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new to canning or thinking about trying a new method of food preservation this year, decide which food preservation method you will use before gathering supplies. There are only two safe methods of canning foods—the boiling water bath and pressure canning methods. All other types of canning are not safe. To reduce your risk of contracting a food-borne illness, you should only consume food that has been preserved using one of these two methods and precisely follow a research-based recipe. Research-based recipe sources include home canning publications from the Cooperative Extension Service, the Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving and the National Center for Home Food Preservation's website <https://nchfp.uga.edu/>. Be aware that not every canning recipe on social media sites is from a research-based source.

To preserve food using the boiling water bath method, you need a large pot with a tight-fitting lid. The pot should be deep enough to have boiling water reach at least two inches over the tops of your jars. If you decide to can your vegetables, be sure to use a pressure canner and make sure the one you have is in good working

order.

You will also need a rack to sit your jars on, so they do not touch the bottom of the canner. If you purchase a new canner, it will come with one. Proper canning methods use mason-type canning jars that were created with thicker glass and specifically designed for canning. Other types of jars, such as craft or storage jars, will not work and may even break under the high temperatures used during processing.

A wide-mouth funnel will help you pour food into a jar. You also need lids and rings to seal the jars. We recommend using a two-piece ring and lid set. You will also need a jar lifter to move jars in and out of the canner. A headspace measurer/bubble remover will make sure you have the correct amount of space between the lid and the food. You do not want to overfill your jar or have your food touching the lid as this will prevent the lid from getting a good vacuum seal. If you do not have a good vacuum seal, bacteria can get into the food. You should always follow a recipe's directions for headspace but generally jams and jelly need a quarter inch of head space,

acidic foods like tomatoes, pickles and relishes

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