Cons - Fermentation turns the sugars and carbs in vegetables into acid, this changes the taste and texture of the vegetable. Sometimes this is a really good thing, sometimes the result is not so delicious. Greens, in particular, are quite smelly when fermented. Over time, certain things can become slimy, soft, and very strongly flavored - still edible, just not always as fun to eat. Traditionally when something became "over-fermented" people would make soup with them.
- C. Safe fermentation requires a saline anaerobic environment. This can be achieved by making sure the vegetables remain submerged in a brine.
- D. Many foods can be fermented. Curing meat, making fish sauce, and other traditional foods like Icelandic "rotten" shark meat require knowledge and attention to tradition and technique to be done safely.

VII. Other methods of preservation:

- A. Herb salts - Finely chop/blend herbs, mix with salt, dehydrate (mixing regularly). The salt will crystallize as it dries, preserving the vibrant flavor of the herb. Works well with strongly flavored herbs, like garlic, lovage, ramps, rosemary, etc.
- B. Cold Smoking - Very old method of preservation, commonly done with fish and other meats. Best when combined with a curing or brining process. The smoke preserves the meat, and the meat is often also partially (or fully) dried in the process. The drier the meat, the longer it will last.
- C. Curing - Applying salt and sugar to meat, the sugar draws out the liquid from the meat, and the salt penetrates into the meat, preserving it. This is how ham and bacon are made. When stored in a cool, dark, humidity controlled place, and especially when the meat is also cold smoked, cured meat will last considerably longer than uncured meat.
- D. Confit - Salting meat (overnight), slowly simmering meat in fat over a long period, then storing the cooked meat submerged in fat. When stored in a cool, dark place confit can last for months.
- E. Salting - Packing meat in salt in order to preserve.

VIII. Hands-on activity:

-Make Sauerkraut