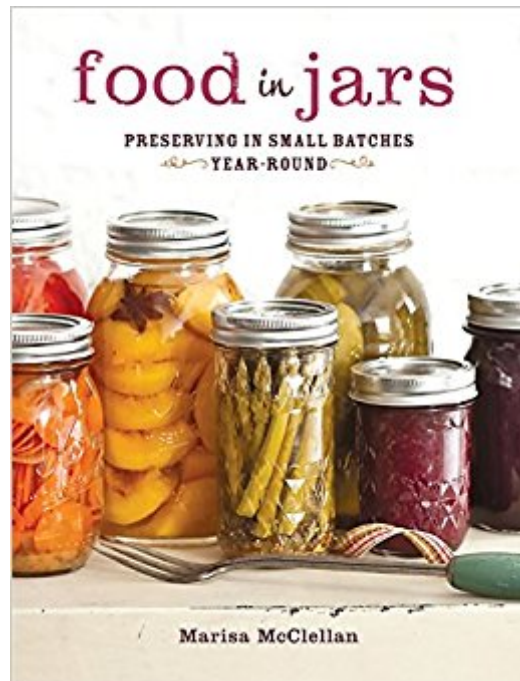




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Food In Jars: Preserving In Small Batches Year-Round



Synopsis

Popular food blogger Marisa McClellan takes you through all manner of food in jars, storing away the tastes of all seasons for later. Basics like jams and jellies are accompanied by pickles, chutneys, preserves, whole fruit, tomato sauces, salsas, marmalades, nut butters, seasonings, and more. Small batches make them easy projects for a canning novice to tackle, and the flavors of vanilla bean, sage, and pepper will keep more experienced jammers coming back for more. Sample some Apricot Jam and Rhubarb Syrup in the spring, and then try your hand at Blueberry Butter and Peach Salsa in the summer; Dilly Beans and Spicy Pickled Cauliflower ring in the fall, while Three-Citrus Marmalade and Cranberry Ketchup are the harbingers of winter. Stories of wild blackberry jam and California Meyer lemon marmalade from McClellan's childhood make for a read as pleasurable as it is delicious; her home-canned food learned from generations of the original "foodies" feeds the soul as well as the body in more than 100 recipes.

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Customer Reviews

Library Journal "Everything about this book, from the attractive design chock-full of enticing pictures to the ingredients, demystifies the canning process and alleviates associated fears. VERDICT: This is an excellent introduction to preserving. The author keeps things simple by using accessible ingredients and small batches. Washington Post "McClellan's voice is friendly and reassuring; the batches are manageable.

True to its name, this recipe collection covers territory beyond the ping of a sealed lid, such as salts, syrups, granolas, stocks and butters. •Relish!“When there’s too much of a good thing that’s the time to can just a couple of jars of something wonderful with a recipe from Food in Jars. • Seattle Times “I’m delighted that McClellan’s Food in Jars blog is now a book [it’s] not restricted to jams and pickles; it’s also got everything from nut butters to salsas. • Sante “A must have for any amateur or professional chef serious about gardening, farm-to-table, organic, and going green. •Bookslut

Marisa McClellan is a former writer and editor for Slashfood, and has a master’s degree in writing from St. Joseph’s University. These days, she writes about canning, pickling, and preserving at Food in Jars (three times nominated by Saveur magazine for a Best Food Blog award). She lives in Philadelphia with her husband. Visit her at foodinjars.com

Canning is something that’s intimidated me. I knew I wanted to be able to preserve fruits and vegetables and save freezer space but it seemed so complicated and time consuming that I put off doing it. This book simplifies the process and explains the why’s and hows and seems quite complete with ingredients and times. I initially browsed the book then started to read it and it’s like having an experienced friend guiding at the beginning. Followed by some intriguing recipes - I never thought of canning brussel sprouts. I can truthfully say that I am enjoying this book as instructive and interesting.

I have recently become interested in canning and I took this book out of the library, along with the Ball Complete Book of Preserving and Put ‘Em Up!. I liked the idea of the recipes being for small batches of 3-4 pints, or 3-8 half pints, since my kitchen is small, and my pantry is non-existent. I started by reading through the information on the canning process from the Ball Book, before moving on to the tasty sounding recipes in this one. I skimmed the recipe titles and the chatty little paragraphs that introduced each one, and carefully marked recipes that I wanted to try. Once I had tried a few simple recipes in the Ball Book (considered such a classic and trusted source, full of time-tested information), I came back to this one and tried a few recipes. Specifically I did the Basic Tomato Salsa, Pickled Brussels Sprouts, Pickled Zucchini, Caramelized Red Onion Relish, and Cranberry Syrup. This is when I started to notice the exceptional number of typos, and instances of missing necessary information. In most recipes it seems that the author has cut and pasted text

from previous recipes. (Understandable when it is the same phrase "Prepare a water bath...") In some instances, an ingredient is listed twice in a row. In others it does not list the amount of headspace needed, which is vitally important in successful canning. I can only assume that the writer and publisher were in such a rush to get the book out and capitalize on the author's successful blog, that no one stopped to edit the text, or more importantly to TEST the recipes. I noticed that while I followed each and every recipe exactly as written on the page, weighing or measuring the ingredients carefully, I had wildly different results with the recipes. In the Basic Salsa I had enough salsa to fill 4 pint jars, but the recipe only called for 3 to be prepared, leaving me with an extra pint of salsa to be used immediately. The recipe for Pickled Brussels Sprouts called for 2 lbs of sprouts, which I carefully prepared. Unfortunately, they came nowhere close to filling the 4 pint jars the recipe indicated, so I had to quickly move some sprouts from the fourth jar into each of the other three jars, AND make an extra half-batch of brine to cover the sprouts. This left me with 3 jars and a partial jar to use right away. The recipe for Caramelized Red Onion Relish also came nowhere close to filling the 3 jars it said it would. I had only 2.5 jars filled, though I do have to note that the relish was absolutely delicious and was raved about by friends and family. I will be making it again, albeit with a slightly larger quantity of onions, based on my own notes, so I can be sure it will actually fill the jars. Finally we have the Cranberry Syrup. I am from New England, and love the flavor of Cranberry year round. I was excited to make this syrup for use in seltzer and mixed drinks. Sadly the flavor was not wonderful. It tasted primarily of sugar, and lacked the brightness and tartness associated with cranberries. I believe increasing the amount of cranberries, and adding some lemon juice might go a long way with improving this syrup. Sadly, I won't be trying this myself, as I am still learning about canning and am not comfortable creating my own recipes yet. As a frame of reference for readers who are considering this book, I created 15 different canning recipes in the last two weeks (since I started). Seven were from the Ball Book, and each came out perfectly as described and outlined. I created 3 from Put 'Em Up!, and again, each came out exactly as described. The final 5 were from Food In Jars, and NONE of the 5 recipes I tried came out as described in the book. They lacked vital information and contained numerous typos that should have been caught during editing. While I understand a typo may slip by even a careful editor, the ones I noticed were numerous and glaring. While the pictures are pretty, it does not make up for lack of substance with the actual information. Also, this novel-style binding is highly inconvenient while cooking. One has to either break the spine to lay it flat on the counter, or make a copy of a recipe to use it. Like many other readers I would urge prospective canners to check out the Ball Complete Book of Preserving instead. The information is excellent and thorough. If you would like to

move beyond that, I would also highly recommend Put 'Em Up!, which is arranged by type of food you wish to preserve, and includes recipes for canning, freezing, drying and fermenting. That book was clearly tested and edited before being dropped on the public.

Move over caviar, truffles, and paté -- small batch, in-season, Food In Jars is the New gourmet food. Marisa has taken the ancient necessity and tradition of preserving seasonal crops, added some updated safety measures, scaled it down to a size manageable in the most modest of kitchens, modernized the flavors and it is pure genius. You don't need to grow a garden, have a food cellar, nor do you need a "cook's kitchen with all the fancy gadgets or counter space. You can create a few jars of culinary delights in your tiny apartment kitchen with the most basic kitchen tools after a quick trip to your local farmer's market, or even the plain old grocery store. Never canned anything? Don't fret. Marisa has simplified it for you making the technique very approachable for even a culinary novice. Still afraid to try it or have lingering questions? No problem. Head over to Marisa's website and blog at foodinjars.com and she will personally answer your questions. Still think it's for old people or your parents' generation? Think again. Impress guests of your next party by serving cocktails made with Marisa's delicious syrups. Meyer Lemon Drop anyone? Or my favorite, a Rhubarb Martini made with the Rhubarb Syrup. To Die For. Having a kids' (or work) party? Make Italian sodas with those syrups. Looking for a quick and easy hors d'oeuvre to serve? Add some Amy's Tomato Jam to your cheese board - or, gently heat into a glaze for meatballs (Coleman Organic Hearty Italian chicken meatballs are a perfect flavor combination! Sold at Costco). Or, pour a jar of Roasted Corn Salsa over some nachos and it doesn't get much easier than that. For dessert just fill some tiny tart cups with the Meyer Lemon Curd. I really love having these little homemade jars of heaven stored in my small cabinet that I can rely on anytime I need to pull something together in a hurry and they are fresh flavors that you just cannot buy - anywhere. I like this book so much, I bought some extra copies to give as gifts and just had to buy her two subsequent books and all look to be just as good as the first. Marisa has given my cooking repertoire a fresh and enjoyable update, and given me some creative inspiration. Note: If you are new to preserving, please be prepared for a little bit of trial and error because there is going to be a learning curve. Be patient, make some mistakes, learn from them, and you will be better prepared to deal with the inevitable

variations that occur in cooking times and yields. Fresh fruits and vegetables vary in their moisture content due to differences in the weather during their growing season but you will soon learn how to effectively deal with these variations. One of the benefits of creating small batches is the reduction in risk should a batch not turn out perfect in the beginning. Also, Marisa's recipes are good places to start and after you've tried them as written, it is easy to tweak the spices to your taste - just as you would any recipe.

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