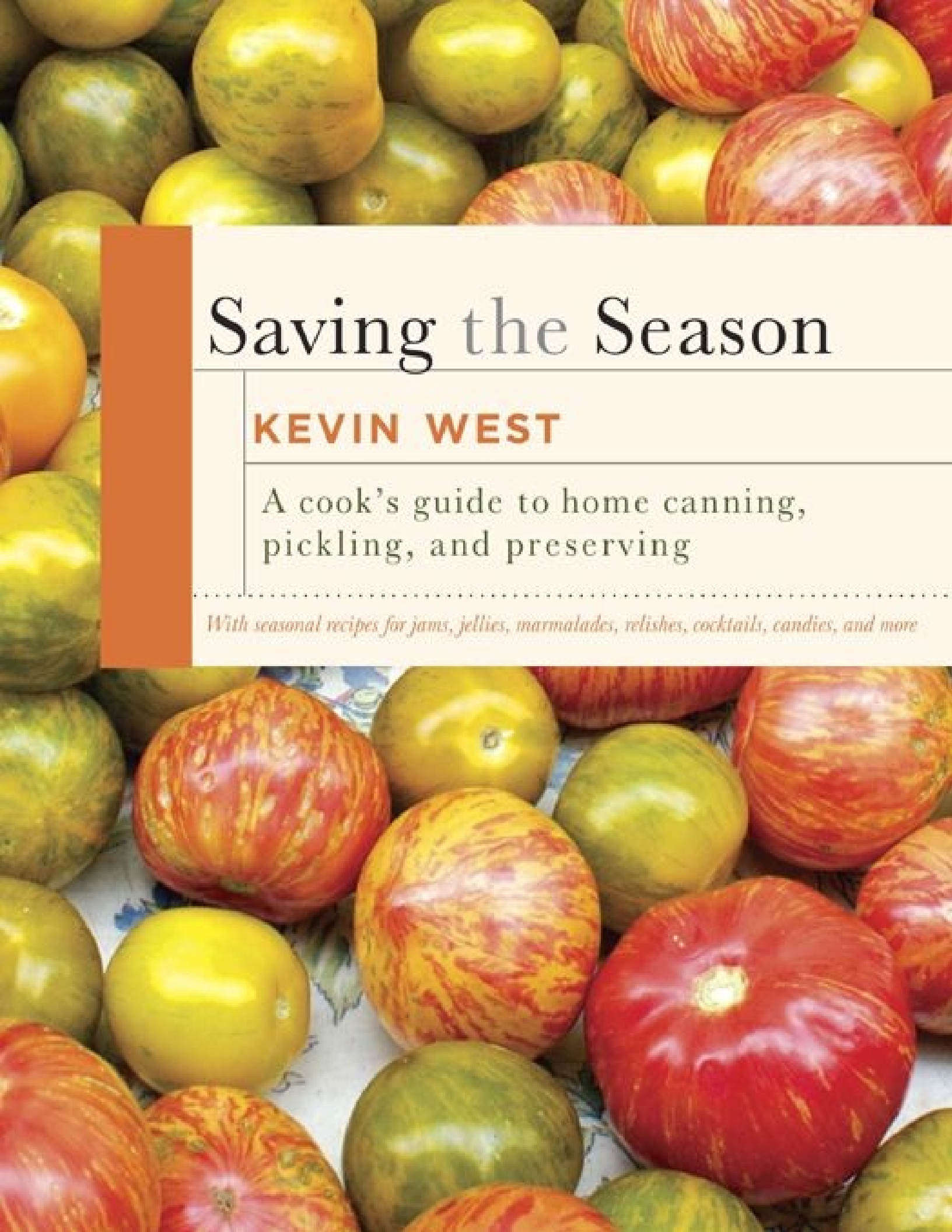

Saving the Season

KEVIN WEST

A cook's guide to home canning, pickling, and preserving

With seasonal recipes for jams, jellies, marmalades, relishes, cocktails, candies, and more

Saving the Season

A COOK'S GUIDE TO HOME CANNING, PICKLING, AND PRESERVING

KEVIN WEST

ALFRED A. KNOPF | NEW YORK | 2013

THIS IS A BORZOI BOOK
PUBLISHED BY ALFRED A. KNOPF

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA
West, Kevin, 1970–
Saving the season : a cook’s guide to home canning, pickling, and preserving / by Kevin West.—First edition.
pages | | cm
Includes bibliographical references and index.
eBook ISBN: 978-0-307-95768-9
Hardcover ISBN: 978-0-307-59948-3
1. Canning and preserving. | I. Title.
TX601.W47 2013
641.4′2—dc23
2012037844

Cover photographs © Kevin West
Cover design by Carol Devine Carson
Illustrations © Nicola Atkinson

v3.1

FOR GRAN AND PAPA

MARY ELOISE WEST

[1916–1981]

JOHN R. WEST

[1912–1999]

O greatly fortunate farmers, if only they knew
How lucky they are! Far from the battlefield,
Earth brings forth from herself in ample justice
The simple means of life, simply enjoyed.

—*VIRGIL'S "SECOND GEORGIC,"*
TRANSLATED BY DAVID FERRY

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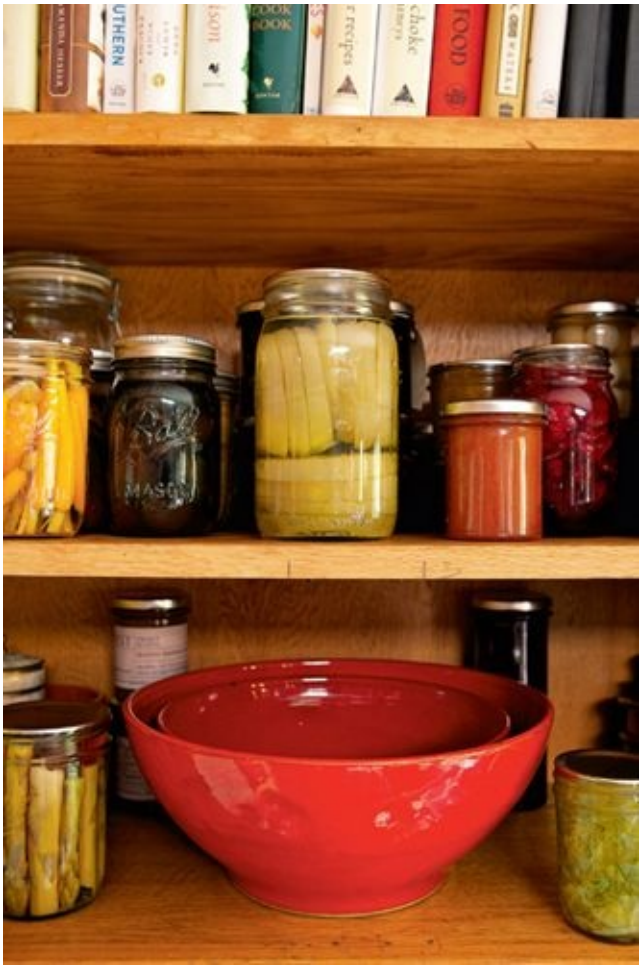
PREFACE



THIS IS A BOOK ABOUT PRESERVING and home canning—or "putting up," as one might say where I'm from—and it will cover jam, jelly, marmalade and other sweet preserves; pickles and briny things; canned tomatoes; liqueurs; candies; and the complement of condiments that includes relishes, sauces, and salsas.

Why bother preserving? So that you can eat your efforts later, of course, and give them to other people to eat, too.

I do it to save the season.

Putting up used to be how plenty prepared for want. Foodstuffs were processed in a season of abundance—when the wild blackberries came in, when hogs were slaughtered at the first cold snap—and brought out to eat in some later time of scarcity.

Today we don't suffer the winter hunger known for most of human history, because the grocery store is always stocked. Not that long ago, though, it was the agricultural cycle—nature—that determined what was on the table, and lusty eaters had to anticipate the harvest of each month, when gardens, orchards, fields, woods, rivers, oceans, and skies delivered a copious annual bounty of a particular thing at a particular time. We've forgotten today to wait for seasonal delicacies, and as a punishment the grocery store has become a year-round warehouse of indifferent fruit and vegetable staples, some of which are absurdly imported from the ends of the earth.

Just a generation ago—that is to say, when I was little—strawberries were a cause for celebration in the spring. My mother and I made annual trips to a pick-your-own farm, where we were always amazed by how good the strawberries were and by how quickly we could pick more than we could eat. In August we visited my West grandparents, Gran and Papa, and when we returned to South Carolina from their farm in Blount County, Tennessee, my mother's baby-blue VW Bug would be loaded literally to the roof with bags of corn, buckets of okra and squash, watermelons, and flats of Papa's homegrown tomatoes.

"There's only two things that money can't buy," Papa would say. "That's true, true love and homegrown tomatoes."

When Gran put them up in quart Mason jars, Papa's tomatoes were as good in January as they had been in August.

That's what I mean by saving the season.

INTRODUCTION

It’s not without reason that we’ve learned to watch
The rising and the setting of the stars,
Marking the equal seasons as they change.

—*Virgil’s “First Georgic”*

I wrote *Saving the Season* while living in the Hollywood Hills, in a house that I called Greenvalley, near the top of a shaded canyon. Greenvalley appears in the

corners of my photographs and between the lines of my stories because it was the house where I first made jam, the home where my canning hobby became an obsession, and the kitchen I returned to after shopping at farmers' markets and visiting farmers in California and around the country. Because Greenvalley was the center of my life for seven years, it was naturally the center of my canning life as well. I can't write about preserving without also writing about Greenvalley, the place where those preserves were made and where they were eaten, often in lively company.

My book is called *Saving the Season* because I found myself frustrated that the foods I most loved eating—asparagus, apricots, raspberries, mulberries, peaches, tomatoes, quince, Seville oranges—would appear at the local farmers' markets in profusion one week, only to disappear quicker than I would have wished the next. Nature's bounty is abundant but fleeting. I wanted to save the season, and preserving is my way to do it.

I find it odd when people insist that there are no seasons where I live in Southern California. It's not true: we have six. The principal annual division is between the wet season—roughly Halloween to Easter, when it feasibly could rain—and an extended drought throughout the rest of the year. Specialists call this two-season weather pattern a Mediterranean climate, and it puzzled me, a Southerner, when I first moved to California in 2004. The wild canyons around Greenvalley spring to life, curiously, in fall, after the first rain. Winter is the lush season, summer the dormant phase.

Overlaying this cycle are the four seasons you learned about in elementary school. The shift between spring, summer, fall, and winter is less dramatic here than elsewhere, but it is distinct nonetheless, especially at the well-supplied farmers' markets around the city. In March, Bill and Barbara Spencer of Windrose Farm in Paso Robles bring baskets of newly sprouted greens and buckets of flowering apple branches to the Santa Monica Farmers Market. James Birch of Flora Bella Farm arrives with wild nettles harvested from the Sierra foothills. Asparagus, pea tendrils, radishes, tiny carrots, and strawberries soon follow; then, one bright day in April, the temperature will briefly hit eighty degrees and all vegetative life seems to leap up. Everything is sweet: the smell of flowers, the taste of new food, the douceur of sunshine, and the pangs of our inescapable animal desires to feed and mingle. Spring!

Summer in Los Angeles is briefly delayed by the annual fogs known as June Gloom. After July 4, the days turn hot, as they do everywhere. Squash, stone fruit, tomatoes, melons, and corn pile up at the market.

Fall’s first damp night comes as a relief after months of unbroken sunshine, and I’m always excited to see apples, grapes, persimmons, and quince back in the markets, even if they mean that the agricultural year is winding down.

At last, winter returns, and even in Southern California there’s much less produce coming from the farms—only a fraction of the sheer edible biomass seen a few months earlier. There will still be a few leeks, some chard, cauliflower, and late apples. But, unlike most other states, California also has a winter treasury maturing in its citrus groves. Peak marmalade season is February.

There are still other, less formal ways to mark the year’s progress. I look forward to wildflower season and ski season. Some live for beach season. I dread fire season, when the parched Santa Ana winds crackle through the canyons with the danger of conflagration. The seasons are astronomical facts, but they are also states of mind, perhaps even phases of being.

Only the unobservant would claim that a place has no seasons, would fail to notice that nature and agriculture respond to the grand tilting of the planets in the cosmos—and that, even as busy urban people, we exist in an eternal natural world.

I’M NOT A FARMER or even an urban homesteader. A few pots of herbs grow on my deck, and there’s an ugly orange tree in the front yard that I can’t bring myself to chop down. But that’s it. I’m an urban person who has worked in publishing for the past seventeen years. I don’t have the time to tend a garden, or enough

sunshine in my shady backyard, or, for that matter, even the inclination to commit myself to a garden's ceaseless upkeep. Instead, I buy my food, including all of the produce used to develop the recipes in this book.

I'm lucky, then, to be able to buy some of the best fruits and vegetables in the country. Every Wednesday that I'm in town, I shop at the Santa Monica Farmers Market, one of the finest anywhere. Sunday morning will find me at Hollywood Farmers' Market or the smaller local market in Studio City, and I'm inevitably inspired, even compelled, by the beautiful produce sold there by conscientious farmers dedicated to sustainable ideals. I consider the farmers my irreplaceable collaborators.

Bill and Barbara Spencer

Bill and Barbara Spencer, in particular, have been constant guides as I've come to learn the real meaning of seasonality and the value of heirloom fruits and vegetables. I often say that 50 percent of successful cooking (or successful canning) is in the ingredients, and if I have one secret that will help you become a happy and productive canner, it is to shop at your local farmers' markets and farmstands. Buy whatever just came in from the farm—then let my recipes show you how to put it up. If you have a backyard garden or orchard, all the better, but it's not a prerequisite to using this book.

The Virginia Housewife

WHY I WROTE THIS BOOK

I've been rattling pots and pans since I was a teenager, and later on you'll read about a few of my early cooking disasters. Eventually, I learned something by hanging out with people who really knew how to cook, by studying cookbooks, and just by logging hours at the stove. By the time I moved to Los Angeles in 2004, I had become a fairly accomplished kitchen-hand. If nothing else, I was dauntless. I'd throw a dinner party for eight friends at the spur of the moment, and I thought nothing of having twenty people over on a Saturday night. With a few big annual feasts—*posole* at Christmas, *navarin d'agneau* at Easter—I'd cook for a large crowd, and when my neighbors Byron and Danielle decided to get married at home, I gave the reception dinner at Greenvalley. We moved out all the furniture, set up tables for fifty inside and out, and I cooked pizzas for everyone, followed by a sit-down dinner of roast leg of lamb. I was accustomed to buying in large quantities.

So, when, in April 2008, I impulsively bought an entire flat of strawberries at the Santa Monica Farmers Market, it wasn't out of character—or entirely insane. In the moment, I had a vague idea about inviting folks over for strawberry shortcake, but as I walked back to my car, I realized that, even with help from friends, I'd never be able to use an entire flat of strawberries before they went bad. It suddenly occurred to me that I had never made jam. I thought about Gran's strawberry jam and decided I should make some.

The experience was more frustrating than I could have imagined, in part because I didn't know the *concept* of what I was trying to do. Gran was already gone by then, and I didn't know anyone who made jam apart from some elderly relatives back in Tennessee. I didn't know whom to talk to. I found a few recipes, but nothing that gave me the sort of big-frame introduction I wanted. After a career as a reporter and magazine writer, I craved some kind of wordy introduction to the subject—some backstory, perhaps even some technical grounding in the science and history of canning. I couldn't find it. Instead, I got curt instructions to shovel sugar over fruit with packets of store-bought pectin. The results were gross. I decided to figure out jam on my own, and from there moved on to pickles and jelly and marmalade and fruit candies and liqueurs and pressure canning and everything else you'll find in the pages ahead.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS

Saving the Season is a guide to mastering the art of home canning, and it encompasses the cuisine and culture of food preservation.

The 220 recipes in *Saving the Season* have been inspired by a range of sources, including my Southern heritage, research into historic cookbooks, and time spent with food professionals and experienced home canners. The recipes fall into two broad categories. Sweet preserves are made with fruit and include jams, jellies, marmalades, and so on. Savory preserves, made with vegetables, include pickles, tomato preparations, relishes, and fermented vegetables such as sauerkraut and kimchi. For the sake of showing what else the home canner can do, I also give a brief introduction to canning low-acid foods—more on that in a moment—using a pressure canner. Finally, we'll touch on simple techniques for drying, freezing, and storing seasonal produce.

At some point after I started my blog—*Saving the Season*—I realized that my objective was not just to make preserves but also to understand America's canning traditions—the *culture* of food preserving—starting with my own family in Tennessee.

The memories and flavors of my childhood lurk behind many of the recipes in the book. In some cases, specific events from my life have prompted me to get busy in the canning kitchen. For example: a few years back, my mother got engaged to a high-school classmate with whom she had reconnected at their fortieth reunion. The house they bought together came with a hoary but productive plum tree, and I put up Plum Sauce to serve at their wedding reception that fall.

Sometimes the stories and recipes have come to me from other families. My friend Sarah Stifler once told me about the green-tomato pickles her family used to buy at their church's annual bake sale. She was so stirred by the memory that she tracked down the recipe through the oldest members of the church congregation, at last finding it in the only remaining copy of a cookbook stashed in the church's safe. Mrs. Dorsey Brown's Green Tomato Pickle, a variation on the classic bread-and-butter theme, appears later.

Apart from my family and friends, I've also been inspired by the skilled preservers whom I've met. This book contains profiles of a few, including jam-maker June Taylor, marmalade master Robert Lambert, pickling guru Linda

Ziedrich, and kimchi entrepreneur Lauryn Chun, founder of Mother-in-Law's Kimchi. I was fortunate to spend time with all of them while working on the book, and our conversations helped me find ways to explain not just the *how-to* of canning but also the *why.* Los Angeles confectioner and preserver Valerie Gordon, in particular, became a good friend, and her wisdom, pragmatism, and technical skill have informed my general approach to jam in significant ways.

Just as influential were my ventures from Greenvalley to visit farms and wild places, chasing the harvest. I drove down to the birthplace of the California citrus industry in Riverside and spent time walking one of the last remaining groves amid the suburban sprawl. In August, I flew home to pick figs from my mother's backyard trees and to forage wild blueberries in North Carolina's Pisgah National Forest, close to the real-life setting of Charles Frazier's novel *Cold Mountain.* These stories and others appear in the pages ahead under the heading "Road Trip."

I roamed afield in another sense as well, following my curiosity where it led me into science books, academic volumes, government reports, literature, and art history. By instinct, and, I suppose, thanks to the lingering effects of a liberal-arts education, I've wanted to understand my subject through the long lens of history, and indeed I've discovered secret stashes of knowledge about the world that, amazingly, were revealed through the prism of food preservation. The still-life paintings of European masters encode long-forgotten recipes, for instance,

and the great poet of tomatoes is Pablo Neruda. The Renaissance prophet Nostradamus published elegant recipes for quince jelly in the sixteenth century, but the nineteenth century was the real Golden Age of Jam—credit the vicious institution of Caribbean slavery. Tolstoy writes beautifully about making jam; black-and-white photographer Charles Jones was one of history's great fruit portraitists. If you're interested in learning more about any of these subjects, read on. There's more to preserved food than PB&J.

THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN BY THOMAS MANN [1875–1955], TRANSLATION BY JOHN E. WOODS

At this late stage in the novel, the central character, a young man named Hans Castorp, has spent years at a sanatorium high in the Swiss Alps. Here he's talking with fellow patient Leo Naphta about big things—mortality and the decay of the body after death, the alchemist's quest, and so on—when the word "hermetic" leaps from the morbid conversation and brings back memories of the sealed canning jars in Castorp's childhood home. He says to Naphta:

> "Hermetic"—I've always liked that word. It's a magic word with vague, vast associations. Forgive me, but I can't help thinking about our old canning jars, the ones our housekeeper in Hamburg … has standing in rows on shelves in her pantry: hermetically sealed jars, with fruit and meat and all sorts of other things inside. There they stand, for months, for years, but when you need one and open it up, what's inside is fresh and intact, neither years nor months have had any effect, you can eat it just as it is.

THE FOUR SEASONS

Saving the Season is divided into four sections—"Spring," "Summer," "Fall," "Winter." In each I present the recipes as the farmers' markets have presented them to me, shifting between sweet and savory preserves.

The recipes are organized according to this subjective system because it best reflects my own canning work over the course of the seasons. In any given week, I'll make both sweet and savory preserves, and I enjoy that sense of change, abundance, and diversity. "Upon the whole," wrote Samuel Johnson in the preface to his 1765 edition of Shakespeare's plays, "all pleasure consists in variety." It's true in the kitchen as well.

"*Spring*" is an introduction to the essentials of home canning and preserving. Perhaps I'm biased, since strawberry jam was my first effort—a failed one, as I mentioned—but I think that straightforward strawberry jam is a good place for a preserving novice to begin. From that basic first recipe, you'll build upon what you've learned to be ready for the more complicated techniques ahead. Cherry Preserves with Red Currants, for instance, is a bit more complex, and certain jellies and marmalades later in the year require a firm grasp of the core principles. Likewise, for pickles, you'll find a good example of the simplest variety in "Spring." Pickled Asparagus Spears with Green Garlic and Tarragon highlights the essential concept of seasonality—what grows together goes together—and explains the fundamental technique for vinegar pickles, one that you'll return to in the pages that follow.

I'll also introduce you to my family: my late West grandparents, Gran and Papa (pronounced Pap-paw), to whom this book is dedicated; my mother, Carol Satterfield; and my father, Fred West. And because the South is not just where I come from but also who I am, I'll need to take you there. The book's first road trip is to a hillbilly encampment in West Virginia to celebrate ramps, one of the seasonal delicacies that define Appalachian cooking. Then we'll go to my dad's farm in Johnson Hollow to pick sour cherries and put up a batch of Gran's Cherry Pie Filling.

"*Summer*" expands the repertoire of sweet preserves and pickles, and also introduces fermented vegetables, relishes, and pressure canning. Summer's theme is dealing with the glut, so there's an abundance of recipes with variations. If you don't like Traditional Spiced Beets, I also give you Pickled

Beets with Star Anise, minimalist Pickled Beets in Cider Vinegar, and Golden Beets with Ginger. Likewise, I'll discuss strategies for how to manage the seasonal abundance without getting overwhelmed—what to do with a bushel of peaches, for instance. The long tomato section explains how to can tomatoes and their juice, as well as how to make tomato sauce, tomato paste, tomato confit, savory tomato jam, and my version of those hometown favorites ketchup and barbecue sauce. Summer is also the season of wild berries, and we'll go on road trips to pick blackberries in the Sierra foothills, and blueberries in the Smoky Mountains, along the North Carolina–Tennessee border.

"FALL" explores jellies in depth. It also includes a special section dedicated to antique fruits such as quince, damsons, and crab apples, which are among the most rewarding fruits to preserve. Autumn pickles are perhaps my favorite of the year, whether it's Indian-inspired curried cauliflower, fermented sauerkraut, or kimchi, the spicy Korean pickle that keeps for months, mellowing and maturing as it ages, almost like wine. Finally, the harvest rituals of feasting and reflection that have defined autumn since time immemorial inspired my road trip to Massachusetts, home of the Pilgrims, to investigate cranberries and the true history of America's Thanksgiving meal.

"WINTER" goes into depth with citrus—marmalades, jellies, candied peel, and syrups.

In every season, I'll also draw your attention to overlooked preserves such as vinegars, shrubs, cordials, and candies, and make the occasional suggestion for how to cook from your canning cupboard.

MY HOPE IS THAT sometimes you'll carry *Saving the Season* out of the kitchen and to your reading chair. The way I see it, recipes can tell you *how* to make something, but they don't tell you much *about* it. Recipes need stories. Anyone who has learned to cook by spending hours in the kitchen with an older relative or a close friend knows what I mean. You learn by watching but also listening, and the instruction imparted is not merely technical. In the kitchen and at the table, food and narrative go together. In *Saving the Season*, recipes are vehicles for the stories.

The essays that introduce some of my recipes reflect the fact that making preserves is often a reflective time. Your mind wanders as you stir a pot of marmalade or wait for pickles to emerge from their boiling-water bath. There's time to cast back through your memories, and to plan for the future. Whom will

you give that marmalade to? When will you open that jar of pickles? During the past five years of filling jars, I've found that my thoughts keep circling back to a cluster of themes that suffuse this book: memory and nostalgia, the passage of time, the continuity of values across the generations, the history of ideas, the human yearning for meaning in the face of mystery. I hope that the more digressive recipe introductions will convey some of the sense of discovery, even wonder, that I felt when I set out to study home canning and unexpectedly found myself learning about history, art, literature, science, and our collective American experience.

Saving the Season is almost like a course on the cuisine and culture of home canning. If you follow the seasons, it takes about a year to complete.

MOBY-DICK BY HERMAN MELVILLE [1819–91]

Ishmael, our narrator, arrives on Nantucket and joins the crew of a whale ship, the *Pequod*. In the days before its departure, Ishmael watches the preparations, overseen by Captain Bildad, to equip the vessel for its three-year voyage "upon the wide ocean, far from all grocers." Pickles were among the essential supplies.

> Chief among those who did this fetching and carrying was Captain Bildad's sister, a lean old lady of a most determined and indefatigable spirit, but withal very kindhearted, who seemed resolved that, if *she* could help it, nothing should be found wanting in the Pequod, after once fairly getting to sea. At one time she would come on board with a jar of pickles for the steward's pantry; another time with a bunch of quills for the chief mate's desk, where he kept his log; a third time with a roll of flannel for the small of some one's rheumatic back. Never did any woman better deserve her name, which was Charity—Aunt Charity, as everybody called her.

GETTING STARTED

Home canning is easy, pleasurable, and safe. If you can make a cake or pie from scratch, or if you have the patience to slow-cook a pot roast, then you have all the kitchen aptitude you need to complete the recipes in this book. Many people get anxious when they hear the word “canning,” because it conjures for them an image of huge piles of fruit, chattering pressure canners, and hours spent over a bubbling cauldron of jam. The reality is much simpler, as this book will demonstrate. Home canning is simply home cooking by another name.

Still, let me immediately address the first fear many people have about home canning: you are not going to poison your family and friends with botulism! I’ll go into specifics shortly, but skip ahead to if you want to learn the nitty-gritty about botulism, its causes, its consequences, and—what may surprise you—its rarity.

When I started to give public canning demonstrations, I was inevitably barraged by questions about food poisoning. To understand more fully the requirements for safe canning, I took a thirteen-week course at the University of California Cooperative Extension San Bernardino to become certified as a Master Food Preserver. The title of our principal textbook, the *Food Safety Advisor Volunteer Handbook*, leaves little doubt about its central focus. Edited by food specialist Dr. Val Hillers and food-safety specialist Dr. Sandra McCurdy, the *Food Safety Advisor* was jointly issued by the Washington State University Cooperative Extension and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. I have relied on its technical guidance in developing the recipes for this book. My other two essential technical references were *So Easy to Preserve* (fifth edition), published by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension, and *The Ball Blue Book Guide to Preserving*, both of which follow USDA guidelines for safe home canning. Interested readers can find updated editions of the *USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning* at UGA’s National Center for Home Food Preservation Web site, http://www.uga.edu/nchfp.

Although there are potential risks involved in home canning, as with any food preparation, they are minimized by exercising normal vigilance to kitchen hygiene and by following the safe-canning practices in this book. If you can safely prepare chicken, a potential vector for food-borne pathogens such as salmonella, then you can handle home canning.

THE KEY CONCEPT TO grasp for your home-canning practice is the distinction between high-acid foods and low-acid foods.

It helps to understand pH, which is the measure of acidity or alkalinity (also called basicity). The pH scale runs from 0 (the most acidic) to 14 (the most basic). Pure water is neutral, pH 7. Technically, pH measures the concentration of hydrogen ions in solution, and the pH scale expresses the negative logarithm of the hydrogen-ion activity. But what matters here is simple: lower pH means higher acidity, and higher pH means lower acidity. Lime juice is about pH 2.0. Milk has a pH range between 6.3 and 6.9. See Appendix III for the pH of many common fruits and vegetables.

For canning purposes, all foods are categorized as high-acid or low-acid.

High-acid foods, below pH 4.6, can be safely canned using the boiling-water bath, as instructed in this book. For a detailed explanation of the boiling-water bath, see Canning Basics. Most fruit preserves are high-acid, including those made with citrus, the pomes (apples, crab apples, pears, quince), berries, and

stone fruit (including cherries).

Another category of high-acid foods is pickles, which are canned in brine or syrup that has been acidified with vinegar. Fermented vegetables (sometimes called brined pickles) are also high-acid because of the action of beneficial lactobacillus bacteria that acidify the brine through their metabolic processes.

Tomatoes are a special case. Their pH hovers near the safe-canning threshold, so it is always necessary as a safety precaution to add a prescribed amount of bottled lemon juice or citric acid to each jar before sealing. Following proper preparation, it is safe to process tomatoes using the boiling-water bath.

Low-acid foods have a pH above 4.6. Vegetables, meat, mushrooms, dairy, and fish are all low-acid. Low-acid products *must* be processed in a pressure canner to avoid the risk of bacterial poisoning, including botulism.

WHY HOME CANNING WORKS

Like a detective out of a 1940s radio drama, veteran food scientist Dr. Art Teixeira knows what he knows and will tell it to you straight. So I asked him a simple but important question: Why does canning work?

"Your question touches on two sides of what we call food science and food processing," boomed Art's tough-guy voice through the

speakerphone. “There is food microbiology and food chemistry, and then there’s food processing and food engineering, OK? And you need to know a lot about all of those, because so much comes into play. Let me give you an introduction.”

Art began by explaining that there are a host of food-spoilage mechanisms. Microbial activity, which includes the growth of bacteria, yeast, and molds, progresses the fastest and is the easiest to understand: we know that bacteria will cause meat to rot if it is left on the counter for a few days, and we’ve seen fuzzy mold spread across overripe peaches. Enzyme activity progresses more slowly but also leads to decomposition: a fruit enzyme called pectinesterase attacks the natural pectin in the fruit’s cell walls, causing it to collapse in on itself. (See more on pectin.) Chemical reactions include those that occur in the presence of oxygen to cause rancidity—“Oxygen is a badass,” says Art—and other reactions that are activated by light. Mechanical damage could include breaking, crushing, or insect infestation.

To prevent spoilage, you determine the hierarchy of need—in other words, which spoilage mechanism is the most urgent—and address each threat with the corrective preserving agent. Microbes are killed by heat, so many food-preservation techniques involve thermal processing, which also deactivates enzymes. A hermetically sealed container protects its contents from oxygen (and sometimes light), as well as shielding it from many forms of mechanical damage, including bugs. Acidity kills bacteria, including *Clostridium botulinum*, which causes botulism. And, finally, all the microbes are defeated by lowering water activity. I’ll let Art explain that one.

“Like all living organisms, microbes need liberal amounts of free water that they can assimilate,” he said. “When you increase the concentration of an aqueous substance with a lot of salt or a lot of sugar, you create a microenvironment in which you decrease the activity of water. The water is still there, but it’s being bound up into the sugar matrix and is no longer available to support microbial activity. See, most chemical and biochemical reactions cannot take place unless there is plenty of water around. That’s why we call it water activity. If you lower the water activity in a foodstuff by increasing its concentration of soluble solids, like sugars and salts,

there's a point where it's so low it won't support microbial activity. Or you can achieve a low water activity by simply removing moisture—by drying. Again, you're preserving the foodstuff by depriving the micro-organisms of free water."

Often more than one preserving agent is at play. When Papa made country ham, he salted it heavily (lowering water activity), smoked it (thermal processing), and hung it to dry (further reducing water activity). When we make marmalade at home, we start with citrus (which has natural acidity), then add sugar and concentrate it by boiling (lowering water activity). Next we ladle the hot product into a Mason jar (hermetically sealed container) and process it in a boiling-water bath (thermal processing).

Of all the spoilage mechanisms, microbial activity is the gravest concern, because bacteria are potentially lethal.

"With respect to public health and food safety, the creature that we worry about the most is *Clostridium botulinum*," said Art. "It kills you. And a sealed can or jar is the ideal environment for the growth of botulism."

But the point Art drove home was that canning is safe because we understand the spoilage mechanisms and have the means to overcome them. Bacteria will not grow in high-acid foods, including pickles and most fruit preserves. Low-acid foods such as vegetables, fish, and meat are canned under pressure to achieve higher temperatures that destroy microbes, even the most insidious bacteria.

"People have been eating canned food for almost two hundred years," said Art. "On the order of trillions of cans of canned food have been made, sold, and consumed around the world, and you rarely ever, ever, ever hear of a case of botulism. Am I right?"

BOTULISM

Botulism is a food-borne illness caused by the anaerobic bacteria *Clostridium botulinum.* The bacteria's spores, which are ubiquitous in the natural world and hardy enough to survive boiling water, reproduce in low-salt, low-acid, low-oxygen environments—such as a sealed jar of fish or vegetables. *C. botulinum* produces a toxin that attacks the nerves and causes a creeping paralysis that begins in the face and spreads to the limbs and vital organs. Without immediate medical care, botulism can kill.

Botulism is rare, however. According to the Centers for Disease Control, an average of 145 cases are reported annually in the United States. Sixty-five percent of all cases are so-called infant botulism, caused when a newborn consumes spores that then flourish in the

intestines. An additional 20 percent of cases occur when botulism spores enter the body through a wound. Only 15 percent of all botulism cases are food-borne. The CDC found that, between 1990 and 2000, 160 food-borne botulism “events” affected 263 people in the United States, an annual incidence of .01 per hundred thousand. (For comparison, the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2011 Statistical Abstract puts the 2008 U.S. homicide rate, the most recent available at this writing, at 5.4 per hundred thousand.) Home-canned food was cited as the leading cause of food-borne botulism in the study, and the overall case-fatality rate was 5 percent. Canned fish and garlic stored in oil were the leading culprits.

Botulism is a low-incidence/high-consequence risk, which places it with other such risks, including plane crashes and shark attacks, that occupy a near-mythic status in the public imagination and cause widespread fear despite their infrequent occurrence.

PREVENTION: Low-acid foods such as meats, fish, vegetables, dairy, and eggs must be processed in a pressure canner at a specified pressure and for a specified time to avoid risk. Because the bacterial growth responsible for botulism is inhibited by an acidic environment, high-acid food, including most fruit preserves and all pickles, can be safely canned using the boiling-water process.

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT

It doesn't take much to start canning. The recipes in this book are scaled to fit standard kitchen implements, so you probably already have the pots and pans for making pickles and jam. (See The Preserving Pan for more information about the ideal shape and size for a preserving pan to make sweet preserves.)

For the boiling-water bath, you'll also need a large, straight-sided pot with a lid. It should be wide enough to fit six pint jars or four quart-size jars, and deep enough so you can submerge the sealed jars by at least an inch of water, with an extra inch or two of added height to keep the boiling water from spilling over. Water-bath canners, illustrated below, are available at hardware stores and cooking-supply shops, but I use a standard stockpot that's eleven and a half inches wide by ten inches deep. The pot will also need a rack to prevent the jars from touching the bottom. I use a circular cake-cooling rack that fits my pot. A water-bath canner will come with a rack. In a pinch, you could also lay a folded kitchen towel in the bottom of the pot, or improvise a rack by putting down a layer of lid rings.

If you're curious about what a pressure canner is, see one and read about it. Only a single recipe in this book, Canned Salmon, requires a pressure canner, and it's given mainly to demonstrate the technique for safely canning low-acid foods.

Although by convention we talk about home *canning*, we might more correctly say *jarring*, since the hermetically sealed glass jar is the standard container for preserves. Various styles of jars are sold, but I'd recommend that you stick with the familiar Mason jars. They have been manufactured since the late nineteenth century and today come in sizes from four ounces to a half-

gallon, which is reserved for canning juice. I prefer half-pints for most sweet preserves, and pints or quarts for pickles. Whether you use wide-mouth or standard Mason jars is largely a matter of preference. For pickles, relishes, and fruits in syrup, I like standard jars, since the pinched “shoulder” keeps the product submerged in the canning liquid. I’ll recommend a particular size or shape if I think the recipe requires it. Jars can be reused endlessly as long as they aren’t chipped or cracked. Be sure to check the rim for damage before each use.

Most Mason jars come with a two-piece lid, a self-sealing closure that consists of a flat disk held in place by a ring that screws onto the threaded jar mouth. The disk, which is somewhat confusingly also called the lid, has a rubbery sealing compound on the underside—it’s essentially a gasket—that ensures an airtight seal. Because the sealing compound is deformed by contact with the jar during the water bath, the lids are considered single-use. Rings can be reused as long as they’re not rusty or bent out of shape.

Part of the genius of the two-piece closure is that the ring allows the lid to “float” slightly off the jar rim during the boiling-water bath, allowing air to escape as the product inside the jar expands with heating. When the jar is removed from the water bath and cools, the product inside contracts, creating a vacuum seal that holds the lid fast to the jar. Once the jar is cool, the rings can—and should—be removed. To open a jar for use, pry off the disk with the edge of a spoon.

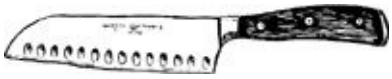
The two-piece closure also incorporates an ingenious safety mechanism. The lid is designed to be slightly convex, forming a “button” that gets pulled down by the vacuum seal. Sometimes the lid makes a ping or click when it pops from convex to concave, but don’t worry if you don’t hear it. You know that the jar is sealed properly if the “button” is down.

Other options include single-piece lids and bail-type closures, in which a glass lid and separate rubber gasket are held in place by a wire bail or metal clips. Some are attractive, but they can be touchy to use. The two-piece lid is nearly fail-safe.

Bear in mind that processing times vary by jar size and shape. A recipe will typically give the appropriate processing time for pints, quarts, or both. (Process half-pints as for pints.) If you want to experiment with non-Mason jars and lids, consult the manufacturer’s instructions for use and processing times.

USEFUL EQUIPMENT

My home kitchen is “unplugged” to the point of being anachronistic. I don’t have any small electrical appliances, and even when cooking in better-outfitted kitchens, I prefer the gentle, quiet, and meditative work of using hand tools—above all, a sharp chef’s knife. In some recipes, I’ll insist on techniques that may seem labor-intensive, because I prefer the results. In other places, I’ll note where a food processor or an immersion blender could be an alternative.



Apart from jars, you might want to have a few other pieces of canning equipment:

- A scale, for weighing ingredients, is the single most useful tool for making preserves and will be suggested for most recipes in this book. I like OXO’s eleven-pound-capacity Digital Food Scale for its sturdy design. Whichever scale you choose should have at least a ten-pound capacity and give readings in quarter-pound increments.

- A wide-mouth funnel, for getting hot preserves into jars.

- A ladle, for the same operation.

- A jar lifter is a set of tongs specially designed to lift jars into and out of the water bath.

- A lid lifter is a small wand with a magnetized end, useful for picking up lids and settling them on the jar.

- A new wooden spoon should be designated for making sweet preserves, in order to avoid the off flavors that may come from one that previously stirred onions or garlic.

- A colander, for draining and straining.
- A fine-mesh sieve, to strain seeds out of citrus juice or remove spent aromatics from pickling brine.
- A muslin jelly bag has many uses, most obviously to strain the pectin stock extracted from fruit when making jelly.
- Cheesecloth, if you don’t have a jelly bag.
- Inexpensive spring-loaded twelve-inch tongs are endlessly useful for handling hot ingredients, repositioning jars in the bottom of the boiling-water bath, and reaching for things on high shelves.
- Bamboo skewers cost almost nothing, and once they are in the kitchen, you’ll wonder how you got along without them. I use skewers to poke fruit and vegetables while cooking to test for doneness, to spear a sample of something from a pot to taste, and to ease things into place while filling jars.

• A digital thermometer is the easiest to use.

Some recipes in this book call for more specialized kitchen equipment, such as:

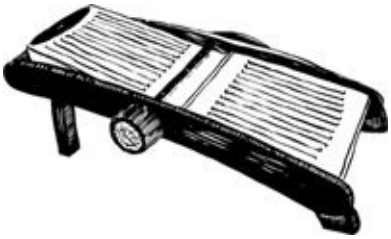
• A food mill, the original multipurpose hand-cranked food processor. Food mills usually come with interchangeable discs, coarse to fine, and have many applications. When making fruit butter or fruit leather, you purée the stewed fruit by milling it through the coarse blade. To remove skins and seeds when making tomato sauce, use the medium blade.

• A chinois has many of the same uses as a food mill. It’s an inverted cone, like a witch’s hat, made of sturdy mesh, and you pound fruits or vegetables through it with a heavy wooden pestle called a roller—very satisfying.

• A reamer is the best way to juice lemons.

- A Microplane zester removes the fragrant outer peel of citrus in a flurry of tiny curls.

- A mandoline is a slicing tool that will quickly dispatch a pile of cucumbers to make dill-pickle chips. Interchangeable blades cut smooth or fluted slices.



- A mortar and pestle crushes and grinds spices.
- A narrow funnel is necessary for bottling liqueurs.
- Crocks or large glass jars in various sizes can be used for fermenting vegetables.

And, finally, it’s nice to have:

- Serving pieces such as cut-glass jam pots, silver jam spoons, relish spoons, and pickle forks, all of which can be found at antiques shops and flea markets. See this page to read about the fine service pieces created during the Golden Age of Jam.

CANNING BASICS

Throughout this book, you can find the essential canning knowledge that you'll need in a series of primers called "Basics." Later in the introduction, I'll lay out Jam Basics and Pickle Basics. In other sections, whenever I introduce a new technique such as brining or jelly, I'll provide the basics to help make sense of it. The information will orient novices and remind anyone else who may be rusty.

These Canning Basics apply to all canning recipes.

PREPPING JARS: Wash your jars and lids in hot, soapy water and rinse them well. It is not necessary to sterilize the jars, since the boiling-water bath will pasteurize the sealed jars along with their contents.

Jars and lids should be warm when you fill them. Keep the washed jars in a 200-degree-Fahrenheit oven until you're ready. Put the lids in a small pan of boiling water, and cover them until needed.

The rings can simply be washed and drained.

HEADSPACE: A jar is not filled to the rim. A certain amount of room is left, to allow its contents to expand during the boiling-water bath. This is called the headspace, and the recipe will specify how much to leave. Measure the headspace with a ruler—at least until you learn to judge the difference between a quarter-inch, a half-inch, *etc*.

If you don't allow enough headspace, the product may "vent," or boil out, during the water bath (see the photograph below), which could prevent the lid from sealing properly.

SEALING: After filling the jar, run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jar to release bubbles or air pockets. Wipe the rim clean with a damp paper towel, settle the flat lid in place, and screw on the ring. *Do not overtighten the ring.* Here is your reminder not to crank the lid too strongly: after you feel the first resistance, stick out your pinkie finger as if you were drinking tea with the queen. Now, using your thumb and three fingers, gently close the ring a bit more until it is *fingertip-tight.* Your extended pinkie prevents you from gaining too much leverage and overtightening.

PROCESSING: Canning is the technique of pasteurizing sealed jars in boiling water, thus rendering the product shelf-stable for long-term storage. Throughout this book, I'll refer to canning as "processing in a boiling-water bath" or simply "processing."

The first thing I do when I go into the kitchen to can is to fill my pot for the water bath and get it on the stove. Big pots of water take time to heat, and you want the water to be at about 180 degrees Fahrenheit—a "whisper"—when you add your jars for processing.

Once the jars are sealed, lower them into the water bath. Cover the pot and rapidly bring the water to a full rolling boil. *Only then* do you begin counting the processing time.

Processing times vary according to the product being canned and/or size. They have been established by the USDA through laboratory testing and cannot be abbreviated. Remember that the boiling-water bath assures the safety of your product. The processing time must be long enough to heat the contents of the jar—all the way through the middle of the middle—to above 180 degrees, for long enough to kill off "spoilers," including mold and yeast spores. The moral of the story: stick to the recipe.

After the designated processing time, turn off the heat and remove the jars from the water bath. Place them on a cutting board or a folded dish towel—a cold stone counter could crack them—and leave overnight. You may hear the lids ping or click as they cool, but it doesn't matter if you don't.

Don't leave jars to cool in the water bath.

ALTITUDE ADJUSTMENTS: The boiling point of water decreases as altitude increases. At sea level, the temperature of a boiling-water bath is 212 degrees Fahrenheit. In the mile-high cities of Denver and Albuquerque, it is about 203 degrees. The lower temperature will require longer processing times. Google the altitude of your city or town, or use a smartphone app such as My Altitude to determine your elevation.

At altitudes of 1,001 to 3,000 feet, increase processing times by 5 minutes. Between 3,001 and 6,000 feet, increase processing by 10 minutes. Between 6,001 and 8,000, by 15 minutes. And up to 10,000 feet, by 20 minutes.

VENTING: The pressure change caused by removing a jar from the water bath may make it vent if it contains a lot of liquid, such as fruits in syrup. To reduce venting, some recipes will ask you to turn off the heat but leave the jars in the

water to stabilize for five minutes before removing.

YIELDS: At the top of each recipe, I give the likely yield—how many jars the batch size will produce—but your yield may differ, depending on the size and freshness of your fruit or vegetables, how you cut them, variations in cooking time, and so on. Think of the yield as a guideline for how many jars you should wash and prep. Since I always find some variation, even when working with my own recipes, I will prep an extra, smaller jar—just in case. (For example, when canning quarts of peaches, I'll also prep an extra pint jar.) *Do not can a half-full jar of something.* With that much headspace, the preserve won't keep properly. You should instead store a half-full jar in the refrigerator and use it first. If I wind up with extra bits of jam or pickles, I'll often put them in whatever small container is handy—a mug, a bowl, a small glass—and plan to eat them in the next day or so.

CHECKING THE SEAL: The next morning, verify that the jars have properly sealed. Remove the ring, and press on the center of the lid. If the lid moves, or if the "button" in the center flexes, the seal has failed to set. The product inside is still safe to eat at this point, but it is not suitable for shelf storage. Put it in the refrigerator and use it first.

The two-piece lid is very reliable, so if you're using new lids and have multiple jars fail to set, you're doing something wrong. The most likely problem is that you aren't leaving adequate headspace, or that you've forgotten to clean the jar rim properly.

STORING THE JARS: Before storing, wipe the jars with a damp cloth and then dry them with a towel until, in the words of one old canning book I have, they "shine like Sunday glasses." Store the jars without their rings in a cool, dark place, such as a basement or cupboard. Most jams and pickles will keep for a year. Some delicate or low-sugar jams are best if eaten within six months. Marmalades and fruits in alcohol will keep two years or longer, mellowing with time. Opened jars should be kept in the refrigerator and consumed within a week (for fruits in syrup) to a few months (marmalade, relish, and pickles). I try to finish a jar of jam within two weeks, which is why I put it up in small jars.

If a seal fails during storage, it's an indication of microbial activity in the jar. *Throw both the jar and its contents away.* Likewise, if you observe any bubbling, fizzing, off smells, off colors, or other signs of spoilage, throw the jar away. The old rule of "If in doubt, throw it out" still applies.

THE OPEN-KETTLE TECHNIQUE: Whenever I give a canning demonstration, I can count on hearing from an older audience member, perhaps a European, who says that her grandmother never bothered with a boiling-water bath and canned her whole life without killing anyone.

What the audience member is referring to is known as the open-kettle technique—inexplicably, since the kettle has nothing to do with it. What's at question is the boiling-water bath. In the open-kettle technique, you sterilize your jars by boiling them or heating them in the oven, then fill them with the hot preserve. You seal the jars and put them up without any further ado. Some open-kettle practitioners say that you should invert the jars after sealing them, the logic being that the scalding contents will kill off any spoilers that cling to the inner lid.

Gran used the open-kettle technique, sealing her jelly and jam jars with paraffin. Various old cookbooks I have dating back to the sixteenth century call for sealing jars with paper dipped in brandy, tissue brushed with egg white, cork plugs, and animal bladders. Technologies change.

The open-kettle technique is time-tested, but the use of two-piece closures and a boiling-water bath virtually eliminates the risk of spoilage if done properly, and in my experience, the extra processing does not harm most preserves. (The exception is some pickles, which can soften with processing, but I'll discuss those special cases in Pickle Basics.)

The open-kettle technique is still widely practiced on the other side of the Atlantic, where the public harbors less fear about food safety. The brilliant preserver June Taylor, an Englishwoman, scoffs at the boiling-water bath, and I know other experienced canners who skip it. Likewise, if I'm making a small batch of jam, jelly, or marmalade for immediate use, I'll sometimes skip the water bath, ladle the preserves into a small antique crock or jelly glass, and "seal" it with a piece of parchment paper and string. The preserve will keep that way in the refrigerator for several weeks.

Nonetheless, the USDA does not recommend the open-kettle technique for home canning.

JAM BASICS

La vie est dure sans confiture,
Elle est meilleure avec du beurre.
Life without jam is tough.
It's better with a bit of butter.

—FRENCH PROVERB

La culture, c'est comme la confiture.
Moins on en a, plus en l'étale.
Culture is like jam. The less you have, the more you spread it around.

—VARIOUSLY ATTRIBUTED TO FRANÇOISE SAGAN, SERGE GAINSBOURG, AND OTHERS

Thomas Dawson's 1596 English cookbook *The Good Housewife's Jewel* is generous with recipes for fruit preserves, giving almost twice as many as for all vegetables and "sallets." The options available to the Elizabethan cook included confit of peaches, preserved gooseberries, wardens (pears) in syrup, conserve of damson plums, and marmelet of quince, as well as condomacke of quince, pompon (pumpkin) confection, confit of walnuts, condite of orange, violet syrup, and apple moyse, a dried-fruit paste. Dawson did not mention jam, and there's no jam in Shakespeare. But by 1845, Eliza Acton's *Modern Cookery for Private Families* offered an array of jam recipes—raspberry, rhubarb, strawberry, currant—among her various other jellies, preserves, fruit cheese, fruit paste, bottled fruit, dried fruit, and marmalade.

When, in the centuries between Dawson and Acton, the word "jam" came to describe a fruit preserve is not known. (You can track the mystery here.) Nonetheless, today jam is understood to be a specific style of sweet preserves made by cooking down the elemental ingredients of fruit and sugar to produce a thick, smooth spread.

Fruit for making jam is often cut or crushed, and a finished jam will typically mound in a spoon or sit on the tines of a fork. However, a jam's consistency,

texture, sweetness, and other characteristics are an expression of personal taste, and the range of jam variations is nearly infinite. Homemade jam will almost certainly be “looser” and less sweet than commercial jam, which relies on a heavy dose of supplemental pectin and copious sugar to achieve a gel set firm enough to be cut with a knife.

Even with jam’s many possible permutations, there are a few guidelines that apply generally.

FRUIT: Always use first-quality, firm, just-ripe fruit—organic if possible, and, ideally, bought from a farmers’ market or farmstand. Freshness is key; a preserving pan should never be considered a catchall bin for overripe, bruised, or damaged fruit. Jam can be only as good as the ingredients that go into it, so use the pick of the harvest.

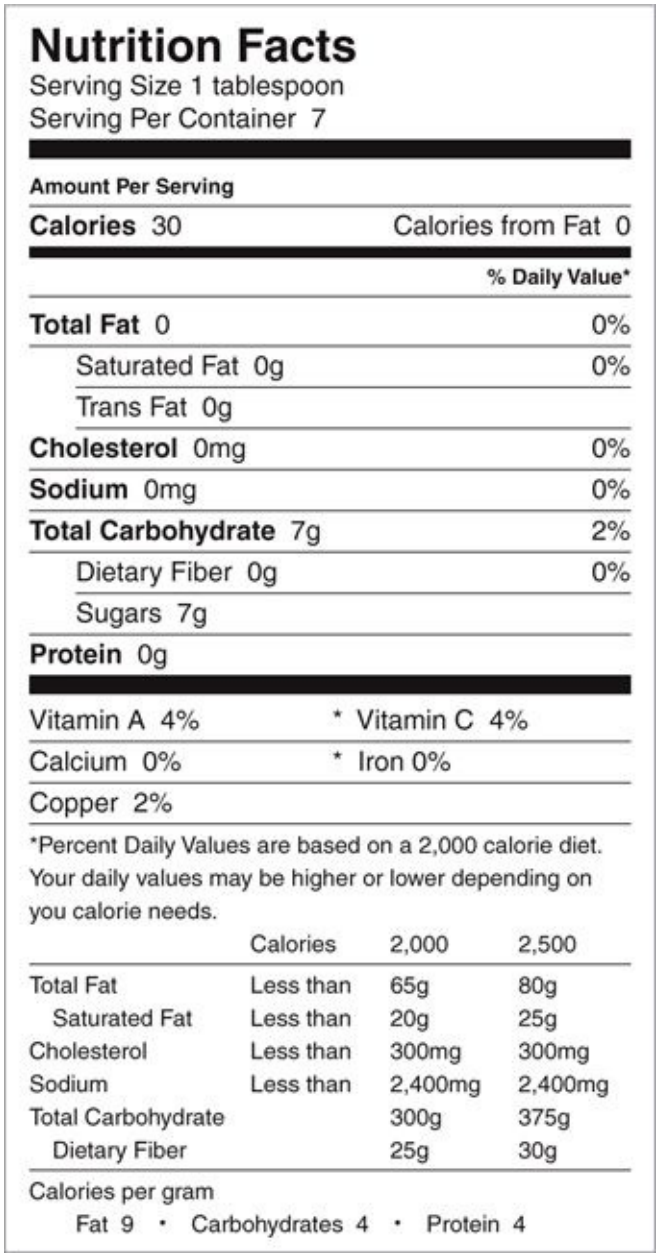
When choosing fruit, be guided by fragrance and taste rather than appearance. Smaller fruit is often best, because it has a lower water content and more concentrated flavor.

Also look for fruit with a noticeable acidic zing. Sweetness is overemphasized by today’s commercial fruit breeders, but counterbalancing acidity is necessary for jam. Many heirloom fruit varieties were once grown specifically for preserving, and fortunately some of these tart old-timers are again available at farmers’ markets. Talk to your farmer for recommendations, and taste before you buy.

Fruit should be processed as soon as possible after you get it home. Ripe berries in particular can mold within twenty-four hours.

Once the fruit is combined with sugar, however, it will keep in the refrigerator up to a week. So, if you're pressed for time, macerate the fruit—the first step in almost all the jam recipes in this book—and store the fruit-sugar mixture in an airtight container in the refrigerator until you're able to cook it.

SUGAR: Sugar is a preservative that reduces the risk of spoilage. It also develops flavor, adds succulence, and contributes to a jam's consistency. The recipes in this book use less sugar than many farmhouse recipes of two generations past, but sugar cannot be eliminated. Jam is, by its very nature, fruit and sugar cooked together. I know that sugar has been demonized as a health risk in some quarters, but a half-pint jar of jam has about the same amount of sugar as a can of soda. And, unlike a can of soda, a jar of jam is eaten in small portions over days or weeks. According to research cited in Janie Hibler's *The Berry Bible*, jam also retains a share of the raw fruit's vitamins and antioxidants, which gives it a nutritive value that sugary treats like cupcakes lack. (See the nutritional information below for my Classic Apricot Jam.)



Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 tablespoon
Serving Per Container 7

Amount Per Serving

Calories 30	Calories from Fat 0
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 7g	2%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 7g	
Protein 0g	

Vitamin A 4%	* Vitamin C 4%
Calcium 0%	* Iron 0%
Copper 2%	

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on you calorie needs.

	Calories	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram
Fat 9 • Carbohydrates 4 • Protein 4

In general, I recommend granulated white sugar in recipes for delicate fruit such as berries. Granulated organic sugar, which has a residue of brown molasses, would muddy the bright taste. With some recipes, however, such as Peach Chutney and Scotch Marmalade, organic sugar adds depth and color. The darker the sugar, the more pronounced its taste will be.

Honey can sometimes be used in place of some or all of the sugar in jam recipes, with two caveats: its higher water content means longer cooking times, and its flavor is definitely noticeable in the finished product. I think of honey more as a flavoring agent than as a sweetener, and use it in small quantities.

Honey is also sweeter than an equal volume of sugar, so replace sugar with a third to a half less honey by volume. Susan Geiskopf's *Putting It Up with Honey* is a useful guidebook for anyone interested in learning more.

SWEETNESS: Sugar is an ingredient that can be measured, whereas sweetness is subjective.

I wish I could tell you that the amount of sugar in my preserves will be universally right for every taste. Unfortunately, that can't be. Recipes I've seen that call for scientifically precise quantities—four pounds and eleven ounces of fruit plus two pounds and thirteen ounces of sugar—mystify me and, I believe, mislead the reader. *Fruit is a highly variable ingredient. Its natural sweetness and acidity depend on the cultivar, the soil, cultivation techniques, the weather, and any number of other shifting factors. No two batches of fruit will ever be the same, and so the jammer has to taste and use personal judgment to adapt the amount of sugar to the fruit on hand.* This is not just my opinion—it's a theme I've heard over and over from experienced preservers I admire. My friend Valerie Gordon calls it "reading the fruit." It's more like reading between the lines: you're not always sure how fruit will react as it becomes jam, so you have to observe and predict. Taste the raw ingredients, and taste again at every step of the recipe. Adjust as necessary.

My strategy is always to start by scanting the sugar—measuring out a less-than-full cup. Once the fruit-sugar mixture has macerated, taste to see if it needs to be sweeter. After the fruit-sugar mixture has come to a boil in the preserving pan, chill a spoonful and taste again. Add a bit more sugar if you like. Bear in mind that, as the jam reduces in the preserving pan, the sugars will concentrate and it will become sweeter—similar to how chicken stock becomes saltier as it reduces. Sweetness is a moving target, and you have to aim for the results you want. If you're using dead-ripe fruit from the peak of the harvest, you might use a quarter-cup less sugar; tart fruit grown in a cool climate might need a quarter-cup more.

If you are just starting out, stick to my recipes until you have a feel for the process. Soon enough you'll be ready to tweak the sugar to suit your own taste.

ACID: To balance flavor and lower pH for a better gel set, many jam recipes call for lemon juice. I use freshly squeezed juice and will specify the quantity in the ingredients list rather than say "the juice of 1 lemon," since I've found that yields from two apparently similar lemons can vary by as much as 100 percent.

Lemon juice is normally added during maceration, but more can be added at the end of cooking to adjust flavor if you find the jam too sweet. Juice added at a late stage will be more pronounced in the final product.

Some recipes will replace lemon juice with lime juice, wine, or vinegar.

PECTIN: Pectin is a complex carbohydrate that occurs naturally in all fruits. Different fruits have varying amounts of pectin—citrus and apples, for instance, are pectin-rich, whereas strawberries, blackberries, and pears have less—but in all cases, pectin levels peak immediately before ripeness.

Pectin is a fascinating molecule, and its properties make it indispensable to the preserver. Given the proper pH conditions and sugar concentration, pectin will form a three-dimensional matrix that traps water and dissolved solids into a semi-solid mass we call a gel set or, more simply, jelly. (For a more detailed discussion of pectin, see this recipe.)

Most of the recipes in this book rely on fruit's natural pectin content. As a general rule, I don't feel it's necessary to use commercial pectin additives in making the small-batch, loose-set jams I like. However, commercial pectin is derived from citrus or apple, and there's nothing inherently wrong with it. The recipe for Cherry Preserves Made with Powdered Pectin demonstrates its use—and its usefulness.

AROMATICS AND ALCOHOLS: I sometimes add herbs, spices, or distilled alcohols such as brandy or eau-de-vie to sweet preserves to subtly boost the fruit's natural flavor and aroma.

In most cases, my goal is for the supplemental flavor to be a faint suggestion—an extra something that you can't quite put your finger on. A few leaves of rose geranium add a nostalgic quality to a batch of strawberry, rhubarb, or quince preserves; a few more leaves could become overbearing. Two tablespoons of pear eau-de-vie (also known as Poire Williams) in a batch of Pear Jam will amp up the pear taste without adding a discernible alcoholic note. My favorite alcohols to preserve with include Calvados (apple brandy), kirsch (cherry eau-de-vie), apricot eau-de-vie, and Scotch. They are expensive, but since you don't use much and the alcohol doesn't spoil, a single bottle could last for years. Alcohols are my best secret ingredients, and it's fun to taste how they can unexpectedly transform a preserve. No one has ever guessed the booze that magically gives a just-picked blueberry taste to my Blueberry Jam with Gin (see for an explanation of why it works).

If you want the flavor of aromatics or alcohol to be more pronounced, increase the quantities to suit your taste. By the same token, those who prefer to avoid alcohol can safely omit it from any of the jam, jelly, and marmalade recipes in this book. (For fruits preserved in alcohol, however, it is the essential preservative and cannot be replaced.)

QUANTITIES: Jam is made more easily, more cheaply, and more pleasurably in small batches. One of the chief misconceptions many people have about preserving is that it has to be done in huge quantities. Avoid that mistake by resisting the temptation to double or triple recipes, especially if you are inexperienced. *My key advice for making jam is to work with small quantities.* Better to make two small batches than one double batch. Besides, how much strawberry jam does anyone really need?

MACERATION: My jam recipes usually call for macerating the fruit, which simply means stirring together the fruit, sugar, and lemon juice and setting the mixture aside for a time. Sugar jump-starts the transformation of raw fruit into jam, and by drawing juices, it reduces the risk of scorching when the fruit-sugar mixture first goes into the preserving pan. As mentioned above, the macerating fruit-sugar mixture can be kept closely covered in the refrigerator for up to a week.

THE PRESERVING PAN: A preserving pan is whatever you use to make sweet preserves. The ideal preserving pan is wide and shallow to maximize the ratio of surface area to volume and therefore encourage evaporation during cooking. A specialized preserving pan is not necessary, however. Any sort of large, heavy nonreactive pot will work, providing that it is wide enough to hold the initial fruit-sugar mixture at a shallow depth—an inch or two at the most. When I first started making jam, my preserving pan was an enameled pot. But I’ve also used all manner of stockpots, pasta pots, saucepans, and even skillets. The preserving pan must be scrupulously clean, so if you’ve previously used it to cook strongly flavored dishes such as stews or pasta sauces, boil water in it for five minutes and then scour it thoroughly with a soapy scrubber before making jam in it.

COPPER PRESERVING PANS

In developing and testing the recipes in this book, I used a ten-and-a-half-quart copper preserving pan from Mauviel that is fourteen inches wide by five inches deep. A specialized tool, it is beautiful to look at and a pleasure to handle, but it was also painfully expensive, and buying it ran counter to my policy against any kitchen apparatus designated for a single use. I do not recommend that you rush out to buy a French copper preserving pan before making your first batch of jam. I justify owning it by remembering that I made sweet preserves several times a week—and sometimes several times a day—during the time when I was developing this book.

If you do decide to get a copper preserving pan, be aware that it's the linen shirt of the kitchen, beautiful when pristine but impossible to keep that way. Embrace the dings, scratches, and tarnish that inevitably come with use, and be ready for the required upkeep. Copper oxidizes quickly, reacting with both air and water, and I gave up on trying to keep the exterior as bright as a new penny. When the interior gets dull between uses, a sign of oxidation, I clean it with a paste of lemon juice and salt. Fruit's natural acidity will keep the inside of your preserving pan shiny with frequent use.

I am occasionally asked if I worry about copper toxicity. The question arises because, in sufficient doses, copper is poisonous, and there is legitimate concern about using unlined copper pots to cook acidic foods, which can erode the metal and potentially lead to copper toxicity. Most modern copper pots are lined, often with stainless steel. However, unlined copper bowls are used for whipping egg whites, and copper candy kettles and preserving pans are also unlined. I had heard that the sugar in preserves somehow prevented the fruit acid from reacting with the copper, but I couldn't pin down an explanation until Harold McGee, author of *On Food and Cooking*, fielded my question. He wrote in an e-mail:

> Copper pans are fine in confectionery and preserves due to the presence of glucose and fructose, either directly from the fruits or from partial breakdown of sucrose during the cooking. Glucose and

fructose are “reducing sugars,” meaning that they inhibit oxidation (reduction is the opposite of oxidation). And for copper to be dissolved from the solid metal surface, its atoms have to be oxidized to form positively charged copper ions. The reducing sugars inhibit this from happening, so the metal surface releases relatively little copper into the liquid phase.

Lab testing bears out McGee’s explanation. One year, I sent a sample of Classic Apricot Jam made in a copper preserving pan to the National Food Lab in Livermore, California, to check for copper. The results returned by the lab were that one tablespoon of jam had 2 percent of the daily value for copper. The USDA-recommended daily intake of copper for healthy adults is .9 milligram, and the maximum tolerable intake has been established at ten milligrams a day. In other words, 2 percent of the daily value for copper, consumed in a serving of jam, would not seem cause for concern, especially given the amount of jam anyone would normally eat.

McGee did note, however, that since citrus fruit is relatively low in sugar and high in acid, cooking citrus without sugar in a preserving pan, as in the first step for making marmalade, could dissolve “significantly more” copper.

A note on caring for a copper preserving pan: a scouring pad will leave behind permanent micro-abrasions. To clean the pan after use, fill it with hot water—I often will use the water from the boiling-water bath after processing my jars—and allow it to soak for a few minutes. The cooked-on sugary residue will dissolve, or at least soften enough that you can wipe it away with a sponge.

Copper is also relatively soft, and knocking a copper preserving pan against a hard surface will leave dents. Take care not to bang it on a tile countertop or against the edge of a sink.

The size and shape of the preserving pan will affect cooking times, perhaps substantially. The wider the pan, the quicker it will evaporate water, and thus the shorter the cooking time.

HEAT: With a few exceptions that are noted in specific recipes, jam should be cooked as quickly as possible. Use your stove’s strongest element at full blast.

On my standard household gas range, I make jam on the extra-large "quick-boil" eye. In general, the small batch sizes in the "Spring" section should reduce within about ten minutes, although cooking times could be twice as long on a different stove.

Please note that when I say to bring the fruit-sugar mixture to a boil and reduce it for a certain time, I mean the time *after* the mixture comes to a boil.

In the final minutes of cooking, as the hot jam becomes thick and sticky, moderate the heat to prevent scorching.

If while making jam you unavoidably must leave the stove for any reason whatsoever, turn off the heat. Jam can burn in a skinny minute, and there is no remedy for a scorched pot. Contrary to what you may have heard elsewhere, there is no harm in stopping a batch of jam midway through cooking. You can bring it back to a boil and finish cooking it after a minute, an hour, or a day with perfectly normal results.

STIRRING: Stirring prevents scorching and also helps break down the fruit. If you want to keep the fruit whole, as in Strawberry Preserves, shake the pan instead of stirring. If you want a fine consistency, as in Fancy Strawberry Jam with Pinot Noir, stir energetically throughout cooking. Stirring with a whisk, even for thirty seconds at the very end of cooking, will produce a smoother consistency than with a spoon.

SKIMMING: When the fruit-sugar mixture first reaches a full rolling boil, which is to say a boil that cannot be stirred down, it will foam up, especially if any honey has been used. Keep stirring, and the foam will subside for the most part. Toward the end of cooking, just before jarring the hot jam, if a layer of dense scum persists, skim it and discard.

THE GEL SET: Jam goes through four stages in the preserving pan: raw, cooked, reduced, and gel set. At the gel set, the hot jam is thick, glossy, and ready to be jarred. A candy thermometer provides the technical measure of doneness: 8 degrees Fahrenheit above the boiling point of water. (At sea level, water boils at 212 degrees.) The traditional subjective test for a gel set is known as the cold-saucer test. Drop a teaspoon of hot jam on a chilled plate and place it in the freezer for one minute. If the surface forms a light skin that wrinkles when you push your finger through it, you have a gel set. (See Cherry Preserves with Red Currants and Cherry Preserves Made with Powdered Pectin for more detailed explanations.)

JARS: Jam should be put up in half-pint or pint jars; whether wide-mouth or standard is a matter of personal preference. Both half-pints and pints get the same processing time. Quart jars are not recommended for jam, and I find four-ounce jars too small to bother with.

STORAGE: Like all preserves, jam should be stored in a cool, dark place such as a cupboard or a basement. Jam may darken somewhat with age, but it doesn't affect the taste. Keep opened jars in the refrigerator. Low-sugar jams will be more prone to mold after opening.

PICKLE BASICS

The word “pickle” long ago migrated to England from Teutonic Europe, where it likely originated in the obscure past from a root word meaning “a thing that pricks or has piquancy.” In the decades after Chaucer’s death in 1400, early English cookery books described ways to “Pikkyll” wild ducks and “Pigell” fresh sturgeon. By Shakespeare’s day, the spelling has stabilized and the process of making pickles with brine or vinegar was common enough that the playwright could name it for dramatic purpose. In *Antony and Cleopatra,* when the smitten queen learns that Antony is already married, she vents her rage by threatening to kill the messenger who delivered the sour news. Hitting the poor servant, she screams:

> Thou shalt be whipped with wire and stewed in brine,
>
> Smarting in ling’ring pickle!
>
> —II, V

The messenger was, to use our modern idiom, in danger of finding himself “in a pickle”—an uncomfortable situation that might “prick” or “smart.”

The pickle's characteristic sour taste comes from acidity, which, apart from adding piquancy, also prevents low-acid foods such as vegetables, meats, and eggs from spoiling. Since an acidic environment below pH 4.6 halts the growth of bacteria, including *Clostridium botulinum*, the cause of botulism, pickles may be canned safely using the boiling-water method.

There are two types of pickles. Vinegar pickles, sometimes called "quick" pickles, get their acidity from vinegar, which is often smoothed out by sugar and seasoned with salt and spices. Fermented or brined pickles are made by covering vegetables with salty brine and allowing them to sit. Within a few days, the growth of beneficial lactobacillus bacteria will cause the brine to sour—that is, to become acidic—and thereby halt the activity of less desirable microbes that might cause the product to go bad. Examples of brined pickles include the familiar kosher dill, as well as sauerkraut and Korean kimchi. (See Brining Basics.)

Almost anything could conceivably be covered with vinegar and called a pickle—and almost anything likely has been. Pickled herring, pickled eggs, and pickled pigs' feet are just a few isolated holdovers from a once-great pickling tradition that has dwindled dramatically in the age of refrigeration. Today most of us probably think of vegetables when we hear somebody say "pickles," and, more likely than not, that vegetable would be a cucumber. However, a whole range of pickles can be made from alliums, squash, asparagus, peppers, corn, and even fruit.

Here are a few vinegar-pickle basics that generally apply.

RECIPES: Follow recipes exactly, and do not modify the ratio of vegetables, water, and vinegar, which is the essential preservative. It is fine to scale up recipes to suit your quantities.

VINEGAR: Always use commercial vinegar, which has a controlled acidity level. Check the label and select vinegar that is marked for 5 percent acidity or higher—most are. Neither homemade vinegars, which have unreliable acidity, nor weaker vinegars are safe substitutes.

However, it is possible to replace one type of acceptable-acidity vinegar with another—to use, for instance, apple-cider vinegar in place of white-wine vinegar.

The key to making good pickles is to use good vinegar. Since vinegar will be the strongest taste in the jar, its quality matters. Be willing to spend a little more. Sample a tiny sip. It will be strong, of course, but it shouldn't have a harsh, tongue-stripping astringency. If you wouldn't want to taste a vinegar straight, then you wouldn't want to pickle with it. One way to think of it is that you should make pickles with the same quality of vinegar that you would use for vinaigrette salad dressing. Because the recipes in this book have less vinegar-masking sugar and spice than my grandmother's pickles, they'll be successful only if the vinegar measures up.

The vinegars used in this book include:

- **white-wine vinegar,** which has a rounded flavor and a relatively smooth taste. It's my standard vinegar. The brand Vilux sells an economical five-liter (169-ounce) size that can be found at restaurant-supply stores.
- **apple-cider vinegar,** which is inexpensive and widely available. Cider vinegar has a hint of apple flavor and a faint sweetness, so I use it mainly in traditional

recipes like pickled beets, or with other ingredients that combine well with apple, such as fennel.

- **red-wine vinegar,** which has great flavor and a bright, agreeable taste, though its color makes it unsuitable for light-colored pickles.
- **champagne vinegar,** which, with its elegant acidity and distinctive, almost "chalky" taste, does subtly evoke the region's fine wines. Because it can be expensive, I mainly use champagne vinegar when the flavor matters most, as when making an herb vinegar.
- **sherry and malt vinegars,** both of which are dark vinegars with pronounced flavor. Sherry vinegar is probably my favorite for general kitchen use, but I use it for pickles only when I want the flavor to predominate, as in Salad Onions.
- **balsamic vinegar,** which is aged in wooden casks, is sweeter than other vinegars. Balsamic vinegar has limited uses in pickling, and wouldn't normally be substituted for any of the above.
- **distilled white vinegar,** which should be considered a cleaning product. White vinegar will dissolve the hazy mineral spots left by hard water. Half a cup of white vinegar in the boiling-water bath will reduce spotting on jars and lids.

SALT: Throughout the book, I call for kosher salt in my recipes, because I find it easier to measure and quicker to dissolve. Please note that the size and shape of salt particles can make a substantial difference in their volume-by-weight. When I weighed a quarter-cup of six salts, here's what I found:

- Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt: 1 5/8 ounces (46 grams)
- Esprit du Sel Grey Sea Salt: 1 5/8 ounces (47 grams)
- La Paludier fine grey salt: 1¾ ounces (50 grams)
- Morton's Coarse Kosher Salt: 2 1/8 ounces (61 grams)
- La Baleine coarse sea salt: 2 3/8 ounces (66 grams)
- La Baleine fine sea salt: 2½ ounces (72 grams)

The potential variation could be amplified, depending on how you measure—a scant quarter-cup versus a heaping quarter-cup, for example—and those sorts of kitchen habits are so ingrained that we rarely notice them, or think about how they might affect our results.

My standard salt is Morton's Coarse Kosher Salt. In developing recipes, I

usually measured it out instead of weighing it. (The exception is for fermented vegetables, also known as brined pickles, which will be discussed later.) Use your own judgment and taste, when making a recipe, to decide if you want to adjust the salt, bearing in mind that a pickling brine will often taste quite salty on its own, while imparting just the right savor to a pickle.

Avoid using iodized table salt in pickle recipes, because the iodine may cause the product to soften and turn dark.

SPICES: With a very few exceptions—notably turmeric and paprika—the recipes in this book call for whole spices. Whole spices keep better and release their full pungency when you grind them right before use. All spices will fade with time, however, so I buy the smallest quantities possible and restock frequently. It is acceptable to change the quantity of spice in any pickle recipe. Note, however, that spices will continue to infuse the jar, and too much spice (especially clove) can become overbearing with time.

The one spice that people will tend to disagree about the most is dried red chili, which is used in a number of pickle and relish recipes. The heat level of different varieties of dried chilies varies widely, as does personal preference, so it's impossible to give quantities to please everyone. I mainly use medium-hot cayenne chilies that I buy fresh and dry. (See Drying Chilies.) In developing these recipes, I tried to keep in mind the Mom Rule—my mother can tolerate some gentle heat but doesn't want to be set on fire. My rule of thumb is to use about one dried red chili per pint jar of pickles. When making pickles and relishes for my own use, I may use more. A few recipes in the book that have "Spicy" in the title will obviously be hotter than the rest. I'd tell my mom to taste those with caution.

TEXTURE: I don't use firming agents such as alum, a mineral salt, but there are other strategies for maintaining as much crunch as possible.

The first is to select crisp young vegetables and to pickle them as soon as you get them home. Next, vegetables may be salted or brined for a few hours or as long as several days. The salt draws water out of the plant cells and also hardens pectins, improving texture. Finally, some recipes in this book offer an optional hot-water bath rather than the standard boiling-water bath: bring a pot of water to 180 to 185 degrees Fahrenheit, then add the jars and maintain the temperature while processing them for the given time. Processing times will be longer than for a boiling-water bath, and you'll need to use a thermometer to gauge

temperatures, but the lower heat helps preserve crunch. The crispest pickles of all are fresh pickles. Cucumber Dill Spears aren’t processed but will need to be stored in the refrigerator.

Note that it is important to trim and discard the blossom end of cucumbers and squash, which contain enzymes that could cause the pickles to soften.

STORING: Unless otherwise noted, sealed pickles should be stored in a cool, dark place. They’ll keep for a year but will soften with age. Open jars should be stored in the refrigerator.

EDNA LEWIS AND WHAT SOUTHERNERS ARE TALKING ABOUT WHEN THEY TALK ABOUT FOOD

Edna Lewis, God rest her soul, was one of the great talents of the American kitchen—and one of the great voices in American food writing. I know her cookbooks well and keep one of them, *The Gift of Southern Cooking*, co-authored with Scott Peacock, on the short shelf of references next to my stove. But the work of hers that touched me most deeply is the essay "What Is Southern?," which ran posthumously in *Gourmet* magazine (in January 2008) and was honored with a 2009 James Beard Award for food writing.

In answering the titular question, Miss Lewis, who was born in Freetown, Virginia, as the granddaughter of slaves, wrote about a South I also know, although my family is from the somewhat different culture of Blount County, Tennessee. It's the South of the farmer, the grandmother, the storyteller, the hunter, the barefoot kid, and the cook. It's a South that sadly coexists with a meaner place—the South of the slaveholder, the segregationist, and the contemporary bigot—but for me those latter voices do not drown out the former. The Southerners who speak to me most loudly are still Gran and Papa, God rest their souls, and they would have understood exactly what Miss Lewis was writing about when she set out to define what is Southern.

The ostensible subject of her essay is food, and she lays a beautiful table with her writing, as well as a fine cupboard of seasonal preserves:

> *Southern is weeks of canning, pickling, and preserving—cucumber pickle, artichoke pickle, pear pickle, tomato pickle, watermelon rind pickle, citron preserves, green tomato preserves, fig preserves, cherry preserves, grape conserve, crab apple jelly, wild blackberry jelly, fox grape jelly, quince jelly, guava jelly, wild plum jelly, wild strawberry preserves (the best).*

But here's the secret knowledge I want to share with you: when Southerners talk about food, what they're talking about is more than just food. They're talking about a specific way of living—in a specific place, with a specific understanding of the land and its inhabitants, and with a specific ethical commitment to sustaining those relationships across the generations. Miss Lewis just barely nods toward all this in her last paragraph, but she gets the point across:

So many great souls have passed off the scene. The world has changed. We are now faced with picking up the pieces and trying to put them into shape, document them so the present-day young generation can see what southern food was like. The foundation on which it rested was pure ingredients, open-pollinated seed—planted and replanted for generations—[and] natural fertilizers. We grew the seeds of what we ate, we worked with love and care.

That message—heartfelt, long-sighted—hints at a deeper meaning hidden behind the title of my book, *Saving the Season.* For a long while, that meaning tugged at me undiscovered, and I wondered what it was I had dimly felt. In time, I began to glimpse it.

With our canning work, we save more than just a seasonal bounty of produce—although that *is* the first thing we do. We are also saving an old way of doing things, habits handed down through families and across the years, and in some cases our food-preserving techniques are truly ancient. Equally, we are saving, even in our urban kitchens, a sense of the agricultural cycle. Canning connects us with the past and with the natural cosmos, which is tantamount to saying that canning is a culture—a specific food culture—that is perpetuated with every jar we put up. We ought to be mindful of that, even impassioned by it.

But let me suggest here a still broader view: if we begin to think about a long history that stretches all the way back to the origins of organized agriculture, then we begin to understand that the culture of food—that is, how we get it and how we eat it—is a crucial building block in the architecture of civilization. Food is a cornerstone achievement, part of civilization's solid foundation rather than simply an ornament—although cuisine surely shares some of the ornamental qualities of the arts.

I'll admit that the history of food can seem a specialized topic, since the kitchen is not an arena for warfare and diplomacy. It's not defined by epic feats. Instead, cooking is a field of knowledge that has been assembled slowly over time, through countless anonymous contributions. But the collective experience of everyday cooks has arranged itself over the centuries into a mosaic of food cultures that merged in the Western world into a general food culture, one which can be traced backward from Miss Lewis all the way to pre-Biblical origins in ancient Persia. (The East has its own history of food, and it also goes without saying that any discussion of American food is hollow unless it celebrates the indivisible contributions of African foodways brought by the slaves—okra,

watermelons, yams—and the likewise ancient cuisine of Native Americans, with their corn, beans, tomatoes, and squash.)

Cooking is a body of knowledge. It is no frivolity, and during the Enlightenment, influential thinkers understood as much. They understood the necessity for statesmen to study not just statecraft but also the sciences, natural history, agriculture, and domestic economy—to be informed about food and its production.

A political thinker as great as Thomas Jefferson bothered to form opinions about farming and eating, basing his conclusions on what he read and observed in his travels and through his own empirical research at Monticello. Some of his ideas seem astoundingly prescient today, such as rotating crops to increase yield and suppress pests. My favorite phrase from the Jeffersonian kitchen is that meat should be served "as a condiment for the vegetables," which is strikingly in line with current USDA recommendations and the popular manifestos of Michael Pollan. Jefferson believed that a vigorous democracy required sustainable farming communities and self-reliant citizens who possessed the means to feed themselves as well as the nation at large. Jefferson understood that food is a matter of national interest. (See *"A Rich Spot of Earth": Thomas Jefferson's Revolutionary Garden at Monticello* by Peter J. Hatch.)

The culture of food, then—how to grow it and preserve it—needs to be safeguarded just as scrupulously as other achievements in learning and the arts. If we willfully discard it or even carelessly allow it to lapse between one generation and the next, then we lose something much more serious than a sheaf of recipes. A bit of civilization is lost, at the extreme transforming us from muscular, self-reliant citizens into feeble consumers. Eating home-canned goods is a modest but meaningful way to assert our self-reliance as citizens and declare our resistance to the oligarchical union of big business with government. Home canning sticks a finger in the eye of agribusiness and flips the bird at the corporate food industry.

When I started to blog about canning, I didn't see big ideas—and I won't flinch if you call them grandiose—in my preserving pan. I just wanted to make Gran's strawberry jam. But while stirring hundreds of batches of jam and filling thousands of jars, I've had the time to lament that Gran "went to a better place," as they say down south, before I could learn to do things her way. Apart from the personal sorrow her absence causes me, I'm also left angry that so much food culture—how Papa grew it, how Gran prepared it—can be lost irrecoverably. Gran and Papa's farm is now a subdivision that grows houses. One generation

was all it took.

Of course I know that America's traditional food cultures are not entirely lost and, if anything, the national awareness about health and nutrition has served to restore local food economies and revive dying food customs. Home-canning practices that had only recently started to fade suddenly appear to be undergoing a vigorous resurgence. Still, I worry about food traditions the way a linguist must worry about indigenous languages among the Amazon tribes. The old people are going, and taking with them what they knew. That kind of extinction has a cumulative effect: at first you may not notice, but then it's too late.

Miss Lewis left a short shelf of cookbooks. I look at them all the time, and it's thanks to women like her and Gran that I have come to believe that the kitchen work of canning has significance beyond being an expression of a currently trendy kitchen hobby. Jam is more than just sweet nothings in a jar. It is a small but nonetheless valuable component of the American democracy.

Miss Lewis understood that all along.

MUCH DEPENDS ON DINNER BY MARGARET VISSER [1986]

Originally published well before Michael Pollan had started pondering our omnivore's dilemma, Margaret Visser's *Much Depends on Dinner*—the title comes from a line in Byron's *Don Juan*—is an influential early contribution to the now crowded genre known as food writing. The book is a high-minded but lively cultural-historical analysis of a simple meal: corn on the cob, chicken, rice, salad, and ice cream. It prefigures a huge amount of writing that has since followed, from monographic studies on salt, cod, and the like to more theoretical works like Vandana Shiva's academic studies and Pollan's popular *Food Rules.* When, about halfway through the writing of this book, I read the following incantatory paragraph from the introduction of *Much Depends on Dinner,* I immediately recognized Visser as a spiritual godmother for the current home-canning revival.

> Boredom is the twentieth century's version of social *miasma*. … Boredom arises from the loss of meaning, which in turn comes in part from a failure of *religio* or connectedness with one another and with our past. This book is a modest plea for the realization that absolutely nothing is intrinsically boring, least of all the everyday, ordinary things. These, today, are after all what even we are prepared to admit we have in common. We have recently discovered in ourselves a determination to consider nothing to be beneath consideration, and a willingness to question passionately matters which used to be thought too basic for words. I think the reason for this is that we are fighting back with an altogether healthy urge to recapture ancient but pitifully neglected, thoroughly human responses such as participatory attention, receptivity, and appreciation.

Spring

Spring is the season when the lambs are plump,
The season when the wine is mellowest,
The time of year when sleep is sweetest of all,
And the shadows on the hills are at their softest.

—*Virgil's "First Georgic"*

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INTRODUCTION

POETS, PROPHETS, AND OPTIMISTS have always celebrated spring as a

metaphor for love, eternal renewal, and the burgeoning promise of the future. And who can blame them? When the chill thaws and buds break, everything seems possible in the world. It's also a good time to eat. Perhaps because we pick spring produce when it's young and tender—"infinitesimal carrots … lima beans tinier than mice eyes," wrote Truman Capote—the new food seems especially full of vitality. When I think of spring, I first picture asparagus and strawberries, but in fact spring is a long phase that runs from March through June in Southern California. Spring opens with the earliest tender shoots and lasts through cherry season, which also marks the start of summer.

The recipes in this section cover all of the fruits and vegetables mentioned above and capture some of the pure pleasure I've always felt when warm weather returns. We'll explore many variations on the theme of jam, with an emphasis on understanding how different techniques yield various results. We will also make a range of pickles with asparagus, carrots, and things that may be unfamiliar, such as nasturtium pods and green almonds. The recipes in this section tend toward simplicity, which makes spring the ideal time to start canning—or to start canning anew.

Jam Technique No. 1

BASIC STRAWBERRY JAM | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

That's me at seven years old, holding strawberries that my mother and I had picked at the local pick-your-own patch in upstate South Carolina back in the seventies. About three decades later, I was carrying home a similar flat of strawberries from the Santa Monica Farmers Market when I decided to make jam for the first time. As I explained in the introduction, my first attempt was not a success, but this is the recipe I've arrived at since. It's nothing revolutionary—a broadly similar recipe can be found in the 1824 cookbook *The Virginia Housewife* by Thomas Jefferson's second cousin Mary Randolph. Still, I've tweaked the basic technique in little ways and adjusted ingredients to balance sweet and tart flavors.

To get started, go shopping at a farmers' market or roadside farmstand if at all possible, and seek out the smallest, reddest berries. Fragrance is a good indicator of quality, but tasting is better still. The giant strawberries favored by supermarket produce managers are not a good choice. I call them "Pamela Anderson fruit," artificially enhanced and tasteless.

The sugar content in this recipe is lower than in many traditional farmhouse recipes, but there's still enough for a soft-set consistency and to ensure a reasonably long shelf life once opened. Lower-sugar alternatives can be found in

the pages ahead, where you'll also find a discussion of the challenges and potential shortcomings of low-sugar preserves.

For those who have little or no experience with preserves, the recipe is given a second time with annotations that provide additional guidance. If you're just starting out, stick to the recipe. With experience, you'll learn where you can improvise.

Also, *do not double the quantities*, at least not initially. A small batch is cheaper, faster, more manageable, and better suited to the size of standard household equipment. If you want more jars, make two small batches. I can assure you from personal experience that you'll be happier with the outcome. In fact, the more experienced I get, the more I'm inclined to do three or four jars at a time—a nice little job to knock off in an hour, rather than a labor that wrings the fun out of the afternoon.

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2 pounds ripe strawberries 2½ cups sugar

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

Optional: a few scrapings of lemon zest

1. Briefly rinse the berries and remove their caps. Combine with the sugar, lemon juice, and zest, if using, in a large bowl, and crush with a potato masher (or your hands).

2. Turn the fruit-sugar mixture into a preserving pan, and bring to a boil over high heat, stirring regularly. Reduce at a full rolling boil, stirring all the while, to the gel point, 8 to 10 minutes, depending on the size of your pan and the strength of the heat source.

3. Once a gel set has been achieved, skim if necessary, and ladle the hot jam into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

BASIC STRAWBERRY JAM | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

[WITH ANNOTATIONS FOR NOVICE JAMMERS]

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2 pounds ripe strawberries

Choose small, fragrant berries that are just-ripe. If possible, use the fruit the same day you bring it home, or as soon as you can afterward. Misshapen "ugly" berries are fine if they are prime quality. Discard any fruit that is bruised and mushy, or that has an overripe taste of fermentation.

2½ cups sugar White granulated sugar has a neutral flavor that won't overwhelm the delicate berry taste. It is fine to replace some or all of the white sugar with unrefined organic sugar, but the stronger flavor that comes from its pale-brown molasses residue may be noticeable in the finished jam. You could also replace a portion of the sugar with half as much honey (by volume), but be aware that honey is a moderately strong flavoring agent that will impart its taste.

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

Always use freshly squeezed juice for its bright, floral flavor. The acidity of lemon juice balances the sugar's sweetness and also helps the strawberry's natural pectin to gel.

Optional: a few scrapings of lemon zest The best tool for zesting citrus is the Microplane grater. The tiny curls it produces will hardly be visible, but they add a more noticeable lemon note than does the juice. By "a few scrapings," I mean you should add a little bit, taste the results, and add a little bit more if you'd like. Or skip the zest altogether—it's optional.

1 Before you start, wash your jars and lids in hot, soapy water. Rinse and drain them well, and place the jars in a 200-degree oven so they will be warm when you need them. Bring a small pan of water to a boil, remove it from the heat,

and submerge the lids in the hot water. The rings can simply be washed. Also, put a couple of saucers and metal spoons in the freezer. You'll need them later, to test for a gel set. **Briefly rinse the berries and remove their caps.** To avoid waterlogging the berries, fill a basin with cool water, dunk the berries, agitate for a few moments, and immediately lift them out to drain in a colander. If the berries are very gritty, dunk them a second time in fresh water, but do not allow them to soak. **Combine with the sugar, lemon juice, and zest in a large bowl, and crush with a potato masher (or your hands).** Crushing the berries has two obvious effects: to break down the fruit's structure and to release juices. Crushed fruit will cook more quickly and produce a more consistent—although still-chunky—texture. Don't use a food processor, a blender, or an immersion blender. Your aim is not to liquefy the fruit, simply to break it apart. If you don't have a potato masher (or even if you do), the perfect implement for this task would be your two hands—crush the berries between your fingers.

2 **Turn the fruit-sugar mash into a preserving pan, and bring to a boil over high heat, stirring regularly.** Choose a preserving pan wide enough to accommodate the fruit-sugar mixture at a depth of about 1 inch. Use your strongest heating element, and turn it up to full capacity. The goal is to bring the fruit-sugar mixture to a boil as quickly as possible. Watch the pot closely, and stir at least every 30 seconds. **Reduce at a full rolling boil, stirring all the while** … A full rolling boil is a boil you cannot stir down. When the fruit-sugar mixture first comes to a boil, it will foam, but the foam will eventually subside with stirring. Don't worry about skimming the pan yet—that comes later. It is crucial to note that the high cooking heat requires that you stir the pan ceaselessly. Do not step away from the stove! If the phone rings, let it ring. Jam will scorch if left unattended, especially in the last minute or two of cooking. If you absolutely must step away from the stove, turn off the heat, and resume cooking when you return**. … to the gel point, 8 to 10 minutes, depending on the size of your pan and the strength of the heat source.** The fruit-sugar mixture will pass through four stages in the preserving pan: raw, cooked, reduced, and gel set.

Raw: The fruit-sugar mixture is cold when it goes into the pan, and will continue to look like what it is—raw fruit in a granular syrup—as it heats.

Cooked: After the boil, the berries will be hot all the way through and will take on the translucent, slumped look of cooked fruit.

Reduced: As the mixture continues to boil and more water evaporates from the pan, the liquid will reduce until it is visibly thicker, coating the edge of the pan and showing some "body" as it pours off the lip of a spoon. (Toward the end of this stage, you may want to moderate the heat to prevent scorching.) *Gel Set:* This is the stage at which the hot jam is fully reduced and ready to jar. Glossy and thick, it will cling to the side of the preserving pan, coat the back of a cold spoon, and fall from the spoon in a "sheet" or clump.

The temperature at which the gel set occurs is 8 degrees above the boiling point of water at your elevation (water boils at 212 degrees at sea level or 203 degrees in mile-high Denver). To verify the gel set, use a digital thermometer, or go by the traditional "cold-saucer test."

Before you do a cold-saucer test, first turn off the flame beneath the preserving pan. Place a teaspoon of hot jam on a chilled saucer and leave it in the freezer for one minute, then push your fingertip through the puddle. If the chilled jam has formed a light skin that wrinkles as you push it, or if a dab of jam between your fingertip and thumb forms a

thread as you open a gap, then you have a gel set. Otherwise, put the preserving pan back on the heat, reduce the contents for another minute, then check the gel set again.

If you're still unsure of whether you have a gel set, take the preserving pan off the heat and stir it for 60 seconds. As it cools slightly, study it: Does it stick to the edges of the pan? Can you draw a line in the bottom of the pan with your spoon? Does it mound in a spoon? Does the hot product look like jam? If so, you probably have a gel set. Or, on the other hand: Is there still excess liquid "in the corners" of the pan—that is, around the edges? Does the hot mixture splash rather than slosh if you slap it against the edge of the pan? Does the liquid dribble quickly off the edge of a spoon? Does the hot mixture look like cooked fruit in thickened syrup? Does the liquid look shiny, like water, rather than lustrous, like jam? If so, you probably do not yet have a gel set.

3 **Once a gel set has been achieved, skim if necessary** … If at this point there is any unsightly scum on the jam, skim it off and discard. I like to stir the hot jam vigorously for 60 seconds off the heat to improve consistency and evaporate a bit more water**. … and ladle the hot jam into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace**. You want to get the hot jam into jars promptly. Don't fill the jar to the rim, but leave a headspace for the jam to expand during the boiling-water bath. **Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.** See Canning Basics for an explanation of the boiling-water bath.

[Note] The yield can vary, depending on a number of factors: the water content of your fruit, whether you use less or more sugar, and how much you reduce the hot jam to achieve the desired consistency.

Jam Technique No. 2

SLOW-COOKED STRAWBERRY JAM WITH ROSÉ WINE | *YIELDS ABOUT 2 PINTS*

> Oh, but strawberries will never taste so good again.
>
> —JOHN STEINBECK, *EAST OF EDEN*

Mrs. S. R. Dull's *Southern Cooking*, a regional bible since 1928, gives seven variations for strawberry preserves, the first of which, called "A Prize Recipe," is so good that it will "resemble sunshine preserves," writes the author. My mother's favorite preserving guide, 1963's *Freezing and Canning Cookbook: Prized Recipes from the Farms of America*, gives instructions for making "sun-cooked" preserves, which are remembered as a delicacy from antebellum days. They sound so appealing. You heat the berries with sugar, pour the mixture into a pan, and leave it outside, under a pane of glass, to "cook" over the course of several days. With such gentle treatment, the fruit supposedly retains its raw vibrancy and fragrance. Sunshine jam might be the *ne plus ultra* of Slow Food: a solar-powered test of patience salvaged from the chronicles of lost time. I bet it's delicious, but I doubt I'll ever make it. I always wonder: What about ants and bees and the four-legged creatures? What about air pollution and dust? Where would I store a sheet of glass between uses?

This recipe is my adaptation for urbanites: crushed fruit is cooked in the oven and finished with a splash of dry rosé wine. Prolonged slow cooking of course directly contradicts my general dictum that sweet preserves should be reduced as quickly as possible. This is an exception, and the technique could be applied to other delicate fruit, such as raspberries.

This recipe's modest sugar content does have drawbacks. Sugar is a preservative, so low-sugar preserves tend to be more ephemeral, all the more so since you don't use the boiling-water bath here. Instead, sterilize the jars by placing them in the oven while you cook the jam, and prepare the lids by putting them in a small pot of boiling water. Store the sealed jars in the refrigerator, and eat the jam within a few months, while it's fresh.

Given the small quantities called for here, the slow-cooked technique would

be ideal for wild strawberries or the fragrant Mara des Bois, a hybrid of four European strawberries (see the long-stemmed berry in this image). Even a handful of these expensive rarities will perfume a batch of jam made with conventional fruit. My favorite commercial cultivar for jam is ‘Chandler,’ which is acidic and has old-fashioned strawberry flavor.

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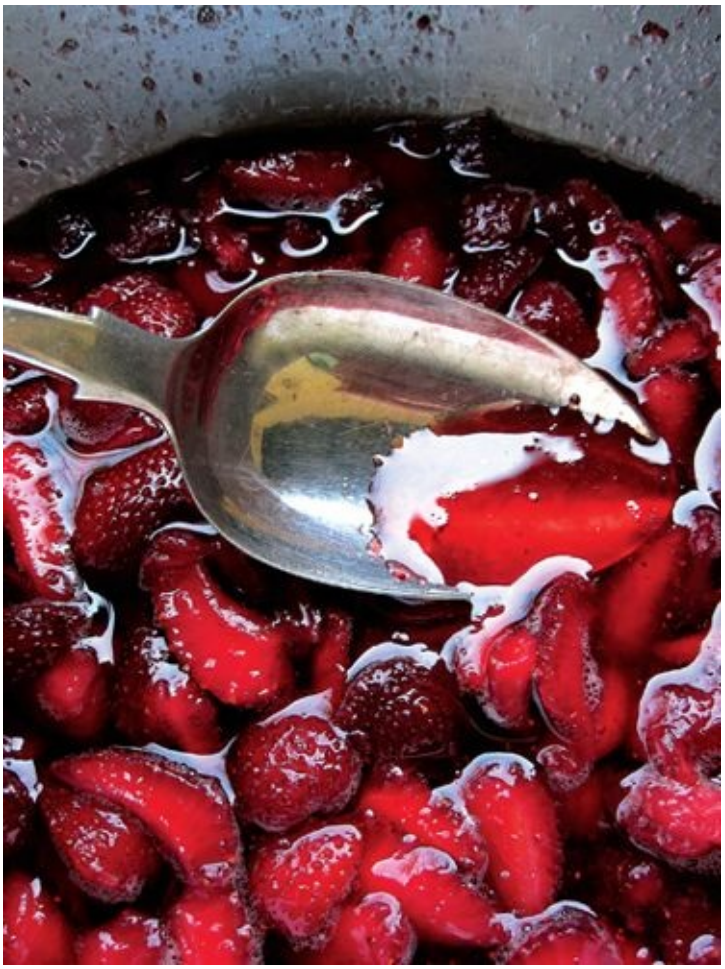
2 pounds small, ripe strawberries 1½ cups sugar 2 tablespoons dry French rosé wine

1 Briefly rinse the berries and remove their caps. Crush them in a mixing bowl with the sugar, and pour into a wide preserving pan. The fruit-sugar mixture should be no more than ½ inch deep in the pan.

2 Slowly heat the mixture to a simmer over medium heat, then put the entire pan in a 250-degree oven. Stir for 30 seconds every 15 minutes until the jam is reduced to your liking, which could take as long as 2 hours. Check the gel set using the cold-saucer test. At last, stir in the wine, and put the pan back in the oven to reduce for a final 15 minutes.

3 Ladle the hot jam into four sterilized ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Once they are cool, store the jars in the refrigerator. Plan to use the jam within a month, or else freeze for longer keeping.

[Note] Use a good rosé that you’ll enjoy drinking later, and avoid sweet American varieties such as White Zinfandel. Alternatively, the wine could be replaced with 2 teaspoons of freshly squeezed lemon juice, added when you crush the fruit. Reduce for a total of 2 hours.



Jam Technique No. 3

FANCY STRAWBERRY JAM WITH PINOT NOIR | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

Over the past several years, the most enjoyable ongoing conversation I've had about preserving is with my friend and fellow jammer Valerie Gordon, founder of Valerie Confections in Los Angeles. Valerie has a very concise manner of speaking, a virtue I especially admire because I lack it myself. We've often discussed why preserving has seen such a resurgence in recent years. My response is to wax on about nostalgia and politics and a grassroots reaction to the culture of corporate greed that also manifests in the Occupy movement, etc., *etc.* Valerie puts it this way: "The farmers' market is the egg, and the jam movement is the chicken that emerged from it." Enough said.

Valerie and I share similar ideas about food, and we buy from the same farmers. But the jams Valerie makes are elegant, refined, intense, and often highly worked, whereas mine are earthier, elemental, and—Valerie says—more masculine. My explanation is that I'm an amateur coming out of the farmhouse tradition, whereas Valerie is a professional steeped in the world of fine food. Her jams are *fancy.*

This recipe was inspired by Valerie's strawberry jam with vanilla, which tastes as if it belongs on a Limoges dessert plate in a four-star restaurant. My recipe borrows Valerie's labor-intensive technique but infuses the darker, moodier flavors of red wine and star anise.

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3 pounds ripe strawberries

2½ cups sugar

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

Zest of ¼ lemon

1 inch cinnamon stick

¼ pod star anise (2 or 3 “rays” of the star)

3 tablespoons fine Oregon Pinot Noir

1 Briefly rinse the strawberries and drain them well. Remove the caps, and quarter lengthwise. If they’re large, cut each quarter in half. Combine the sliced berries in a bowl with the sugar, lemon juice, zest, and spices, and leave to macerate for 30 minutes.

2 Turn the fruit-sugar mixture into a preserving pan, and bring to a boil over high heat. Vigorously stir the pan with a whisk, which over the course of cooking will break down the berries into a smooth paste. After 6 to 8 minutes, add the Pinot Noir. Continue reducing to the gel point, another 4 to 6 minutes, whisking all the while.

3 Discard the spices, and whisk for another minute or so, until the jam has a smooth, consistent texture. Ladle it into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Jam Technique No. 4

STRAWBERRY PRESERVES | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

What's the difference between jam and preserves? It's easier to approach the question from the jam side. At some point around the turn of the eighteenth century, "jam" was first used to describe a cooked fruit spread. How or why the old word took on its new meaning in the kitchen is anyone's guess. Nathan Bailey's *Dictionarium Britannicum,* an etymological dictionary published in 1730 and 1736, offers a charming if dubious explanation that it comes from *j'aime*, "as Children used to say in French formerly, when they liked any Thing." Samuel Johnson must have known of Bailey's work—Dr. Johnson seems to have read everything—but when he prepared the entry for jam in his learned *Dictionary* of 1755, he did not mention French-speaking children: "*Jam* (I know not whence derived), a conserve of fruits boiled with sugar and water."

Even the *Oxford English Dictionary* is uncharacteristically modest in its proposed etymology, suggesting that "perhaps" the transitive verb "to jam" lent the noun its auxiliary sense of "to bruise or crush," as in a citation from Hannah Glasse's 1747 *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy: To Make Raspberry Giam: Take a pint of this Currant Jelly, and a Quart of Raspberries, bruise them well together, set them over a low fire. …*

That sounds like giam to me.

A *preserve,* by contrast, is whole or sliced fruit in thickened syrup, and the word tends to be used in the plural, as in strawberry *preserves,* perhaps to distinguish the specific usage from the more generic *preserve,* as in "jam is a type of fruit preserve." The dividing line between jam and preserves is indistinct, and one man's chunky jam could be another man's thick preserves. But, technically, when making preserves, you take pains to keep the fruit intact by plumping it with sugar as you repeatedly heat it in syrup.

The process requires two days or more. France's Queen of Confiture, Christine Ferber, demonstrates the basic approach. She macerates the fruit for a time to draw the liquids, then gently brings the fruit-sugar mixture to a boil and sets it aside overnight. The next day, she strains off the syrup and reduces it first, before adding the fruit and heating it through for canning. An interesting Russian cookbook I have expands the process. You heat the fruit and sugar, then leave

overnight. On day two, you reheat it and, again, leave overnight. On the third day, you bring it to a boil and, finally, can it. Celebrated chef Scott Peacock, co-author of *The Gift of Southern Cooking* with Edna Lewis, told me that his mother used a similar three-step process with whole figs, which would turn translucent as sugar slowly suffused through to the center. “You could lift a fig out of the jar by its stem,” he said. “It was the best fig jam I’ve ever had.” To me, Mrs. Peacock’s fig *preserve* would clearly be *preserves,* but who can quibble with the name of a family recipe?

My two versions of strawberry preserves include supplemental flavorings, mainly because my local strawberries often need some help. The first, which is flavored with elderflower liqueur, references the European tradition of combining strawberries with elderflower blossoms, which appear in late spring, as the berries ripen. The second recipe was inspired by the Italian idea of serving fresh strawberries with black pepper and balsamic vinegar. In either case, if you have very fragrant berries, the flavorings could be omitted.

Choose small berries for a preserve, or cut larger ones into halves or quarters.

STRAWBERRY PRESERVES WITH ELDERFLOWER LIQUEUR | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

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3 pounds strawberries, the smaller the better 2¼ cups sugar

3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 to 2 tablespoons St-Germain elderflower liqueur

1 Briefly rinse the berries, and remove their caps. If some are larger, cut them into halves or quarters. Layer the fruit with the sugar, and sprinkle the lemon juice over the top. Set aside for an hour.

2 Turn the fruit-sugar mixture into a preserving pan and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat. Once it's cool, cover and store overnight in the refrigerator.

3 The following day, strain the mixture through a colander and capture the syrup in a bowl. Allow to drip for 15 minutes. Reduce the syrup in a preserving pan over high heat to the gel point, 8 to 10 minutes after the full boil. The temperature of the syrup will be 220 degrees on a candy thermometer. As a subjective guide, watch for the large bubbles I call frog eyes to form mats that cover the surface of the hot syrup.

4 Add the berries to the preserving pan, and cook over moderate heat for 3 minutes longer, shaking the pan or stirring gently. Stir in the St-Germain during the last minute of cooking. Ladle the hot preserves into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Strawberry Preserves with Balsamic Vinegar and Black Pepper | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

3 pounds small, ripe strawberries 2½ cups sugar

3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Follow the recipe above, omitting the lemon juice and St-Germain. Note that this recipe uses slightly more sugar. In the last minute of cooking, stir in the balsamic vinegar and black pepper. Fill, and process the jars as directed.

ADRIAEN COORTE [ACTIVE 1683–1707]
WILD STRAWBERRIES IN A WAN LI BOWL, 1704

When Adriaen Coorte took up his paintbrushes in the provincial Dutch town of Middelburg around 1683, it had become possible only relatively recently for anyone to think of himself as a still-life painter. Though, to be sure, carefully rendered inanimate objects had long been scattered at the edges of European art for decorative or symbolic effect, most historians agree that Caravaggio created the first fully independent still life—a fruit portrait, you might say—just before 1600. Another half-century or so elapsed before the term "still life" appeared, first in a Dutch inventory. Although the later French painter Jean-Baptiste Descamps preferred the coinage *nature morte*, literally "dead nature," in either case the point was made. The still-life genre concerns itself with inanimate or immobile objects: flowers, fruits, caught fish, shot game, seashells, cooking implements, books, musical instruments, weapons, skulls, and so on.

Coorte was likely born in the decade before Rembrandt's death in 1669, but almost nothing we know about him is certain other than that he signed about a hundred paintings that have survived. The modestly scaled and rather stark works stand apart from the sumptuous, even ostentatious displays of wealth that typify Dutch still life of the Golden Age, when rich patrons wanted to adorn their walls with painted piles of silver, citrus, game, and other symbols of conspicuous consumption. Coorte had a more rustic vision; he favored the unadorned beauty of a bundle of white asparagus or a pretty bowl of wild strawberries.

Apparently, his work brought Coorte little credit in his lifetime, and his still lifes were largely forgotten until the early twentieth century. The first major exhibition of his work had to wait until 1958, but it was enough to earn him a spot, albeit belatedly, in some art-history textbooks. In the brochure to accompany a 2003 exhibition of Coorte's work at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., curator Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr., resorted to scholarly musings on what would account for an artist's being appreciated in our time after such previous neglect: *Perhaps Coorte lived not in Middelburg itself but in the surrounding countryside, enjoying a quiet, contemplative existence akin to the serenity created in his elegant paintings. It is also possible that he painted as a gentleman "amateur" rather than as a professional artist. Such an explanation would help account for the individuality of his style, which he pursued with a single-minded devotion throughout his career.*

It strikes me that Coorte painted the way a gardener or a cook might, as one who observed the seasons and preferred the wealth of nature to the glitter of more

worldly goods. Such a preference set Coorte apart in his time, as well it would in our own.

RHUBARB JAM WITH ROSE GERANIUM AND RASPBERRY VINEGAR | *YIELDS 2½ PINTS*

Rhubarb is usually cast as a bit player in the fruit world—strawberry's sidekick. The mistake is twofold. In the first place, rhubarb makes for good eating on its own. Second, it's not even a fruit but, rather, the vegetable stalk of a sorrel relative, *Rheum rhabarbarum,* that probably originated in Siberia. A U.S. Customs court at Buffalo, New York, officially declared rhubarb a fruit in 1947, because that's how everyone eats it.

However, if you go all the way back to the first mention of rhubarb in ancient Chinese herbals, it wasn't considered either fruit or vegetable, but medicine. The Romans and medieval Europeans likewise consumed it only for its putative medical value, and even into more recent centuries, rhubarb was relied upon as a purgative. Perhaps in the preindustrial food world, when winter vegetables were scarce, a large serving of the fiber-dense stalks in early spring would indeed have delivered a welcome cleansing effect.

By the early nineteenth century, English and American gardeners and cooks at last decided that they could eat rhubarb for pleasure alone. Americans sometimes called it "pie fruit," indicating its principal use. Rhubarb's popularity depended on cheap sugar, making it a novelty from the Golden Age of Jam.

Its leaves contain toxic concentrations of oxalic acid. The stalks have it, too, but no more than spinach. Anyone prone to kidney stones is advised to avoid oxalate-rich foods.

The English preserving expert May Byron, in her classic 1917 *Jams and Jellies*, advises macerating rhubarb overnight to draw the juices. With very fresh rhubarb, you can get by with less time, but heat it carefully at first to prevent scorching.

2½ pounds rhubarb stalks 3½ cups sugar 2 tablespoons raspberry vinegar

3 or 4 rose geranium leaves

1 Trim and discard the leaves, and chop the stalks into ½-inch pieces. Combine with the sugar in a mixing bowl, and set aside to macerate for at least 1 hour, or up to overnight.

2 Turn the fruit-sugar mixture into a preserving pan, and bring to a boil over moderate heat. Rhubarb breaks down as it cooks, so, in order to have a more textured preserve, stir sparingly at first; instead, shake the pan to ensure that no pieces stick to the bottom. Once the pan boils, reduce over high heat for 7 to 9 minutes, until the liquids are thickened. Watch the pan carefully, and stir more toward the end of cooking.

3 Turn off the heat, and stir in the raspberry vinegar. Bruise the rose geranium

leaves by squeezing lightly in your fist, and stir them through the hot jam for a minute, then discard. Taste, and add more vinegar or rose geranium if you like.

4 Ladle the hot jam into five prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. For a stronger rose flavor, you can place one small rose geranium leaf in the bottom of each jar. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Rhubarb Jam with Mescal | *YIELDS 2½ PINTS*

Mescal is the rustic cousin of tequila. Its fire-cooked, smoky quality blends surprisingly well with rhubarb and is matched here with a bit of honey, lime juice, and freshly cracked black pepper. A good-quality añejo tequila could be substituted.

2½ pounds rhubarb stalks

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice

2¾ cups sugar 2 to 4 tablespoons honey

2 tablespoons mescal

¼ teaspoon cracked black pepper

Follow the recipe for Rhubarb Jam with Rose Geranium and Raspberry Vinegar, omitting the vinegar and rose geranium. Add 1 tablespoon of lime juice when you macerate the sliced rhubarb with the sugar. Then, in the last minute of cooking, stir in the second tablespoon of lime juice, as well as the honey (to taste), mescal, and black pepper. Process as directed.

STRAWBERRY-RHUBARB JAM | *YIELDS 2½ PINTS*

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2 pounds small strawberries

1½ pounds rhubarb stalks 3 cups sugar

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

Optional: 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise

1 Rinse the strawberries quickly and drain. Remove their caps, and quarter the berries. Cut the rhubarb into ½-inch chunks. Combine the fruit, sugar, lemon juice, and vanilla bean, if using, in a bowl, and leave to macerate for 30 minutes.

2 Turn the mixture into a preserving pan, and rapidly bring to a boil. Reduce over high heat to the gel point, 10 to 12 minutes. Discard the vanilla bean, if using, and ladle the hot jam into five prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF JAM

"Of the juyce of this Reed is made the most pleasant and profitable sweet, called Sugar, whereof is made infinite confections, confectures, Syrups and such like … the which to write of would require a peculiar volume."

—JOHN GERARD, *HERBALL, OR GENERALL HISTORIE OF PLANTES* [1597]

"It was in the colonies of the New World that sugar was really born."

—BRILLAT-SAVARIN, *THE PHYSIOLOGY OF TASTE* [1825]

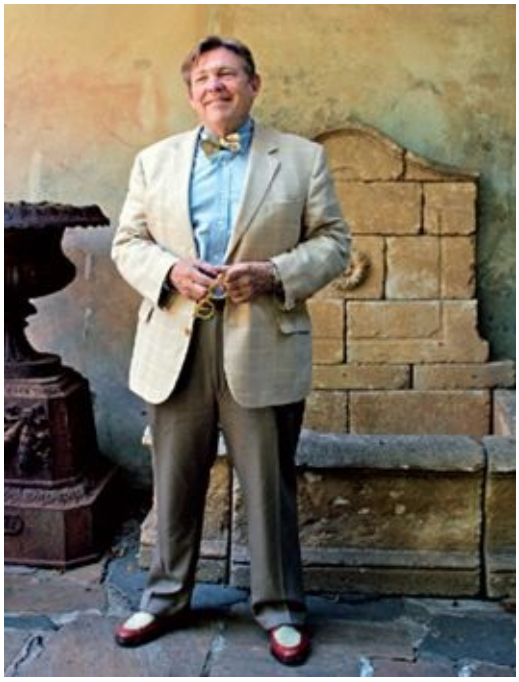
The one ingredient without which this book would be impossible is sugar. Indeed, sugar is so much a part of the twenty-first-century diet that it is difficult to imagine life without it. Yet, as historian Sidney Mintz describes in fascinating detail in *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, sugar was a costly luxury for the rich before 1750, as out-of-reach for the common man as truffles and caviar are today. Go back another millennium and sugar was treasure. The Venerable Bede, who died in 735, actually bequeathed his tiny stash of sugar to his brethren. When England's King Henry III wanted sugar in 1226, he instructed the mayor of Winchester, an important market town, to procure three pounds "if so much could be had at one time," writes Mintz. Even as late as Louis XIV's reign (1643–1715), sugar in France had to be bought in small amounts from apothecaries. (When someone found himself short of what he needed, he was proverbially "like an apothecary without sugar.") Only after the explosive growth of the Caribbean sugar industry in the eighteenth century did the precious granules finally become a household staple. Mintz writes: "A rarity in 1650, a luxury in 1750, sugar had been transformed into a virtual necessity by 1850." A short fifty years after that, sugar was supplying one-fifth of the total calories in the English diet.

The rising supply of sugar over the same period eventually made jam, jelly, marmalade, and other sweet preserves accessible to the masses. Its usefulness as

a preservative had been known since ancient times, and as John Gerard noted in his *Herball* of 1597, sugar figured in so many Elizabethan preparations for fruit- and flower-based syrups, confections, and preserves that to list them all would require “a volume.” But all would remain costly treats until the nineteenth century, when the variety and abundance of preindustrial agriculture was met for the first time in history with an avalanche of cheap sugar. The result was the Golden Age of Jam.

Nineteenth-century cookbooks abound with recipes for sweet preserves—those in Eliza Acton’s *Modern Cookery for Private Families* from 1845 are as good as any ever published. For the first time, everyday people incorporated sugar and sugar-based recipes into their daily life, giving rise to new habits—marmalade for breakfast—and creating a need for new domestic implements, such as jam pots and jelly spoons. Serving pieces in the average household were modeled on examples made for French aristocrats, who commissioned lavish silver and porcelain pieces in imitation of still grander objects at Versailles.

Sometime after I read *Sweetness and Power,* a friend e-mailed me pictures of a gorgeous old preserving pan he had seen in a New Orleans shop called Lucullus, which specialized in culinary antiques. My curiosity piqued, I contacted the shop's owner, Patrick Dunne, and got myself invited to learn more about antique preserving paraphernalia.



Patrick Dunne

Dunne greeted me at Lucullus on a triple-digit June morning, looking as if he'd just stepped off the set of a period movie about the Big Easy. In his office in the former stables out back, he'd laid out a copper preserving pan, jelly jars, porcelain jam pots, and a solid silver *confiturier,* a communal jam pot. Similar pieces are in the Louvre.

"Imagine the extravagance of sugar in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries," Dunne said. "They had an incredible sweet tooth and were always eating jellies and preserves, which were a status symbol as well as a satisfaction, like tea."

Dunne had studied cultural history at Georgetown and Tulane before becoming a dealer, and almost before I could start our interview, he focused my attention on the subtler historical significance of the artifacts on the table. Pretty as they are, they recalled to Dunne the brutal history of jam's Golden Age.

"The thing that's interesting about your subject," he said, "is that it all hinges on the tragedy of sugar."

He suggested I read an illuminating book on the subject, *Sweetness and Power.*

MINTZ'S SWEEPING NARRATIVE SPANS the Stone Age to Coca-Cola, but it all began with a large tropical grass, *Saccharum officinarum,* or "sugar of the apothecaries," that accumulates sucrose in its fibrous stalks. Crushing the stalks releases pale-green juice with something of the light body and sweetness of fresh apple cider. Sugarcane juice can be boiled down for molasses or, with more skill, crystallized into granulated sugar, which in its most refined form is pure white. (Read about my experience making molasses in Tennessee.) Man first domesticated sugarcane in New Guinea sometime before 8000 B.C., and carried it with him on successive migrations. It reached India two thousand years later, and there we find an early written reference to sugar in the world's first grammar book, a commentary on Sanskrit from around 400–350 B.C., which named sugar as an ingredient in rice pudding and ginger-flavored beverages.

From India, the knowledge of sugar traveled west on the tides of conquest. Darius the Great took it home to Persia, and Alexander's army encountered sugar, or at least a sugarlike substance, along the Indus and Euphrates Rivers. The Greeks failed to grasp its culinary uses, however, and it remained to them a foreign curiosity. The Romans didn't eat it, either, at least not in any quantity, although the physician Dioscorides wrote in the first century A.D. about "a kind of concreted honey, called *saccharon,*" that could remedy stomach and bladder ailments. (For Romans, sweetness came from honey.) Arabs mastered the art of granulated sugar, and as they marched west across the Mediterranean world, sugar, writes Mintz, followed the Koran as far as the Iberian Peninsula.

Bible-toting Crusaders were perhaps the first Western Europeans to understand sugar's potential. After storming the Holy Lands on the First Crusade (1096–99), Albert van Aachen described fields of "honey reed," *zuchra,* growing on the Plains of Tripoli, and noted that inhabitants of besieged cities could survive on it. Crusaders carried *zuchra*'s secrets home, but even so, for centuries to come, the average European would likely live and die without ever hearing about sugar, let alone tasting it. Well into the Renaissance, sugar's price was lordly, comparable to spice, the age's other culinary treasure. Nobles decorated their banquet tables with sugar sculptures called "subtleties"—an outrageous extravagance meant to dazzle guests—and at the wedding feast of England's Henry IV in 1403, candied plums were presented in richly decorated bowls called *drageoirs,* from the French for "sugar-coated." Some memory of sugar's

archaic ceremonial value survives even today in the form of the wedding cake, and in the small sculpted marzipan “fruit” seen around Christmas.

The great turning point in the democratization of sugar came in 1493, which is where Dunne took up the story.

“Did you know Christopher Columbus’s mother was in the sugar business?” he asked over the top of his glasses. “I guess it was the sweet tooth that sparked the explorations. Columbus was looking for spices, but I think he was also looking for a place to grow sugar. On his second voyage, he brought the cane.”

Brillat-Savarin overstated his claim that sugar was “really born” in the New World, but it is true that the modern sugar industry developed here. In the centuries after Columbus, European landholders exported “white gold” from vast Caribbean plantations manned by huge numbers of African slaves. Until the emancipation movements of the nineteenth century, the “tragedy of sugar” was its iron link to slavery, and slave labor enabled plantation owners to amass staggering wealth. According to Waverly Root, one sugar baron’s horse-drawn carriage in London attracted George III’s envy for being more splendid than the royal coach.

The rough midpoint of what Mintz calls sugar’s “downward and outward spread” from kingly treasure to everyday commodity occurred in the eighteenth century. The wealthy class who could afford sugary products needed suitably stylish ways to eat them, and in 1752, the porcelain workshops at Vincennes, France, created the first *pots à confitures*, lidded jam pots. Although other countries also developed specialized service pieces for sugar and jam, the perceived superiority of French culture meant that Parisian styles led Continental fashions. In the decades after the French Revolution, ever more elaborate vessels for serving jam, such as the *confiturier* in Dunne’s collection, were dreamed up to satisfy citizens wanting to flaunt their money and taste.

“It wasn’t just what they were eating, but how they were eating,” Dunne explained. “I have a theory that the culinary obsession really became the substitute for the religious instinct in France. After the revolution, the ritual of the table superseded the ritual of the altar. Food became a religion. The *confiturier* looked almost like a monstrance or a reliquary.”

If French dining paraphernalia encoded quasi-religious drama, as Dunne suggested, it also expressed the political idealism of the revolution. The round dining table, with its matched set of armless chairs, eliminated hierarchical seating, unlike the rectangular English table with its thronelike armchair at the head. All Frenchmen seated together were equals, and the silver *confiturier,* fitted with a matching suite of spoons, allowed each person to serve himself, without regard to rank, from the communal jam pot.

“*Liberté* may have come with the revolution,” said Dunne, “but *fraternité* and *égalité* came at the table.”

During the nineteenth century, as the price of sugar fell, jam became a staple in less privileged households. The middle classes wouldn’t have had silver *confituriers,* but their lidded glass jam pots, called *présentoirs*, served the same function. Copper preserving pans were likewise produced in varying sizes to suit their owners’ means: small ones for the cottage, huge vats many feet wide for the château. Newer technology also made possible the mass production of reusable jars shaped much like those used today by the jam manufacturer Bonne Maman. Antique examples at Lucullus looked like the faceted water glass you might see

in Paris bistros, which makes me think that empty jam jars must have been resourcefully repurposed, in the same way that Southerners use Mason jars to serve iced tea.

By 1900, sugar was everywhere, and, notes Mintz, the poor lived on jam and tea in the absence of more substantial fare. Which more or less brings the story of sugar into our own day, when some might argue that the modern tragedy of sugar is its ubiquity. According to the USDA, the 2010 per-capita consumption of all sweeteners (including high-fructose corn syrup) was 132 pounds, a bit below the historic peak of 151.3 pounds for every American in 1999.

“Today the sweet tooth has become so numb,” said Dunne, pained, as we talked about how the spread of sugar throughout the ages somehow brought us to the point when “grape” jelly in plastic packets is handed out for free with fast-food biscuits. “Jelly is one of the many gustatory pleasures that were trivialized in the late twentieth century.”

Perhaps as a consequence, the historic status once associated with sugar has been inverted, as today’s health-conscious consumers strive to eliminate excess sugar from their diets. I do, as well. But because many of the sweet-preserve recipes in this book can be traced directly to the nineteenth century, I’d argue for restoring, as well, the notion that eating sugar, in moderation, might again be an occasion for pleasure and conviviality, perhaps around a communal jam pot.

PICKLED ASPARAGUS WITH TARRAGON AND GREEN GARLIC | *YIELDS 3 PINTS*

A few years ago, there was a coffee-table book in which famous chefs were asked what they would eat for their last supper. It's not the kind of thing I usually think about, but flipping through the book prompted me to sort through my food memories.

The dish that I miss the most is Gran's fried chicken. The pleasantest meal I can remember is a soft-shell crab fried in butter that I ate on my porch, alone with a bottle of Gewürztraminer, to celebrate my birthday in 2008. And my most intense food memory is of a Périgord black truffle the moment it emerged from the ground and I lifted it, caked in dirt, to my nose.

But if I had to pick one meal to repeat as I crossed eternity's threshold, it would be the jumbo asparagus I buy every March from Zuckerman's Farm at the Santa Monica Farmers Market. Fatter than a quarter is round, Zuckerman's jumbo asparagus needs only to be blanched and rubbed down with butter to achieve perfection. There would be nothing else on the table for my last meal, not even utensils, because, as Miss Manners will tell you, whole asparagus may be eaten with the fingers.

In California, asparagus arrives in the market at the same time as tarragon and immature "green" garlic. The trio makes an elegant pickle to serve with terrines or pâté.

Buy the jumbo-est stalks you can find, and cut them in half to fit into wide-mouth pint jars. If you'd rather pickle just the tips, double the quantity of asparagus.

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3 pounds fat fresh asparagus 1½ cups white-wine vinegar 1½ cups water 1½ teaspoons kosher salt, plus more for the pot

2 teaspoons sugar

¼ teaspoon black peppercorns, cracked 2 allspice berries, crushed ½ bay leaf

1 sprig fresh thyme

Six 4-inch sprigs fresh tarragon

6 green garlic “scallions,” or 3 mature cloves garlic

1 Heat a large pot of water for blanching the asparagus. In a separate saucepan, combine the vinegar, water, salt, sugar, pepper, allspice, bay leaf, thyme, and three of the tarragon sprigs. Bring to a boil, then remove from the heat, and steep for 15 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, snap the woody ends off the asparagus, and peel the base with a vegetable peeler if you like. Trim the stalks to size, using a 4-inch bamboo skewer as a measure.

3 Salt the blanching water (about 1 heaping tablespoon per quart) and, working in batches, blanch the asparagus for 90 seconds, or until half cooked. The

spears should be pliable, but still firm, and opaque at the center. Shock the asparagus in a bowl of ice water to arrest the cooking, then drain well.

4 Pack the spears into three prepared wide-mouth pint jars, along with a fresh sprig of the remaining tarragon per jar. Divide the garlic evenly among the jars.

5 Strain the pickling syrup, and discard the spent aromatics. Bring the syrup back to a boil, and ladle over the asparagus, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. Wait a week before opening.

PICKLED CARROTS, TAQUERÍA STYLE | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

Almost every taco stand in Los Angeles will have a self-serve bar of salsas, lime wedges, and carrots *en escabeche.* While you wait for your tacos to come out, you occupy yourself there, using an oversized spoon to finesse the condiments into undersized plastic tubs. The carrots are meant as a side dish to cut through greasy meat, but I am a nibbler, and the combination of vinegar and crunch is compelling. Mine usually don't last until the tacos arrive.

This recipe is a canned version of the taquería fresh pickle, with jalapeños, onions, garlic, oregano, and cumin. It goes well with any kind of fatty, charred meat, and makes a good addition to sandwiches (see the following recipe).

2¾ pounds carrots ¼ pound small red onions (2 to 2½ inches in diameter) 2 to 4 fresh jalapeño peppers ½ teaspoon cumin seeds 8 cloves garlic, peeled 2 cups white-wine vinegar

2 cups water

4 teaspoons kosher salt, plus more for the pot ½ teaspoon black peppercorns, crushed

2 teaspoons dried Mexican oregano

Optional: 4 small dried red chilies

1 Heat a pot of water large enough so you can blanch the carrots in one batch. Peel and trim the carrots, and cut them into diagonal ½-inch slices. Peel the onions, and cut them into eighths. Quarter and devein the jalapeños, removing the seeds if you like only moderate heat. Toast the cumin in a dry skillet for a short minute, until it is colored and fragrant. Divide the garlic, cumin, and dried chilies, if using, among four prepared pint jars.

2 In a second pot, bring to a boil the vinegar, 2 cups water, salt, peppercorns, and oregano. Add the onions and jalapeños, and remove from the heat. Set aside until needed.

3 Salt the blanching water (1 heaping tablespoon per quart) and boil the carrots for 2 to 3 minutes, until cooked partway through. Drain the carrots, and immediately put them in the other pot, with the vinegar and onions. Bring to a boil.

4 Using a slotted spoon, divide the vegetables among the four jars, then top off with the hot pickling liquid, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. For a firmer texture, process in a hot-water bath, between 180 and 185 degrees, for 30 minutes.

THE CARROT CLUB SANDWICH

On this club sandwich, pickled carrots stand in for bacon. Toast three slices of rye bread, and swab the inside faces with mayonnaise. Starting at the bottom, build up the sandwich with layers of pickled carrot, roasted turkey, shaved Gruyère, and arugula leaves. Serve in halves, skewered with toothpicks.

PICKLED CARROTS, BISTRO STYLE | *YIELDS 3 PINTS*

During the four years I lived in Paris, the most vivid meals I ate were sometimes the simplest, such as a pot of mashed carrots I made at home one November night. The carrots had come from the Boulevard Raspail organic market, and I cooked them in milk, mashed them with Normandy butter, and stirred in crème fraîche from the fragrant cheese shop around the corner. The flavor was of rooty sweetness, minerals, and cold air, almost like tasting a landscape, and it has become one of my touchstones for *terroir,* that elusive concept used by winemakers to describe the effect of soil and climate on the grape. The carrots tasted of *place,* and they always come to mind when I see carrots at the Santa Monica Farmers Market.

An interesting aside: coriander and caraway “seeds” are actual tiny fruits rich in aromatic oils. Along with dill and fennel, both plants belong to the carrot family.

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2 cups white-wine vinegar

1¾ cups water 1½ teaspoons kosher salt 1½ teaspoons coriander seeds, crushed ½ teaspoon black peppercorns, cracked

1 teaspoon caraway seeds

½ bay leaf

3 sprigs fresh thyme

A few leaves fresh rosemary

3 cloves garlic, peeled 1 small shallot, cut into thick slices

2 pounds small carrots

1 Combine the vinegar, water, salt, and all aromatics except the garlic and shallot in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, then set aside to steep for 15 minutes.

2 Peel the carrots with a vegetable peeler, and trim the roots and stems. If necessary, cut them into 4-inch lengths to fit into pint jars. (Larger carrots may need to be cut into sticks.) 3 Divide the garlic and shallot among three prepared pint jars. Pack the raw carrots into the jars, alternating stem-up and stem-down for the best fit. Bring the pickling liquid back to a boil, and ladle it over the carrots, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

AGRODOLCE SPRING ONIONS | *YIELDS 1 PINT*

There used to be a store in West Hollywood called The Cook's Library, and after I got serious about preserving, I repeatedly threw money at it. Not that there were many books on the shelf marked "Jams and Pickles" at the way back of the store, but by the time I could navigate the other sections there and back, I'd have a leaning pile of things that I just *had to have.* Books are a vice, and never let anyone tell you otherwise.

The best of the "Jams and Pickles" shelf included Christine Ferber's *Mes Confitures,* and I read with wonder her recipes for Fig and Gewürztraminer with Pine Nuts, White Cherry with Raspberry, and Banana with Bittersweet Chocolate. But the book was for me as full of frustration as inspiration, and Madame Ferber led me to ruin many pounds of good fruit. One gets the impression that she published her cookbook to avoid revealing anything about how she actually makes preserves. So French.

The Cook's Library also delivered me Thane Prince's *Jellies, Jams and Chutneys,* which tells a preserving story from the other side of the Channel. Prince is a food journalist who clearly knows her way around the preserving repertory, and I learned a lot from her—you might even say she's one of my teachers. But the book is dinky. Somehow you feel as if it's the cheap digest version of a larger guidebook, which is what I'd rather have. Also, there's something scatterbrained about *Jellies, Jams and Chutneys.* Prince raises points and then briskly marches on without addressing them. Or she'll send you to such-and-such a page to learn more, and the detour proves to be a blind alley. Prince doesn't bother with the boiling-water bath, either, preferring instead such charmingly antiquated closures as cellophane seals, which are more closely related to the nineteenth century than the twenty-first. So British.

About the time that I had made myself a regular at The Cook's Library, it went out of business. Feeling stymied, I trolled the Internet for obscure dealers in cookbook arcana and, to my genuine surprise, found one named Janet Jarvits in Pasadena. I noted her coordinates and set out, unaware that I had more or less found the address of Ali Baba's cave.

The Jarvits treasury is guarded by cats. As you approach, a feline odor emerges to greet you on the sidewalk, and when you enter the door, a cat or two

will swirl around you the way that waves assault your ankles when you walk on the beach. But to behold the view from inside Jarvits's door is to believe her claim to have thirty thousand volumes. The shop is a stupefaction of cookbooks: scholarly editions of nineteenth-century classics like Lettice Bryan's *The Kentucky Housewife*, collectible early printings of *Joy of Cooking*, and cast-off dollar copies of the latest from Rachael Ray. Shoppers are welcome, provided they don't take up too much space: the passageways are mere cracks between book-lined cliffs.

Jarvits herself looked nothing like what I had imagined. Tanned and sinewy, she might have passed for a rah-rah triathlete, but she spoke quietly and gave the impression of being painfully shy. Because she seemed to know everything about her subject, however, she also visibly enjoyed having her expertise tapped. On a subsequent visit, when I asked her for something on the history of Thanksgiving, Jarvits mentioned an article published a decade earlier in an academic journal. After scouting a chaotic corner of the store for half a minute, she handed it to me. I was floored, and unless my eyes failed me, she allowed herself a glimmer of due self-congratulation.

On that first trip to Jarvits's emporium, I reluctantly left when my pile threatened to become too heavy to carry. Among the finds was a 1950s hardback, no dust jacket, with an orange binding illustrated with a buxom woman in a mutton-sleeved gown, her arms upraised and her mouth operatically open. Behind her appears to be London Bridge. The book's title is a non sequitur: *West Coast Cook Book.*

I'd never heard of its author, Helen Brown, and the book devotes only four pages out of four hundred–plus to preserves and pickles, but the recipes for Cherry Olives, Bodega Beans, and Tiburon Onions grabbed me. The book cost four bucks, which for a few good recipes would be a bargain at twice the price.

At home, I made Tiburon Onions with onions the size of Ping-Pong balls, and they were delicious, with sweet golden raisins balanced against the sour of wine and vinegar. A little tomato paste provided color, herbs an earthy depth. It was an unfussy and efficient recipe that yielded masterful results. So American.

I studied Mrs. Brown's volume more closely. Its publication antedated the opening of Chez Panisse by nearly twenty years, but it sings the praises of the Pacific Slope in the same seasonal-regional key as Alice Waters, whom my generation esteems as the inventor of California cuisine. Brown devotes wonderful chapters to fruit, vegetables, seafood, and salads, and she writes knowledgeably about olives and olive oil, herbs and spices, wine—all rather specialized subjects for her era. She curtly dismisses convenience food and recipes that rely on them. Committed to the multiple cuisines of California's immigrant communities, Brown demonstrates a knowledge of Latino and Asian cooking and sound judgment on which "foreign" recipes will best adapt to the mainstream table. Her collection of game recipes—venison, small birds, rabbit, bear, squirrel—is the best I've seen anywhere.

What's more, the tone of Brown's writing conveys the sunny, confident, unpretentious, democratic gumption of those who for 150 years have moved west to avoid the convention-bound strictures of back east. She writes in her introduction: *This is a book of West Coast cuisine—if anything as simple as our cookery can be called a cuisine. … These are the recipes that show the versatility of our cooks—not the high-salaried exponents of la haute cuisine, but the cooks, both male and female, who are fascinated by the kitchen and whose greatest pleasure lies in discovering some new ways to serve some old familiar food. West Coast cooks improvise. They have ever since, in the early days, they had to use whatever was on hand, or starve. Today they still improvise although they are blessed with plenty, and they frequently do it with remarkable success. That is why we not only believe we should have the finest food in the world, we don't honestly see how we can avoid it.*

Astonishingly, Mrs. Brown's volume anticipates the food trends of the past decade: a local, seasonal, artisanal, vegetable-based, cross-cultural, mindful, and whole-food approach to eating. Who was this woman?

Once I knew, I felt sad that I had even to ask. History teaches us that fame is fleeting—*sic transit gloria mundi*—and Helen Brown's too-brief afterlife proves it. According to *The Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink,* Brown was born in 1904 and lived her married life in Pasadena (coincidentally, the birthplace of Julia Child). By the late thirties, she was known in New York as "the West Coast food establishment," and her professional cohorts included Child and Craig Claiborne. James Beard was a close friend; they co-wrote a book on outdoor cooking in 1955 and maintained a twice-weekly correspondence that was published in 1994. "Beard was deeply attached to her," confides the *Oxford Companion.* "She functioned somewhat as an older sister." Brown died of cancer in 1964.

When I got to the end of the entry, I was startled by the name of its author—Janet Jarvits. Later, on another trip to the shop, I asked Jarvits about it. She hadn't known Brown, but as a young dealer in 1994, she bought the bulk of Brown's cookbook collection from the author's estate. Some of the ten thousand books had been damaged in a fire after Brown's death, others had been chewed by rats, but the purchase helped establish Jarvits's name in the book trade. I asked her why Brown isn't more famous today. "I don't know," said Jarvits. "Maybe she died too soon."

Brown's Tiburon Onions inspired one of my favorite savory preserves. My version is faithful to the original, apart from small tweaks to the seasonings and some explanatory notes. *Agrodolce* means "sweet and sour" in Italian. Tiburon is a seaside village in Marin County. *Tiburón* is the Spanish word for "shark." Agrodolce Spring Onions would go well with grilled meaty fish like tuna, marlin, and, naturally, shark.

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1 pound spring onions (less than 2 inches in diameter, or 1 quart when trimmed) 3 cups tart white wine, such as Chilean Sauvignon Blanc ½ cup white-wine vinegar ½ cup golden raisins 1 tablespoon tomato paste 3 tablespoons olive oil 3 tablespoons sugar 1 dried red chili pepper 1 bay leaf 3 cloves

1 sprig fresh thyme

¼ teaspoon black peppercorns (about 12), lightly crushed

1 teaspoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon yellow mustard seeds

1 Soak the onions in cool water for 5 minutes to soften their skins, then peel and cut off the stalks. Scrape or carefully pare away the roots, taking care not to sever the base, which will keep the onions intact during cooking.

2 In a medium saucepan, cover the onions with the wine and vinegar. Add the raisins and the remaining ingredients, and bring to a boil. Moderate the heat to a simmer, and cook, uncovered, until the onions can be easily pierced with a bamboo skewer or a sharp knife and the sauce is thickened and deeply colored. The cooking time will be approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes. Occasionally turn the onions over to ensure even cooking, and as the sauce reduces, shake the pot to prevent sticking.

3 Pack the hot onions into a prepared wide-mouth pint jar—you will probably have a few left over to use right away. Allow the jar to cool, then store in the refrigerator indefinitely. To process for shelf storage, leave a generous ½ inch headspace, clean the rim with a paper towel dipped in vinegar, and seal. Process in a boiling-water bath for 15 minutes.

[Note] The recipe can be doubled, provided you use a large enough pot. The contents should be no more than about 3 inches deep.

COCKTAIL ONIONS | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

When I first started preserving, colleagues in the publishing world were amused by my new hobby, which they seemed to regard as quirky but probably benign. Observant friends, though, saw that I was in the grip of a mad passion. The poet and journalist Dana Goodyear, understanding that a blog is the natural medium for documenting obsessions, encouraged me to keep some sort of online kitchen diary. After I began *Saving the Season*, in the summer of 2009, a professional mentor told me not to quit my day job.

Others asked what I would do with everything I'd canned, and how long did canning take.

To answer number two first: it depends on what you're putting up and how much, but generally preserving takes less time than you might expect. Once, while waiting at home for a friend to call me back, I put up a few jars of cocktail onions—enough for a year's worth of Gibsons. Which comes around to the question of what I do with everything. I use it.

There's a long list of reasons to take up home canning: the thrift of preserving homegrown produce, the pride of self-sufficiency, the ecological benefit of sourcing and processing foodstuffs locally, and the merit of opting out of the industrial food system. But at the top of that list is pleasure. I like having things like cocktail onions on hand.

This recipe could be doubled if you have patience for peeling tiny onions. Note that, after you prep the ingredients in step 1, the onions will need to soak in brine for a week.

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1 pound cocktail onions (about 10 bunches) 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons kosher salt 2 cups water, plus 1 cup for hot brine

1 cup white-wine vinegar

¼ teaspoon whole black peppercorns, cracked 4 allspice berries, cracked 5 juniper berries, crushed, plus extra for the jars 3 cloves

1 teaspoon mustard seeds

½ inch cinnamon stick

1 bay leaf

½ teaspoon Prepared Horseradish or grated fresh

1 Soak the onions for 5 minutes in cool water to soften the skins. Peel and discard the outermost layer. Trim the root and stalk. Dissolve 2 tablespoons salt in 2 cups of the water, and pour it over the onions in a ceramic bowl.

Weight the onions with a saucer or a lid from a small cooking pot. Combine the vinegar and aromatics in a jar or bowl, and cover. Store the onions and the vinegar in the refrigerator for 1 week.

2 Drain the onions, and rinse with fresh water. Pack them snugly into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace. Strain the vinegar through a fine-mesh sieve, and discard the spent aromatics.

3 Combine the vinegar with 1 cup water and 2 teaspoons of salt, and bring to a boil. Pour the hot brine over the onions, leaving ½ inch headspace. Add two or three fresh juniper berries to each jar. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. Allow to cure for at least a week before opening.

THE GREENVALLEY GIBSON | *YIELDS 2 COCKTAILS*

The cult of the dry, dry martini has been carried to absurd lengths. Straight gin is fine, but a Gibson is a cocktail made of gin *and* vermouth.

Because timing is important, lay out everything you'll need before you begin mixing: opened bottles, glasses, ice cubes, a shaker, a stirrer, a jigger, and onions.

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5 ounces gin

1 ounce Dolin dry white Vermouth de Chambéry 2 cocktail onions, with pickling liquid

Fill two cocktail glasses with ice and water to chill. Fill the shaker halfway with ice, and pour in the gin and vermouth. Stir steadily in one direction for 30 seconds. Working quickly now, drain the glasses and shake out the water clinging to the inside. Strain the chilled alcohol into the glasses, and add one cocktail onion and a few drops of the pickling liquid to each. Drink immediately, while viscous and cold.

[ROAD TRIP]

THE 59TH ANNUAL HALE FAMILY RAMP DIG

GREENVALLEY TO CASS, WEST VIRGINIA The ramp is an allium native to the Appalachian Mountains, of interest to cooks and preservers because the entire plant is edible: it can be stewed, fried, shredded for slaw, and pickled. Ramps favor upland hardwood forests, but you can get sunburned digging them, since ramps emerge before the trees leaf out, just as the trillium, lady's slippers, and columbine bloom.

Allium tricoccum ("three-seeded") has broad and glossy leaves—two for the male plants, three for female, according to seasoned ramp-pickers—and is easily spotted. Ramps grow in clumps that multiply to form colonies, and colonies can cover entire mountainsides. Walking through the ramp-y woods, one is likely to smell a patch before seeing it: like its kin, onions and garlic, the ramp has a genius for odor.

The ramp is often called a "wild leek" by authorities trying to describe this regional delicacy to those from outside its home range. I

gather that the description is botanically correct, and the ramp's flattened leaves do generally resemble those of a garden leek more than the tubular greenery of onions, garlic, or chives.

But still I dislike the name "wild leek," because the leek is valued by the French and other snobs for its mildness—the allium at its most effete. The ramp is not meek or, for that matter, elegant. True to its origins among the Appalachian highlands, it has an untamed exuberance that may be shocking to some. In enclosed quarters, the smell becomes almost literally suffocating.

When my mother was very young, she lived in the hills adjacent to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. She went to elementary school with a boy from a family that ate ramps—not everyone did, even back then—and the Monday after his family's trip to the annual ramp festival in Cosby, Tennessee, he stank so bad that the teacher refused to let him in the room. He had to attend class in the hallway.

If one chooses to eat ramps in any quantity, it would be advisable to do so in the company of other ramp-eaters and to avoid polite society for a few days following. The ramp, like all the alliums, concentrates sulfur from the soil, and those volatile compounds are released by peeling, cutting, and heating—by cooking and eating, in other words. According to Harold McGee, who writes about the science of food, the sulfides that remain in the mouth after we eat alliums are related to the methanethiol of skunk spray. Another compound, methyl allyl sulfide, is created during digestion and peaks from six to eighteen hours after consumption. The ramp's garlicky vitality exits the body through the skin and breath, and—I'm sorry to have to say this—it diffuses a definite whiff of the outhouse.

One may wonder why a person would eat such a plant. People do because ramps are delicious in a particular sort of way, with a potent bite when raw and a savory, almost meaty quality when cooked. Like oysters and truffles, ramps are powerfully evocative of the season and setting that produces them.

In preindustrial America, ramps were eaten just because they were there. Emerging in early spring, ramp leaves are mild and vegetal when stewed with smoked pork; in earlier eras they must have made a welcome break from winter's chlorophyll fast. When mature, the white bulb has the same "sweetness" as an onion when cooked, and the

reddish stalk packs the invigorating heat and aroma of strong garlic. (The Québécois calls ramps *l'ail des bois*, or "garlic of the woods.") A curious quirk of the ramp is that it's pleasanter up close than at second hand, perhaps like cigar smoke and certain cheeses. The flavor is more palatable than the smell.

In years past, I have eaten ramps at elegant restaurants in New York and San Francisco. Usually, they appear as a seasonal side dish, perhaps two or three ramps stewed alongside other little springy things like asparagus and fava beans, morels and fiddleheads. Recently, and out of nowhere, ramps have exploded as a full-blown food trend, presumably because they are seasonal and regional, free in the wild but dear in the market, and just odd enough to excite the adventurous and offend the squeamish. In 2010, *Time* magazine ran a story entitled "For Foodies, Ramps Are the New Arugula."

That same spring, a Los Angeles friend of mine named Mathew Swenson told me about a ramp dig he had attended in Cass, West Virginia, and he contacted the hosts to fish for an invitation to the upcoming fifty-ninth annual Hale Family Ramp Dig. Callie and Bill Hale sent word that we both were welcome, and Mathew and I made arrangements to go eat ramps, yonder where they grow.

The dig happens on the first Saturday in May, but most folks gather

at the Hale cabin the night before, to fortify themselves with craft beer and what is known locally as untaxed whiskey. Mathew and I took a red-eye flight into Washington Dulles and loaded into a dandelion-yellow rental car for the four-hour drive to Cass. We headed west against the inbound commuter traffic, taunting them with our Friday truancy, while noisy morning deejays squawked on the radio. I studied a map for clues to what we might find. We pulled over for coffee and Egg McMuffins. It was a road trip.

The local season was high spring: the redbud had faded, and the few dogwoods were past, but the locust trees were in full bloom, and tall wild phlox nodded in the hedgerows. Here and there along the freeway, I saw airy clumps of wild asparagus fern. If we'd had more time, I would have stopped to gather a few spears. But we sped along Interstate 81 and turned south through the magnificent sweep of the Shenandoah Valley.

Our first stop was an hour later, in Staunton, Virginia, which had the look of a formerly prosperous nineteenth-century resort town for families escaping the miasmic Washington summer in the unimaginable age before air conditioning. It was only 9:30 a.m., but we found the Jolly Roger Haggle Shop open for business.

The Jolly Roger was a first-rate junk shop, full of treasures, a

catalogue of which, like a Borgesian library, would by necessity be as large as the universe it described. It was a place of muchness, a collection decades in the making, an irreplaceable trove of objects with value both real and perceived.

There were shelves of antique glass bottles, oak cupboards filled with mismatched glasses, dusty baskets hanging from nails in the rafters, stacks of old *Life* magazines, faded quilts and homespun linen, display cases with Indian artifacts and genuine lead bullets from the Civil War, old photographs and amateur oil paintings adorned by unreasonably optimistic price tags, rusted metal implements, and heavy glass insulators of the sort once used on utility poles. The place smelled like Gran and Papa's house: a smell of thrift and hoarding, a smell of valued scraps—the bent nail, the twist of twine, the tin box whose usefulness was foreseen only by the person who had set it aside.

I grew gregarious with excitement and spoke to the owner, a boar of a man with patches of eczema at his elbows.

"Well, good morning," I said. "How long have you had this place?"

"I been here since 1970," he said.

"When I walked in, I thought you had one of everything," I said. "But then I realized you've got two of everything."

"And three of some," he replied.

My eye fell on a brown stoneware jug, speckled white at the shoulder like a meadowlark, with a small loop handle. Snuffy Smith might have used it to tote his moonshine. I also chose a two-gallon crock identified by its tag as Shenandoah Red Ware from nearby New Market. It had evidently been hand-thrown on a wheel: its sides wobbled.

I took the two pieces to the owner to discuss price. It wasn't much of a haggle. I had in mind a certain round number, and when he named the same number, our deal was made.

As he wrapped the pieces, we chatted about how best to avoid road construction on the way out of town. He asked us what way we'd be going, and we told him our route.

"That's Highland County through there," he said. "They call it Little Switzerland."

"Why?" I asked. "Are there milkmaids and chocolates?"

"No," he answered. "But there are peaks and valleys."

He thought for a moment.

"Ain't that just life."

As Mathew and I continued west along Highway 25, we gained altitude, and the seasons reversed themselves. Soon we were back in early spring. Lilacs bloomed everywhere: by mobile homes, alongside the Rifle and Pistol Club, near the foundation of a house that burned long ago.

And the route was lousy with apple trees: mainly untended Methuselahs brooding in pastures and barnyards, their weary forms aflutter with white blossoms like bird down caught among the branches. Out in the woods, a sprightlier native companion threw up its own confetti blossom: the serviceberry tree, pronounced "sarvicebery," which in summer produces a tart fruit that is good for jelly. (In the Chesapeake Watershed and elsewhere, serviceberry is also known as shadbush or shadblow, since it blossoms when the shad run.) The area was remote, with scattered houses and farms surrounded by deep woods. We passed through a forest designated a "ruffed grouse conservation area," and in places where the road crossed a creek, the sign naming it often preserved some antique vocabulary for tumbling water, as in Ramsays Branch.

Our route took us atop Monterey Mountain, elevation 3,880 feet,

from where we looked into West Virginia and saw the seasons had turned back so far that the hardwood forests had not yet leafed out. It was glorious. Passing through the Bluegrass Valley, we saw perfect bucolic scenes of tidy farms surrounded by lush pastures, as if the landscape had been art-directed on a grand scale.

By midafternoon, we finally made it to Cass. Rather than going straight to the Hales' cabin, we thought it best, after our airborne night, to restore ourselves with a nap along the Greenbrier River. We found a grove of pine trees that had laid a mattress of dry needles and proved to be a fine place to sleep, except perhaps for the sociable flies that came to pay their respects.

It will sound like lyrical overstatement to say that we arrived at the Hale cabin along a path festooned with wildflowers, but that was the truth. Refreshed by our nap and a splash in the river, Mathew and I eased up a rutted lane through the woods. It emerged into a meadow alight with tiny blue flowers, and as the ruts dissipated in the grass, we rolled the final few yards across a literal carpet of blooms.

The Hale cabin sat at the far edge of the clearing and faced away from it. We first saw the back porch; the front porch overlooked a wooded slope to the creek where we had just been. The modest structure made no effort to impress. It was flanked on the one side by

an open woodshed and on the other by a weathered oak-plank outbuilding. To the right, down a gentle swale, was the outhouse.

We were not the first to arrive. As we drove up, a group of three men and a young boy in a Superman cape were circumnavigating the house, staring intently at the ground. From the back porch, an agreeable man in his forties ambled over to greet us.

"They're out botanizing," he said with a nod in their direction.

"There's a lot to see," I said, looking into the grass. "What's that little bluet-looking flower?"

"A bluet," said the man.

We laughed, and I went over to address the others.

"Would y'all like a beer?" I asked.

"We wouldn't be against it," said one of them, who was evidently the leader of the wandering botanists. He held up his empty mug. "We thought it would be a good way to limber things up."

This was Bill Hale, native West Virginian and retired Defense Department mathematician. He had the ease and good nature of a clan chieftain whose gentle authority is widely recognized and rarely challenged, except in matters conversational, intellectual, and, perhaps, botanical. After we opened beers, Bill invited Mathew and me to join the wildflower ramble.

"If you disagree with our identifications, then speak up," he said, "because we like to be corrected."

Bill offered up his credentials: he's been coming to Cass to dig ramps on nearby Cheat Mountain for fifty-nine years, a claim that I accepted on faith but found hard to reconcile with his fine looks and agile limbs, which didn't seem to allow for that many years' experience.

"Have you had ramps before?" he asked, sizing me up.

"My family is from Blount County, Tennessee," I said.

"You know ramps, then," he said.

I told him about the boy my mother went to school with.

"Yes," said Bill. "In West Virginia they pretty much close down the schools."

He continued to survey his meadow, pausing from his stroll to appreciate the treasures underfoot.

"There's gaywings in its glory," he said, stooping to point out an

inch-tall flower shaped like a trout lure and colored like costume jewelry. "*Polygala.* It looks like it's about to fly away."

More people arrived, happy to be out of their cars at last. Bill's wife, Callie, emerged from the house to hug everyone. Soon there was a crowd standing in the meadow, and they all talked at once about their trip.

"I only missed the turn once!" said a pretty girl in her twenties.

"We came up the 210," said an older lady. "It's a good way to go if you're not in a hurry. And we weren't."

As afternoon turned dusky, we all found places in the clearing to pitch our tents. I opened a jar of pickled asparagus and passed it around. After supper, we retired to a flotilla of lawn chairs around a bonfire to listen to Clifford Hale's bluegrass picking, and I was pleased to think that we were sipping from a quart of homemade moonshine in the actual West Virginia moonshine.

On the far side of the bonfire, someone could be seen with his arm up-stretched, sketching the constellations in the sky.

Someone else noticed the gesture and commented loud enough to be heard. "If there's somebody pointing at the stars, it's Bill," said the speaker with affectionate sarcasm. "He knows what he's talking about. Or thinks he does. Bill sees things … that only he can see."

Bill was naturally undeterred from his astronomical considerations.

The evening cooled, and Mathew and I went to our tent, knowing that in the morning we would dig ramps.

Saturday morning looked like this: coffee, more coffee, sourdough-buckwheat pancakes with homemade maple syrup, outhouse, wash up, dress for digging ramps, wait. Lie in the sun, reread yesterday's paper, lollygag, wait. Wait some more.

As Bill Hale says, "These big trains are hard to get moving."

As his son Clifford says, "Anyone who waits on a Hale is a damned fool."

It was the crack of noon before some urgency suddenly infected the Hale encampment. Maybe Callie and her sister Lizzie, being the two in charge of the kitchen for the evening's ramp feed, made it known that supper was the culmination of a long process that could not begin until the ramp diggers went to dig. Whatever the cause, it transformed torpor and pause into activity. The departure was nearly frantic as we piled shovels, bags, and ourselves into vehicles and tore off toward Cheat Mountain, where, on a south-facing slope, ramps were growing as thick as dog's hair.

Once there, children tumbled out of cars, and old-timers reached for their favored digging implements—shovels or picks, long-handled or short.

"Let's go dig some ramps," called out Clifford.

"I wanna be with Uncle Cliff!" hollered a little one.

"Well, come on, be with me," he hollered back.

It is customary, although not altogether requisite, that ramp harvesters pair up, one digger with one cleaner. The digger's goal is to uproot a clump of ramps without severing the bulbs. His partner shakes the dirt from the dug ramps and lays them in a sack. The digger needs strength and persistence; the cleaner requires quick hands.

The ramps don't yield easily. They root themselves among rocks and form tight bunches.

"It's like they're holding on to each other for protection," said Mathew.

After about ninety minutes, the digging teams slackened their pace. Some blamed the eighty-degree temperatures, unusual this time of year. I blamed the previous night's moonshine.

"How do you know when you have enough ramps?" I asked Cliff.

"You can never have enough ramps," he said.

By the time we stopped, we might not have had enough, but still we had plenty: half a dozen garbage bags, holding perhaps forty pounds of fragrance. We delivered our haul to the Hale front porch.

If you've ever dispatched a scallion, then you already know how to handle ramps. You peel back the papery outermost layer and trim the root. The rest is supper.

The best strategy for preparing a ramp feed is to recruit other ramp lovers. And pray that someone married a ramp-cookin' woman. There's actually a song about a man who's hoping to find "a gal with ramps on her breath and love on her mind."

Bill Hale wore a T-shirt reading: "Networks are like children. You can't manage them if you don't understand them." The same might be said of ramps. They can turn out good or bad, depending on how you treat them. The simplest thing you might do is to scatter minced ramp leaves over deviled eggs. But if you chop the green leaves into a chiffonade and stir them raw into coleslaw, you will be very happy with the outcome. If you chop the bulbs and stems and fry them with potatoes, you will again be very happy. (Callie prefers homegrown Kennebec potatoes, an old Maine variety.) But if you roughly chop a great armful of whole ramps and slowly stew them with a piece of streaky meat and at the last moment before serving toss them in a skillet with smoking-hot oil—then you will have tasted the funky ramp at its most soulful.

Later that night, we all sat sated and stinking on the front porch, where we relied on the purifying breeze to be able to stand each other's company. Some talked loudly and some stared mutely into the outer dark, but when the fiddler came out and rosined up his bow, everyone took notice. A few others went inside to get guitars and banjos, and the musicians joined in for a hillbilly jamboree.

In ramp country, the bulbs are considered to be the ideal size for pickling at the end of their growing season, after their leaves have already died back. That's around July 4 in Cass. I gather that the picker locates the bulbs for harvest by looking for the ramp flowers, which emerge only after the leaves are gone.

The ramps we picked may have been young for pickling, but I took five pounds of them back to Los Angeles anyway. Despite double-bagging them in the heaviest Ziplocs, I smelled ramps the instant I picked up my duffel at baggage claim. On the shuttle bus out to the satellite parking lot where Mathew and I had left the car, we knew that our fellow passengers smelled … something … from the way they looked around in alarm.

RAMP TRIVIA

• The city of Chicago takes its name from an aboriginal word for “ramp.”

• Our word for “ramp” is an abbreviation of the word “ramson,” which was brought to America by early English settlers who mistook our native ramps for a similar but different wild allium, *Allium ursinum* or bear’s garlic, that they knew from home. “Ramson,” in turn, derived from the Old English *hramsa,* wild garlic. The rampion is an unrelated plant of the genus *Campanula.*

• Callie Hale uses only store-bought Marzetti Slaw Dressing for her ramp slaw, but she applies it with a light hand and allows it time to draw out the cabbage juices. She also suggests adding puréed ramps to a bottle of Marzetti’s so that you can always have the flavor on hand.

• Ramps contain selenium and are believed by some to be cleansing. At the least they might have a laxative effect. “It’s a spring cleaning,” said one guest at the Hale dig.

• Ramps are not eaten everywhere they grow. “In Ohio,” said another guest, “they only eat things that deer will eat. There are fields of ramps in Ohio, but people don’t eat them because the deer won’t.”

• Bill Hale says: “I think the bigger they are, the sweeter they are. Some say the bigger they are, the hotter they are, but I myself don’t believe that’s the case.”

• A veteran ramp man told me that the smell of ramps will travel through a house “faster than the word of God.”

Also suitable for small green garlic, garlic scapes, and tiny pearl onions.

RAMPS IN WHITE-WINE VINEGAR, FRENCH STYLE | *YIELDS 1 PINT*

1 pound whole ramps, or ½ pound trimmed bulbs 1 cup white-wine vinegar 1 cup water

1 tablespoon dry white vermouth

1½ teaspoons kosher salt 1 tablespoon sugar 10 black peppercorns

1 bay leaf

3-inch sprig fresh thyme

1-inch sprig fresh rosemary

1 To prep ramps, trim the root and peel off the papery outermost layer from the white bulb. Trim the green leaves above the reddish stem, and reserve for other uses.

2 Combine the ramps with all the other ingredients in a small pot and bring to a boil. Simmer for 5 minutes. Cover, and leave overnight at room temperature.

3 The next day, bring the contents of the pot back to a boil. Using a slotted spoon, pack the hot ramps into two sterilized ½-pint jars. Cover with the pickling liquid, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and, once cool, store in the

refrigerator. Alternatively, for shelf storage, pack the hot ramps into prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Process the sealed jars in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

RAMPS IN APPLE-CIDER VINEGAR, TENNESSEE STYLE | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

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2 pounds whole ramps, or 1 pound trimmed bulbs 12 black peppercorns 2 cloves

4 allspice berries

1 cardamom pod, crushed to extract the seeds 2 small shards of mace, or a few fresh gratings of nutmeg 1¼ cups apple-cider vinegar 1¼ cups water 1½ teaspoons kosher salt

2 teaspoons honey

1 To prep ramps, trim the root and peel off the papery outermost layer from the white bulb. Trim the green leaves above the reddish stem, and reserve for other use.

2 Pack the raw trimmed ramps into two prepared pint jars, and evenly distribute the aromatics between the jars.

3 Combine the vinegar, water, salt, and honey in a saucepan, and bring to a boil. Ladle the hot liquid over the ramps, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal the jars, and process for 10 minutes in a boiling-water bath.

[Note] Reserve the ramp leaves to stew with a little water and a piece of ham hock or fatback until tender, then sauté them quickly in a skillet of hot grease just before serving.

Ramp Farm in Richmond, West Virginia (www.rampfarm.com), ships fresh ramps in early April, as well as selling ramp bulbs and seeds. On the West Coast, www.wineforest.com also distributes ramps in season.

PICKLED RAMPS WITH SHAVED HAM AND WILD GREENS

Pickled ramps are both condiment and ingredient. They go particularly well with other foraged foods, and aged ham of all nationalities. For a quick hors d’oeuvre, pile sautéed wild greens, shaved ham, and pickled ramps on a slice of crusty bread.

The greens, such as nettles or lamb’s-quarters, should be trimmed and quickly blanched in salted water. Drain well, and, once they’re cool, squeeze out the excess water. Sauté in hot olive oil with garlic and dried chili flakes, just before serving.

PASTA WITH WILD MUSHROOMS, PANCETTA, AND PICKLED RAMPS

Although this preparation for spaghetti or linguini combines pickled ramps with wild mushrooms and ham, you could just as well replace the mushrooms with chicken, and add blanched fava beans or asparagus tips.

Sauté half a bunch of chopped scallions and a crushed dried chili pepper in a little oil. Add butter to the pan, and sauté two handfuls of mushrooms with a small handful of diced ham for about 5 minutes longer. Stir in ¼ cup of minced parsley, then set aside. Meanwhile, boil ½ pound pasta, and reserve a bit of the cooking water before you drain it. Transfer the drained pasta to the pan with the sautéed mushrooms, moisten it with ¼ cup of the cooking water, and toss with tongs until every strand is coated. Turn the pasta into a warm serving bowl, throw in a dozen chopped pickled ramps, and toss everything with extra-virgin olive oil and toasted bread crumbs. Finish the dish with a squeeze of lemon juice and freshly ground black pepper. Serves 2 as a main dish, or 4 as a starter.

PICKLED EGGS IN SRIRACHA SAUCE | *YIELDS 1 QUART*

Consider the chicken. This humble bird bred from wild jungle fowl has lived with humans so long that having one is a symbol of well-being. Henri IV of France said, “I want there to be no peasant in my realm so poor that he will not have a chicken in his pot every Sunday,” and the sentiment echoed again through Herbert Hoover’s 1928 presidential campaign. Few Americans living today will go to their graves without ever having tasted the chicken or the egg, or without musing over which came first.

My mother has told me that, when she was growing up in the East Tennessee hills, she was ashamed of the chickens scratching around her front yard; the families of her better-off town friends could afford to buy their Sunday roaster. Today the chicken has become a mascot for urban homesteaders, who may be surprised to realize that six hens will lay about three dozen eggs a week. What to do with the surplus? Pickled eggs.

The Chinese have been fermenting eggs for eons—the common name for them is “thousand-year-old eggs”—and they are said to have the putrid

deliciousness Europeans might associate with mold-laced blue cheese. In the United States, keeping hard-boiled eggs in vinegar is an old-fashioned farmhouse practice—my recipe was inspired by *Housekeeping in the Bluegrass*, from 1881—and pickled eggs are still sometimes served as bar snacks.

The recipe could hardly be easier. You put hard-boiled eggs in vinegar, and store them in the refrigerator for a day or two before eating. I've seen Amish cookbooks suggest adding a beet to the pickling liquid—or even using the vinegar brine left over from a jar of pickled beets—if you go for the idea of pink eggs.

I've updated the pickled-egg concept by flavoring mine with Sriracha Hot Chili Sauce, which is widely available at ethnic markets and gourmet stores. The Thai condiment is popular with chefs and foodies, who have given it a nickname inspired by the illustration on the bottle that is curiously apt for this present use —Rooster Sauce.

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1 dozen large eggs 1¼ cups white-wine or apple-cider vinegar ¼ cup Sriracha Hot Chili Sauce, or adjust to taste 1 teaspoon kosher salt

2 bay leaves

1 Put the raw eggs in a pot large enough to accommodate them in one layer, and cover by at least 1 inch of water. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 11 minutes. Drain the eggs, and immediately plunge them into a basin of ice water. Crack them gently, and allow to rest in the water for about 5 minutes to loosen the shells. Peel.

2 Pack the peeled eggs into a wide-mouth quart jar that has been scalded with boiling water. It's fine to press the eggs lightly into the jar, but don't squeeze them so much that they split.

3 Combine the vinegar, Sriracha sauce, salt, and bay leaves in a saucepan, and bring to a boil. Ladle the hot liquid over the eggs to cover, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal the jar, and allow to cool; then store in the refrigerator for up to 1 month. The liquid will separate, so shake it well before using. To serve, cut the eggs in half and dress with a few drops of the pickling liquid. *This recipe is not intended for canning or shelf storage.*

[Note] You could pickle any sort of eggs this way, although duck eggs may be too rubbery and goose eggs too large. Pheasant eggs or guinea eggs, if you can find them, are the best of all, followed by quail eggs. It would take about three dozen peeled quail eggs to fill a pint jar, in which case you'd want to halve the amount of pickling brine in the recipe.

CALIFORNIA CAPERS: PICKLED NASTURTIUM PODS | *YIELDS 1 PINT*

The nasturtium is a gaudy little flower that sprawls like ivy if given half a chance, and the untended patch on the back hillside at Greenvalley spreads each year. In Southern California, you see nasturtiums growing along roadsides, one of the many exotic plants that have escaped from gardens and now threaten native plant communities. It's a weed, though an eye-catching one.

The plant is also entirely edible. You can use the leaves and the flowers in salads for their peppery taste, like a radish's. A few days after the bloom fades, a distinctive three-part seedpod swells at the end of a long stem with the arabesque flourishes of signatures on the Declaration of Independence. Collect the pods to pickle—I call them California capers, although the idea is older than the state. Thomas Jefferson planted a large bed of nasturtiums in his kitchen garden at Monticello annually between 1812 and 1824. This recipe is adapted from *The Virginia Housewife* by Jefferson's cousin Mary Randolph.

Note that the recipe requires a three-day process.

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1 pint fresh nasturtium pods

Kosher salt

1 shallot

Black peppercorns

1 clove

Mace

White-wine vinegar

1 Rinse the pods, then cover them with a brine of 3 tablespoons of salt to 2 cups hot water. Soak, uncovered, at room temperature overnight. The next day, drain the pods, and pick out any soggy bits of blossom. Don’t worry about the sulfurous smell. Cover with fresh brine and, again, leave overnight.

2 On the third day, drain and pack the pods into a scalded pint jar. Add a slice of shallot, half a dozen black peppercorns, a clove, and a small shard of mace. Cover the pods completely with vinegar, and store the jar in the refrigerator. The capers will keep a year.

NASTURTIUM SALSA VERDE

This isn’t the Latino salsa verde of ground tomatillos and chilies but, rather,

the Italian one of parsley chopped with salty flavorings. Use your sense of proportion in combining the ingredients. No two salsas are ever the same.

Dice half of a small shallot, and macerate with a fat pinch of salt in a tablespoon of sherry vinegar. Mince half a bunch of flat-leaf parsley, along with whatever other fresh herbs you may have, such as chives, chervil, tarragon, mint, or a few fresh nasturtium leaves. Mash an anchovy fillet into a paste. Pound a garlic clove in a mortar with another pinch of salt. Chop a tablespoon of California Capers. Zest half a lemon, or mince a small piece of Salt-Cured Meyer Lemons.

Add the parsley to the pounded garlic in the mortar, and stir in a generous ¼ cup of your best extra-virgin olive oil. Strain the shallots and add them to the mortar with the remaining ingredients. Add more salt, freshly ground black pepper, a few drops of the shallot vinegar, along with enough additional olive oil to thin the mixture into a rustic sauce that can be drizzled over grilled vegetables or meat, from scallops to bison steaks. Salsa verde is also delicious on beans and stews in any season. It’s best fresh, but leftovers will keep in the refrigerator for a day or two.

PICKLED GREEN ALMONDS | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

[FOR MAYA]

In early spring, the long drive from Los Angeles to San Francisco through California's great Central Valley is made less monotonous by the sight of thousands of acres of blossoming almond groves. Sometime in March, green almonds the size of olives appear in ethnic markets around L.A. Their shells have not yet hardened, and the entire nut, which is covered by a fuzzy exterior husk, is edible. Green almonds make an unusual pickle that could take the olive's place in a martini.

Almonds are related to the stone fruits, and tiny green peaches or nectarines could be prepared in the same way—for example, as a use for immature fruit that might otherwise go to waste when thinning branches in late spring.

This is a two-day process.

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1 pound green almonds

1 quart plus 1 cup water

¼ cup kosher salt 1 cup white-wine vinegar

2 tablespoons dry vermouth

½ small shallot, cut into thick slices ¼ teaspoon Prepared Horseradish
2 small pieces of mace, or a few fresh gratings of nutmeg ½ teaspoon black peppercorns A few fresh rosemary leaves

1 dried red chili

1 Rinse the green almonds in cold water. Prick each one in two places with a trussing needle or skewer. Set them aside in a large nonreactive bowl.

Combine the quart of water and the salt in a saucepan, bring to a boil, and pour over the almonds. Cover, and leave overnight.

2 Also on the first day, mix the remaining cup of water, the vinegar, vermouth, and aromatics in a small pot. Bring it to a boil, remove from the heat, and set aside overnight.

3 On the second day, drain the almonds and rinse them with fresh water. Pack them into two scalded pint jars. Strain the vinegar brine through a fine-mesh sieve to remove the aromatics. Bring it to a boil, and ladle the hot brine over the almonds to cover. Seal the jars, and store in the refrigerator. The almonds will darken with age, so this pickle is best eaten soon after putting up, within a month or so.

CHERRY PRESERVES MADE WITH POWDERED PECTIN | *YIELDS 2½ PINTS*

Pectin causes more anxiety among novice jammers than any topic besides botulism, and nothing at all will generate more heated opinions among experienced preservers. Commercial pectin supplements such as Sure-Jell were considered a godsend during my grandmother's generation, but artisans of today's new jam movement seem to consider pectin a contaminant. I've heard it argued that commercial pectin is an industrial product with no place in homemade preserves. (In fact, I've said it myself.) So let's proceed with caution, beginning with the science.

Pectin was first identified in 1825 by French chemist Henri Braconnot. According to the *Wiley Encyclopedia of Food Science and Technology*, the pectic substances are a group of complex carbohydrates that occur naturally in a plant's cell walls. Pectin is what gives fruit its structure: it makes an apple crisp. Generally speaking, pectin is concentrated in a fruit's seeds and skin—the most durable parts—but pectin levels vary among different fruits. Whole citrus contains as much as 1 percent pectin by weight, and the dried peels, a source of commercial pectin supplements, may contain up to 40 percent. Soft strawberries and raspberries have much less. In all fruit, however, pectin levels peak just before ripeness. Soon after, enzymes begin to dismantle the pectin, which makes sense if you think of fruit as a seed-delivery system. The pectin-dense architectural envelope needs to collapse before the seed can reach the soil, and the genius of nature has provided pectin with a self-destruct mechanism.

Pectin also gives texture to cooked fruit products, especially preserves. The molecule is a helix—it twists around itself—and unravels when soaked and heated. In sufficient concentration, the molecules will bind together as they cool into a matrix that traps sugar and water into a semi-solid mass. We call the results a "gel set" or just "jelly." (The word "pectin" derives from the Greek, meaning "to congeal.") I still get a kick from watching hot jelly set as it cools. There seems to be magic at play.

A gel set requires a 60 to 65 percent concentration of dissolved solids, including sugar, and a pH environment of 2.8 to 3.5. With tart apples, cranberries, and currants, it's easier to make jelly, because the fruit is acidic and

pectin-rich. With ripe apples, which have pectin but perhaps not enough acidity, you add lemon juice to lower the pH. Blackberries, which are relatively low in pectin and acidity, may not reach a gel set at all before they begin to taste overcooked. But even without a firm gel set, pectin still provides body and viscosity to jams and syrups.

Most fruit has enough natural pectin to thicken preserves without resorting to pectin supplements, and I personally like working with only the elemental ingredients of fruit and sugar. (See Jelly Basics for the relative pectin content of common fruit.) Cherries, however, are considered a low-pectin fruit, and cherry preserves will be better if you add additional pectin in some form. Traditional sources include apple jelly (see Sour Cherry Preserves) and high-pectin fruit such as currants or plums.

Or you could add powdered apple pectin, which is sold at health-food stores as a source of dietary fiber. There's nothing inherently unnatural about it, and it allows you to reduce cooking time, which improves flavor and increases yield. It's a helpful aid, and you might say that I've come to regret my earlier anti-pectin diatribes. This recipe is my apology.

A NOTE ABOUT CHERRIES: they are a lot of work to pit and need careful attention in the pan, so my advice is to start with a small batch of 3 pounds. I've given up on cherry pitters and now prefer to prep cherries with my bare hands. For the sweet varieties: Grasp a cherry with one thumb on either side of the stem. Gently pull

the cherry open, splitting it along its natural seam. Pop out the pit with one thumb. I like the rustic, torn look and think it gives a better texture for preserves. (I'll talk about pitting sour cherries later.) Also, sweet cherries have less character when cooked than when they are raw, so my other advice is to combine several varieties for a more complex preserve. My favorites include the red-skinned, light-fleshed types such as Brooks, pictured at left. Then I like to mix in a smaller proportion of black-fleshed Bings, and also a few yellow Rainiers for contrast. If I can find any sour cherries at all, I'll include those as well—even dried sour cherries will improve the flavor. Combine sweet and sour cherries, or red and yellow varieties, in any combination you like. See Appendix I for a guide to the complicated cherry nomenclature.

Nineteenth-century recipes often call for cooking the pits with the preserve, for the almond flavor they impart.

---

3 pounds mixed sweet cherry varieties (see headnote)

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

2½ cups sugar

1 tablespoon powdered apple pectin

Optional: 25 cracked pits, for their almond flavor Optional: 1 tablespoon kirsch

1 Rinse and pit the cherries. I've used a cherry pitter, but pitting them by hand is just as fast. Work over a bowl to catch all the juices.

2 Toss the pitted cherries with their juices and the lemon juice. Mix together the sugar and pectin, and stir it into the fruit. If you choose to add the cherry pits, crack them with a hammer and wrap them in a small cheesecloth pouch. Add this to the fruit-sugar mixture, and allow to macerate for several hours or overnight. (If overnight, press parchment paper or plastic wrap onto the fruit's surface to prevent browning.) 3 Strain the fruit-sugar mixture through a colander, and catch the liquid in a bowl. Allow to drip for 15 minutes. Put the liquid and pouch of pits, if using, in a preserving pan. Bring to a sustained

boil for 3 minutes. Add the fruit. Return to a boil, and cook for 3 to 4 minutes, until a teaspoon of syrup placed on a chilled saucer in the freezer forms a light skin. The goal is not a firm gel set, but a thickened syrup. Once the syrup is sufficiently reduced, remove the pan from the heat. Discard the pits, and add the kirsch. Stir for 30 seconds.

4 Allow the preserves to cool for a few minutes, then stir again to distribute the fruit. Ladle the preserves into five prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Cherry Preserves with Pinot Noir | *YIELDS 2½ PINTS*

2 cloves

2 allspice berries

2 blades (the “rays”) of star-anise pod 10 black peppercorns, lightly crushed Optional: 25 cracked pits 3 pounds mixed sweet cherry varieties (see headnote) 2½ cups sugar 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 tablespoon powdered pectin

¼ cup Oregon or Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir

Wrap the spices in a small cheesecloth pouch with the pits, if using. Follow the recipe for Cherry Preserves Made with Powdered Pectin, with the exception that in step 3 you add Pinot Noir to the preserving pan at the same time the cherries go in, omitting the kirsch.

CHERRY PRESERVES WITH RED CURRANTS | *YIELDS 2½ PINTS*

Red currants make beautiful jelly used to glaze fruit-and-custard tarts with an aspiclike coating that prevents the fruit from drying out. Extracted currant juice and dark cherries—such as the heirloom Black Republican or its offspring, the Bing—make the finest of all sweet-cherry preserves. Thanks to the currants' tartness, the preserves have an ideal sugar-acid balance and a depth of flavor that nearly recalls the taste of fresh May Duke cherries, an old French hybrid of sweet and sour varieties that was once considered the height of cherry perfection.

This recipe may seem a bit involved, but, for time management, I'll suggest how the steps can be spread over two days. Unlike the previous recipes, this preserve may set firmly enough to hold an edge when scooped out of the jar. (Don't worry if it doesn't.) I like using dark-fleshed cherries with a few Rainiers thrown in for variety. You could also use a combination of sweet and sour types. If you're using all sour cherries, increase the sugar by ½ cup, or more to taste.

There is also a recipe for Red Currant Jelly.

---

3 pounds ripe cherries

2½ cups sugar

1 pound red currants

¼ cup water Optional: 1 tablespoon kirsch

1 Pit the cherries, and macerate with the sugar for ½ hour. Slowly bring the mixture to a boil in a preserving pan; then remove from the heat. At this point, you could pour the mixture into a bowl and refrigerate overnight, with parchment paper or plastic wrap pressed to the surface to prevent browning. Otherwise, strain the contents of the pan through a colander placed over a bowl to catch the syrup, and allow to drip for 15 minutes, stirring

occasionally.

2 Rinse the currants, and pick out any leaves. It isn't necessary to remove the stems; just put the berry clusters in a small pot with the water, and crush them with a potato masher. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 10 minutes; then strain the juice through a damp jelly bag and allow to drip for 15 minutes. Despite the stern injunctions one always sees against squeezing the jelly bag, I find there's no harm in gently massaging the bag as it cools, to extract more juice. You should have 1 cup of this pectin stock (see Jelly Basics).

3 Combine the cherry syrup and the pectin stock in a preserving pan, and boil for 5 minutes. Add the cherries, return to a boil for 6 to 8 minutes longer, then check the gel set. Reduce a minute longer if necessary.

4 Stir in the kirsch, if using, and continue to stir the pot for 2 to 3 minutes to cool the preserves slightly. Ladle into five prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Take care to distribute the cherry meats and syrup evenly among the jars. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

RED CURRANT JELLY | *YIELDS ABOUT 1½ PINTS*

For general tips on making jelly, refer to Jelly Basics.

---

2 pounds fresh red currants 1 cup water

3 cups sugar

1 Rinse the currants, and place them in a pot with the water. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 10 minutes; then press them a time or two with a potato masher. Strain this pectin stock through a jelly bag for 15 minutes. You should have about 3 cups of juice. If you have substantially more or less, adjust the amount of sugar accordingly to maintain a ratio of 1 cup juice to 1 cup sugar.

2 While the jelly bag drips, spread the sugar on a cookie sheet, and warm it in a 225-degree oven for 15 minutes.

3 Bring the pectin stock to a boil in a preserving pan, and add the sugar. Reduce to the gel point, 6 to 8 minutes. Working fast, skim any foam and, before it starts to cool, ladle the hot jelly into three prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. If any foam or bubbles remain, allow the jars to cool for a minute or two, until a light skin forms on the surface of the jelly. The skin will trap the impurities, and you can scoop it out. Seal the jars, and process them in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

CHERRY PRESERVES WITH PLUMS | *YIELDS 2½ PINTS*

I tend to think of plums as a high-summer fruit, but the end of Southern California's short cherry season overlaps with the start of its long plum season. Both are stone fruit of the genus *Prunus*, and they collaborate well, with the inky-black late cherries giving flavor and color while the new plums provide pectin and acidity. This recipe calls for a little brandy, but other Southerners may agree with me that it could be replaced with bourbon.

The plums pictured following are Red Beauty. Other red-skinned plums would work, but tarter is better. Depending on the variety, you may need to adjust the sugar by ½ cup.

The finished red-and-black preserves would make a good condiment for pork or duck.

---

2 pounds black cherries, such as Bing 2 pounds firm, yellow-fleshed plums, such as Red Beauty 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

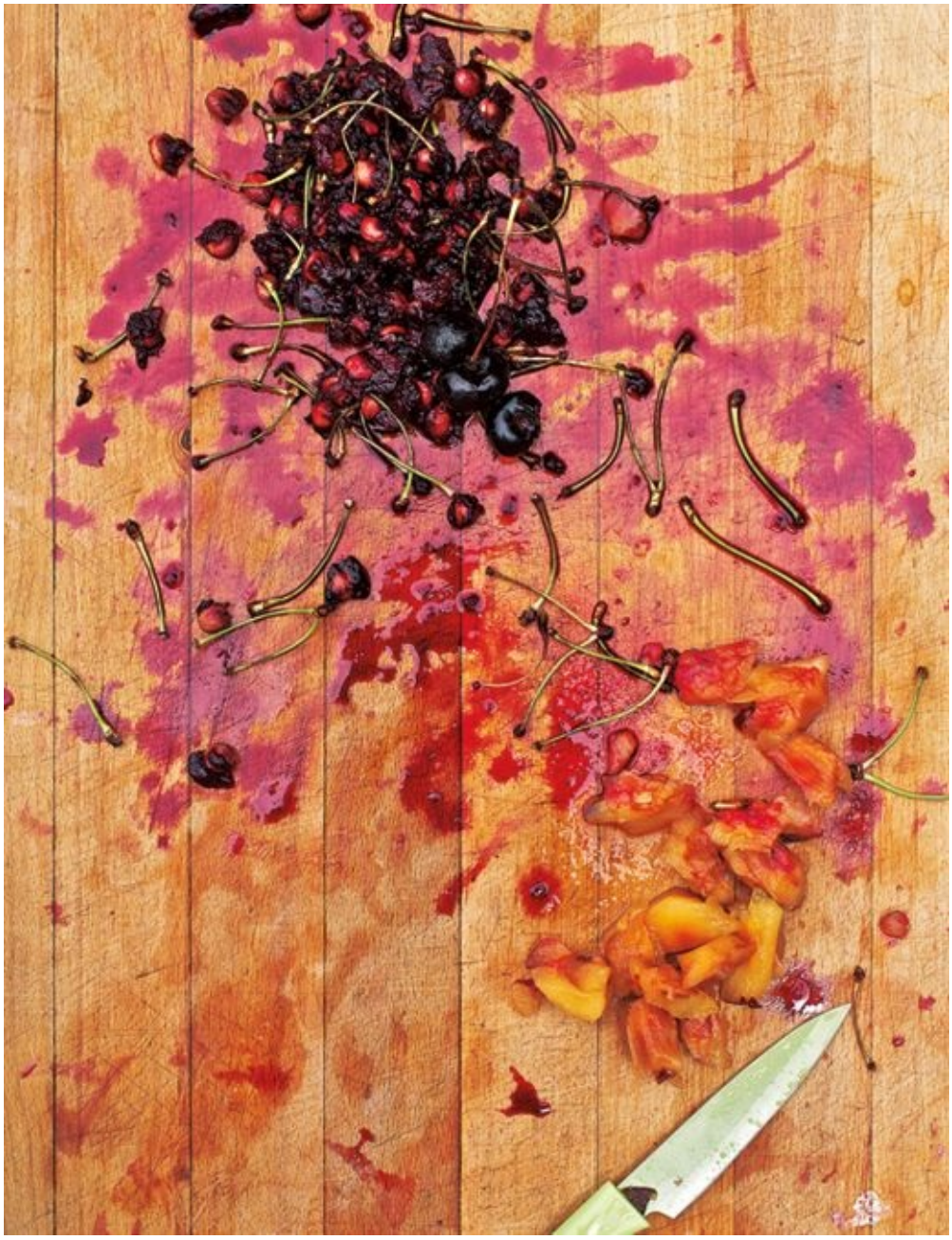
3 cups sugar

¼ cup brandy or bourbon

1. Wash and drain the fruit. Pit the cherries, and slice the plums away from their pits in sections. Stir together the fruit, lemon juice, and sugar. Set aside to macerate for at least 15 minutes.

2. Turn the fruit-sugar mixture into a preserving pan, and reduce over high heat, stirring frequently. Once it's fully reduced, which should take from 10 to 12 minutes, add the brandy or bourbon, and continue to cook, stirring well, for 1 minute longer.

3. Ladle the hot preserves into five prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace, seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.



SMOOTH CHERRY JAM AND CHERRY CHEW | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

Earlier, I noted that cherries are considered low-pectin fruit, but, in fact, they do contain enough for a gel set, even without supplemental pectin.

This apparent contradiction is explained by their neat hemispheric shape, which doesn't break down with cooking. If you're willing to sacrifice form in the interests of function, you can grind the cherries in a food mill, and reduce the purée with sugar and fresh lemon juice. What results is Smooth Cherry Jam with a loose but satisfying consistency.

Cook the purée longer, until it is very thick, and you can pour it out to cool as a slab. Dried and cut into strips, as in the picture opposite, it's a kind of fruit leather or fruit roll-up. I call it a "chew."

Marasca cherry liqueur is the original ingredient in Maraschino cherries, and it adds a brighter cherry flavor than soulful kirsch.

---

3 pounds mixed cherries, including some fresh sour cherries, or 8 ounces dried sour cherries

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

2½ cups sugar Optional: 1 teaspoon marasca cherry liqueur, or 1 tablespoon kirsch

1 Rinse the cherries, and remove their stems. Without pitting, put them in a heavy pot and crush with a potato masher. Avoid splatters by draping a clean dish towel over your hands as you work. The crushing should release enough juice to cover the bottom of the pot. If not, add a few tablespoons of water.

2 Bring the pot to a boil, stirring occasionally, and simmer for 15 minutes, or until the cherries are very soft and the pits separate from the flesh. Remove from the heat.

3 Once the fruit is cool enough to handle, pick out the pits and discard. (Yes,

it’s tedious, but pits are the inevitable price to pay for cherries.) Grind the pulp through the coarsest blade of a food mill, or pulse it in a food processor until smooth.

4 Combine the cherry purée, lemon juice, and sugar in a preserving pan. Bring the pan to a boil, and reduce over moderate heat, stirring constantly. Check for a gel set once the hot jam is thick enough so you can draw a line in the bottom of the pan with your spoon, 10 to 12 minutes after it boils. When using the cold-saucer test, if the jam leaks liquid at the edges, reduce it a bit more. It’s done when a skin forms on the surface of the chilled jam.

5 When you’re satisfied with the gel set, stir in the alcohol, and cook 1 minute longer. Ladle the hot jam into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Cherry Chew | *YIELDS ABOUT 2 POUNDS*

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3 pounds mixed cherries, including some fresh sour cherries or 8 ounces dried sour cherries 1½ cups sugar

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

Follow the recipe for Smooth Cherry Jam, noting that the chew requires less sugar. In step 4, reduce the fruit-sugar purée until it is very thick and pulls away from the edges of the pan, about 30 minutes or longer after it first boils. To avoid the risk of scorching, you could also finish the reduction in a 250-degree oven. Stir every 15 minutes until the hot paste is sufficiently thickened.

Finally, allow the paste to cool in the preserving pan for 5 minutes, stirring several times, then pour it onto a parchment-lined cookie sheet, and spread it to an even 3/8-inch thickness. Dry the paste, uncovered, in a warm, sunny spot for a day or two, until the surface is barely tacky, then flip it over and peel off the parchment. Allow the second side to dry. (Alternatively, you could dry the paste in a 200-degree oven for several hours per side.) Once the paste is fully cured, cut it into strips or any shape you like, and store it in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

CHERRY ’SHINE | *YIELDS 1 QUART*

The English once knew cherry brandy by the cheery name “Cherry Bounce.” Eliza Acton included an easy how-to in her immortal *Modern Cookery for Private Families* of 1845: Fill a bottle three-quarters full of sour cherries, add 4 ounces of sugar, and top it off with good brandy. Age for 2 months.

This recipe is my down-home version, prepared with moonshine.

Unaged corn liquor is legally sold by a few distilleries, sometimes under the trade name of “white dog.” My favorite can be ordered from Troy and Sons Distillers in Asheville, North Carolina. It’s made with heirloom Crooked Creek corn grown by farmer John McEntire’s family for 150 years. Other types of alcohol, including vodka, rye, or bourbon, could also be used, provided it is 80 proof or higher. (I like Monopolowa vodka, made from potatoes.) After a few months in the jar together, the cherries and liquor exchange their best parts. The cherries are delicious, and the liquid itself is sublime. In *Stalking the Wild Asparagus,* legendary forager Euell Gibbons remembers a New Englander who decided, after some hesitation, to give his parson a jar of wild cherries preserved in rum. He waited anxiously for a comment, and finally a note arrived from the minister. It read: “You can’t imagine how delighted I was to receive your little present. But what I appreciated even more than the gift was the *spirit* in which it was given.”

Serve Cherry ’Shine in tiny cordial glasses on nights when you want to sit by the fire and read thick books.

Either sour or sweet cherries can be preserved this way. With sour cherries, you may want to add a modest amount of sugar. Start with ¼ cup per quart, and adjust to taste.

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1 to 1½ pounds firm, dark cherries

1 pint 80-proof alcohol

Rinse the cherries, and trim their stems to ½ inch. Pack them snugly into a scalded quart jar. Cover the fruit completely with alcohol, and seal the jar. Set

aside to age for at least 1 month. The jar does not need to be refrigerated, but the cherries and alcohol are best if used within 6 months.

MARASCHINO CHERRIES | *YIELDS 1 PINT*

Barman, cocktail historian, and author Toby Cecchini—he's the man credited with (or perhaps blamed for) creating the Cosmopolitan—compares the commercial Maraschino cherry to "an embalmed corpse." Its illustrious ancestor was born on Croatia's Dalmatian coast, where in the sixteenth century Dominican monks created liqueur from wild sour cherries called the marasca. The spirit was Maraschino, pronounced "Mar-ah-SKEE-no." Since 1821, the Italian distillery Luxardo has produced marasca, and making Maraschino cherries is as easy as pouring it over a jar of sour cherries. The liqueur is sweet enough to balance the sour without any added sugar. Maraschino cherries will keep for a year in the refrigerator, or you could can them for shelf storage. Add two cherries and some of their liqueur to a glass of rye for a shorthand version of the Manhattan.

½ pound sour cherries 1 scant cup Luxardo brand marasca liqueur

1 Rinse the cherries, and drain them well. Trim the stems to ¾ inch and pack the cherries closely into a scalded pint jar. Fill the jar with liqueur, seal, and store in the refrigerator for a least a week before using.

2 To can the cherries, pack closely into a scalded pint jar, and cover with liqueur, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 15 minutes. To reduce venting, allow the jars to rest in the water for 5 minutes before removing.

[Note] If you'd prefer to stem the cherries, plan for 10 ounces per pint jar.

CHERRY OLIVES | *YIELDS 1 PINT*

Replacing the alcohol in the preceding recipes with vinegar will give you pickled cherries. This easy recipe is adapted from Helen Brown's *West Coast Cook Book.* I've Frenchified it with red wine and a sprig of tarragon, but kept the nifty name, which I think conveys the spirit of a swinging postwar suburban cocktail party.

½ pound firm, dark cherries

1 sprig fresh tarragon

½ cup red-wine vinegar ½ cup water ½ teaspoon kosher salt

2 tablespoons sugar

1 Rinse the cherries, and trim their stems to ½ inch. Pack them closely into a scalded pint jar and tuck in the tarragon.

2 Combine the vinegar, water, salt, and sugar in a small saucepan, and heat just enough to dissolve the solids. Ladle the syrup over the cherries to cover completely. Seal, and cure for at least a week before using. The cherries will keep for several months in the refrigerator.

[ROAD TRIP]

CHERRY TIME IN LATE MAY

GREENVALLEY TO JOHNSON HOLLOW, TENNESSEE

My father, Fred West, was born and raised in Blount County, Tennessee. Thirty years ago, he commenced his preparations to die in Union County, about an hour's drive to the north, when he and Bob Sharp built themselves a house and planted a garden in Johnson Hollow, a topographic crumple in the backwoods community of Sharps Chapel. My father was in fine health then, as he is today. But moving to a place as remote and insular as Johnson Hollow is tantamount to declaring that you don't intend to leave again.

Some may not be entirely familiar with the old-fashioned word "hollow." The best explanation I know comes from *Home Ground: Language for an American Landscape,* edited by Barry Lopez:

Throughout most of the North American continent, a hollow is a scooped-out place in the land. The term is used to describe many features: a small, sheltered valley, as in Washington Irving's *Legend of Sleepy Hollow,* or, in the Catskill Mountains of New York State, a notch or pass in the mountains. In *A Lady's Life in the Rocky*

Mountains, Isabella Bird writes of “the blue hollow at the foot of Longs Peak … where the hoar frost crisps the grass every night of the year.” Deep within the Appalachian Mountains, however, the word is pronounced “holler” and is used to describe the seam where two mountains join. In a holler, land rises on three sides, up the crease (along which a stream usually flows) and so up the flank of each mountain. The sun shines into a holler only a few hours a day, and the woods within are dark and dense. “Most hollers don’t have no view,” observes Granny Younger in Lee Smith’s novel *Oral History.* Small hollows are sometimes called cloves, likening them to the space in a goat’s splayed hoof.

My dad and Bob built an actual log cabin in Johnson Hollow, on land deeded them by Bob’s family—descendants of the community’s nineteenth-century pioneer Thomas Sharp. They have since moved two miles down the hollow, to the old Walker place, a pretty farm of a hundred acres that sits in a broad spot where Johnson Hollow joins a small valley, which is why there’s enough sun for sour cherries.

In 2009, my dad called to say that, for once, the cherry crop had escaped frost damage and that his four trees were loaded down. He threw netting over them and hung CDs among the branches to scare the birds. He called me weekly with updates. Luck stayed with us. The

weather held, the birds were thwarted, and when the cherries finally started to turn, I booked a ticket home for cherry time.

The sour cherry, *Prunus cerasus*, is one of the stone-fruit clan, which also includes peaches, apricots, and plums. It is a different species from the sweet cherry, *P. avium*, a name that testifies to the fruit's popularity among the avian tribes. George Washington did not chop down a sour-cherry tree, but, then, he didn't chop down a sweet-cherry tree, either. That story was made up by Parson Weems in his *Life of George Washington*, which the subtitle promises is full of "curious anecdotes" meant to instruct the nation's young citizenry.

Cherries probably originated in Western Asia, but birds and man spread them across Europe in prehistoric times. According to food historian Maguelonne Toussaint-Samat, evidence from Stone Age sites suggests that wild-cherry juice was being fermented even before grapes were first turned into wine. Cherries were cultivated by the ancient Greeks and Romans but, curiously, the fruit figures far less in our myth and literature than apples. Maybe it's the cherry's unheroic size. Rabelais caricatures a friar of parsimonious speech—"Nothing is to be got out of him but monosyllables"—with the sarcastic jest "I believe he would make three bites of a cherry."

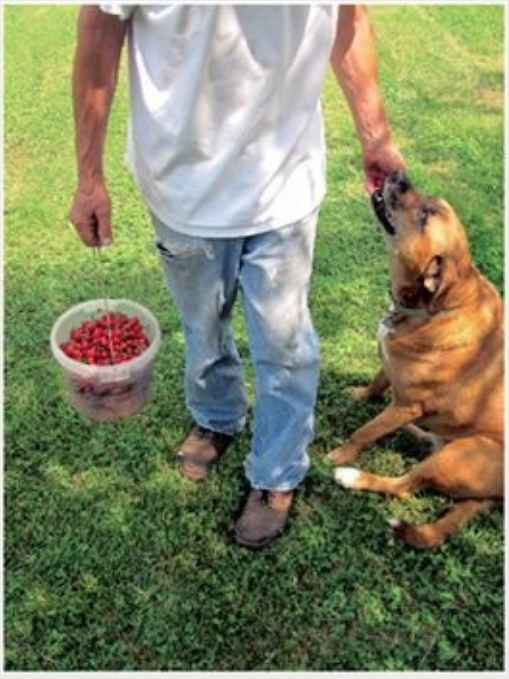
Cherries also have a distinctly feminine connotation in the poetic

tradition. The fruit is firm, dainty, roundly curved, and highly perishable, making it a perfect symbol of delicious but fleeting virginal beauty. The cherry was associated with the Virgin Mary for Renaissance painters, and theologians considered it a fruit of heaven, in contrast with the apple, which represented man's fall. At the very dawn of the Renaissance, Italian poet Petrarch wrote his *Rime Sparse,* and it set off a craze for love poetry that burned through Europe for centuries. Countless imitators used his fourteen-line sonnet form and also embraced his highly wrought metaphors of skin as white as snow, and cheeks like rose petals. Finally, the cherry's moment in poetry had arrived.

In the most florid lyric poems of the age, the lover's face becomes an entire garden.

There is a garden in her face,
Where roses and white lilies grow;
A heavenly paradise is that place,
Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow.
There cherries grow, which none may buy
Till Cherry ripe themselves do cry.

—THOMAS CAMPION [1567–1620], "THERE IS A GARDEN IN HER FACE"



“Cherry ripe” was the call used by street vendors hawking their wares, and the sound must have echoed through London’s streets every spring.

Cherry-ripe, ripe, ripe, I cry,
Full and fair ones; come and buy.
If so be you ask me where
They do grow, I answer: There
Where my Julia’s lips do smile;
There’s the land, or cherry-isle,
Whose plantations fully show
All the year where cherries grow.

—ROBERT HERRICK [1591–1674], “CHERRY-RIPE”

Fast-forward a few more centuries to our own time, and the cherry still retains a residue of sensual appeal. The “cherry on top” is an extra something that caps a series of happy events. Even the cherry’s erotic associations endure, such as in the crude slang for a virgin. The film *The Witches of Eastwick,* based on John Updike’s novel, shows the devil (played by Jack Nicholson) and his coven of beautiful witches luxuriating by a pool and sucking down great bowlfuls of cherries. By means of a dark spell, the devil makes a local religious freak vomit up the pits until her husband bludgeons her to death with a phallic poker. In a more lyrical mood, Pablo Neruda writes in *Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair,* “I want / To do with you what spring does with the cherry trees.”

Sweet and sour cherries have been grown side by side at least since the time of Lucullus. (Pliny the Elder credits the famous gourmet with introducing cherries to Italy, but scholars have withdrawn that honor, noting that the earlier Etruscans already had cherry orchards.) Sour cherries are less popular today than they were fifty years ago, no doubt because they live up to their name. “The second one’s not as bad” is how my dad puts it. You have to get past the acid surprise to appreciate the flavor.

The sour cherry is really a cooking fruit. My favorite dessert when I was growing up was Gran’s cherry cobbler, made with sour cherries from two geriatric trees in the middle of Papa’s garden. Sour-cherry pie is much better than sweet-cherry pie, and the same is true of preserves.

Sour cherries’ only real drawback is that the pitting is tedious work. You extract the seed this way: grasp a single cherry between the thumb and forefinger of one hand. With the other hand, hold its stem. Simultaneously squeeze with the one hand while tugging with the other, and the pit will separate from the flesh. That motion must be repeated hundreds of times to prep for a batch of cherry preserves. A mature cherry tree produces a harvest that is measured by the bushel; planting one is a commitment to substantial future labor.

In places like Sharps Chapel, though, that work is often sped along

by conviviality. At my dad's farm is where I realized that canning work can be a social time, almost a form of entertainment.

One afternoon, as my dad and I were at the kitchen table pitting the cherries we had picked that morning, the phone rang, likely a neighbor or relative, two categories that overlap substantially in Sharps Chapel.

"Hey," said Bob, taking the call, "what you doin'?"

He must have been asked the same question, because next he said, "Fred and Kevin are down here in cherries. They picked about twelve gallons."

After a brief further exchange, Bob hung up the phone and said, "That was Dot. She said she's a-coming."

Bob's sister Dot was soon walking in the backdoor.

"I hear you'uns is in cherries," she said.

"Well, what took you so damned long?" my dad answered in a tone he uses to make anything funny.

Dot poured herself a cup of black coffee, took one of Bob's cigarettes, and sat down at the table. After a minute or two to settle and find her work rhythm, she started in with the news of the day—who's pregnant, who won the basketball tournament, who will be "coming in" next week to visit so-and-so in the hospital, where things are not looking too good. Over the next hour or so, there was talk of cherry-pitting technique and cherry recipes; a recitation of stories, many already familiar; expressions of regret and relief about the weather's impact on this year's gardens; inquiries into the source of someone's particularly fine fruit trees or vegetables.

To me, these conversation are what I most value about going home, because I always learn something around the table, much of it useless to other people but precious to me, like that my uncle David's sour-cherry trees grew from a start off of Papa's old tree and therefore could provide a start for me if I were ever to have a place for an orchard.

I guess you could characterize the afternoon as spending quality time with my father, but I would not. I'd call it pitting cherries together, and at the end of it, we were ready to make cherry preserves.

In the cherry pluckt at night, With the dew of summer swelling, There’s a juice of pure delight, Cool, dark, sweet, divinely smelling.

—ROBERT GRAVES [1895–1985], “CHERRY-TIME”

SOUR CHERRY PRESERVES | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

Back in L.A., with a suitcase full of sour cherry preserves, I sent a note to Rosette, who the previous winter had become a friend, thanks to marmalade. Rich and single, Rosette was known in certain circles for her art collection and the extravagant parties held at her Beverly Hills mansion. I didn't really know her, but she was hard to miss—a willow-thin woman of a certain age with a taste for ornament and color—and we'd exchange cordial hellos. The conversation never went much beyond that, until at a mutual friend's birthday party the hostess mentioned that I made marmalade. Rosette lit up.

"I love marmalade," she said. "I buy it by the case. Literally by the case."

Rosette explained that in the Turkish Sephardic community of her childhood, marmalade, preserves, and *membrillo* were considered delicacies fit for wedding banquets. She confessed to standing in her Beverly Hills pantry and eating marmalade out of the jar.

As Rosette talked, a friend who was standing alongside looked restless and tried to slip away unobtrusively.

"I'm sorry, am I boring you?" Rosette asked, as the friend made polite protestations but kept moving. "I could talk about marmalade for months."

I leaned in closer. Rosette said the supreme marmalade in her opinion is made from bitter, aromatic Seville oranges: "I like to taste the peel." At that, we were friends.

So, back to cherries. I sent Rosette an e-mail offering a jar of sour cherry preserves and got an immediate response: *In Turkey it's traditional to make many jars of the conserves to be used in the summer for breakfast with your toast. Then the liquid and a few of the cherries are put in the bottom of glasses to be filled with icy water. The resulting drink is offered in homes and restaurants as a refreshing beverage called visne şerbet (the ş is pronounced "sh").*

That word *şerbet* ought to sound familiar: it's related to the Persian word *sharbat,* which is the ultimate source of "sherbet"—both the word and the dessert. As Rosette said, a sherbet was originally a drink chilled with crushed ice or snow—the original snow cone. In nineteenth-century Europe, the slushy drink morphed into scoopable "sorbet," the direct antecedent of our modern American sherbet.

5 pounds sour cherries, pitted

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

2½ cups sugar 8 ounces Apple Jelly or Red Currant Jelly
Optional: 2 tablespoons kirsch

1 Combine the cherries and lemon juice in a ceramic mixing bowl, and stir in the sugar. Allow to macerate for several hours or overnight. If overnight, refrigerate and press parchment paper or plastic wrap onto the fruit's surface to prevent browning.

2 Strain the fruit-sugar mixture through a colander, and catch the syrup in a bowl. Allow to drip for 15 minutes. In a preserving pan, reduce the syrup over high heat until thickened, 6 to 8 minutes after it has first come to a boil. Stir in the jelly until it dissolves. Add the cherries, and reduce over high heat another 3 to 5 minutes, then check the gel set. Stir in the kirsch, if using.

3 Turn off the heat, and allow to cool for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally so that the fruit is evenly distributed through the syrup. Ladle the hot preserves into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

SOUR CHERRY PRESERVES WITH MINT AND HONEY | *YIELDS 1 PINT*

Wild mint grows on my dad’s farm, and a neighbor of his produces honey. This variation is the ideal preserve for lamb. The recipe could be doubled.

2½ pounds sour cherries, pitted

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 cup sourwood honey or other pale, floral honey 4 ounces Apple Jelly
Three 4-inch sprigs fresh mint

1 Combine the cherries, lemon juice, and honey in a ceramic mixing bowl. Macerate for several hours or overnight. If overnight, refrigerate and press parchment paper or plastic wrap onto the fruit’s surface to prevent browning.

2 Strain the fruit-sugar mixture through a colander and catch the syrup in a bowl. Allow to drip for 15 minutes. Reduce the syrup in a preserving pan over high heat for 5 minutes. Stir in the jelly to dissolve. Add the cherries, and reduce over high heat for another 3 to 5 minutes, then check the gel set.

3 Remove from the heat. Lightly bruise the mint by crushing it in your fist. Swish the sprigs through the hot preserves for 30 seconds, and discard. Allow the jam to cool for a few minutes, stirring occasionally, then ladle into two prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

CHERRY PIE FILLING, OR SOUR CHERRIES IN EXTRA-LIGHT SYRUP | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

The sour cherry's flavor is racy, with the mixture of bright and deep flavors typical of wild fruit. The acid brightness is also why sour cherries make a spectacular pie or cobbler.

My dad says that Gran canned her cherry pie filling in plain water, but I add some sugar to improve the color and texture of the canned fruit. A bit of optional kirsch adds depth.

If you're not a baker, don't be put off by the name "pie filling," because these cherries go with ice cream or yogurt, or can be stirred into a wintry reduction sauce for duck, venison, or lamb. To be very extravagant, drizzle a bowl of drained cherries with sourwood honey, top it with whipped cream, and serve with crisp almond cookies.

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5 pounds sour cherries

¼ cup sugar Optional: 2 tablespoons kirsch, or 1 teaspoon almond extract

1. Pit the cherries, working over a bowl to catch the juices. Strain off the juice, and add water if necessary to make 1 cup total.

2. Bring the juice to a boil in a pot large enough to hold all the cherries comfortably. Stir in the sugar to dissolve, then add the cherries and bring to a boil. Add the kirsch or almond extract, if using, stir a few times, and turn off the heat.

3. Using a slotted spoon, divide the cherries evenly among four prepared pint jars. Top up with the hot juice, leaving ½ inch headspace, then seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 15 minutes.

VINEGARS AND SYRUPS

A syrup is nothing more than sugar dissolved in water and infused with fragrant plant material. You could use flowers (lavender), herbs (rosemary), leaves (bay), seeds (fennel), peels (citrus), bark (cinnamon), roots (ginger), or the tender tips of edible wild plants (sage or fir)—anything with an essence you'd like to capture. One fall, I made pine cone syrup, using pitchy piñon cones (see here for the recipe), and served it that winter over snow-cream. My advice for any syrup is to start with a simple, direct fragrance, such as rose geranium, and experiment. The stakes are very low—2 cups of sugar—and the margin for error is wide. You can hardly go wrong.

Heat 2 cups of water to a "whisper," about 180 degrees; don't boil it. Turn off the heat, and stir in 2 cups of sugar (or more) to dissolve. Add a moderate amount of the material you would like to steep—several stalks of herbs, a generous handful of rose petals, ¼ cup of peeled and diced ginger, three cinnamon sticks, a vanilla bean. The next day, taste the syrup. For a stronger flavor, you could steep longer or do a second infusion. (Discard the spent plant material, reheat the syrup, and add fresh plant material for a second overnight infusion.) Or you could layer another flavor over the first, such as adding a clove and an allspice berry to ginger. Or, as Berkeley preserving guru June Taylor does, add oregano to bay-leaf syrup. Use a light hand, though, because strong flavors can become unpleasantly concentrated. When the syrup tastes good to you, pour it into a scalded jar or bottle and store it in the refrigerator. Syrups can be used to flavor tea, cocktails, and fizzy water. Or treat them as minimalist sauces to pour over ice cream, pound cake, mascarpone cheese, or sliced fruit.

Herb vinegars are even simpler. Put a few stems of your favorite spring herb —mine is tarragon—into a jar or bottle. Cover it with good vinegar (white-wine, champagne, cider). Wait a few days, then taste, and add more herbs if you like. Vinegars don't need refrigeration and can be used over the course of the next year to dress salads, to sprinkle over vegetables, or to stir into sauces.

DRYING HERBS

In Southern California's parched climate, drying herbs is as easy as letting them hang in a well-ventilated spot for a week. A little prep, however, will improve the dried herb's appearance and make it easier to store and use.

To begin, strip the leaves off the lower third of the stems. Gather four to six equal-sized stems into a small bouquet. Tie the bouquet tightly with an 18-inch length of kitchen twine. Knot the loose ends of the twine together to make a loop. Hang the herbs in a warm spot that has plenty of ventilation but is out of the direct sun. They will dry within a week or so, and will keep for up to a year, although they will become less potent with time and eventually take on a slightly "dusty" taste.

The herbs that dry well and retain the best flavor include rosemary, thyme, sage, lavender, lemon verbena, bay, rose geranium, oregano, marjoram, myrtle, savory, and flowering dill seed heads.

The herbs that do not dry well and in my opinion are not worth the bother include basil, parsley, cilantro, and chervil.

STORING GARLIC

One year, in early summer, I saw a bushel basket of fat heirloom garlic heads at the Windrose Farm stand at the Santa Monica Farmers Market, and a light went on. I realized I could buy several pounds and store them at home. I like knowing that they're always on hand, and three to five pounds will last the better part of a year. The cloves get a little sprouty by the following spring, but of course by then green garlic is coming in again.

The key to keeping garlic is to cure the fresh-dug bulbs and keep them in a cool, dark, well-ventilated space. At Greenvalley, I hang garlic in my garage, which is dug into the hillside and stays reasonably cool even when the temperature outside tops a hundred. My wine "cellar" is down there, too, so perhaps the best advice is to store garlic wherever you keep your wine.

If the fresh garlic is still on the stalk, you can braid the stalks or tie them in a bunch with string. The loose heads should be dried on a rack for 2 weeks and then stored in a wooden crate with a loose-fitting lid, or in a cardboard box with holes punched in the sides. (A terra-cotta pot would also work. Plastic will cause the garlic to mold.) Put a few crumpled paper towels among the garlic to absorb moisture, and check the box once a week for the first month or so. If the paper

towels or the garlic’s papery skin feels damp, inspect the bulbs to make sure they haven’t begun to mold, and leave the lid off the box overnight. Once the garlic is fully cured, it will take care of itself.

Nothing is so beautiful as Spring— When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush; Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing; The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.

—GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS [1844–89], "SPRING"

Summer

And so the vines grow ripe and lavishly Bring forth their fruit, and every vale and glade Is full to overflowing.

—*Virgil's "second Georgic"*

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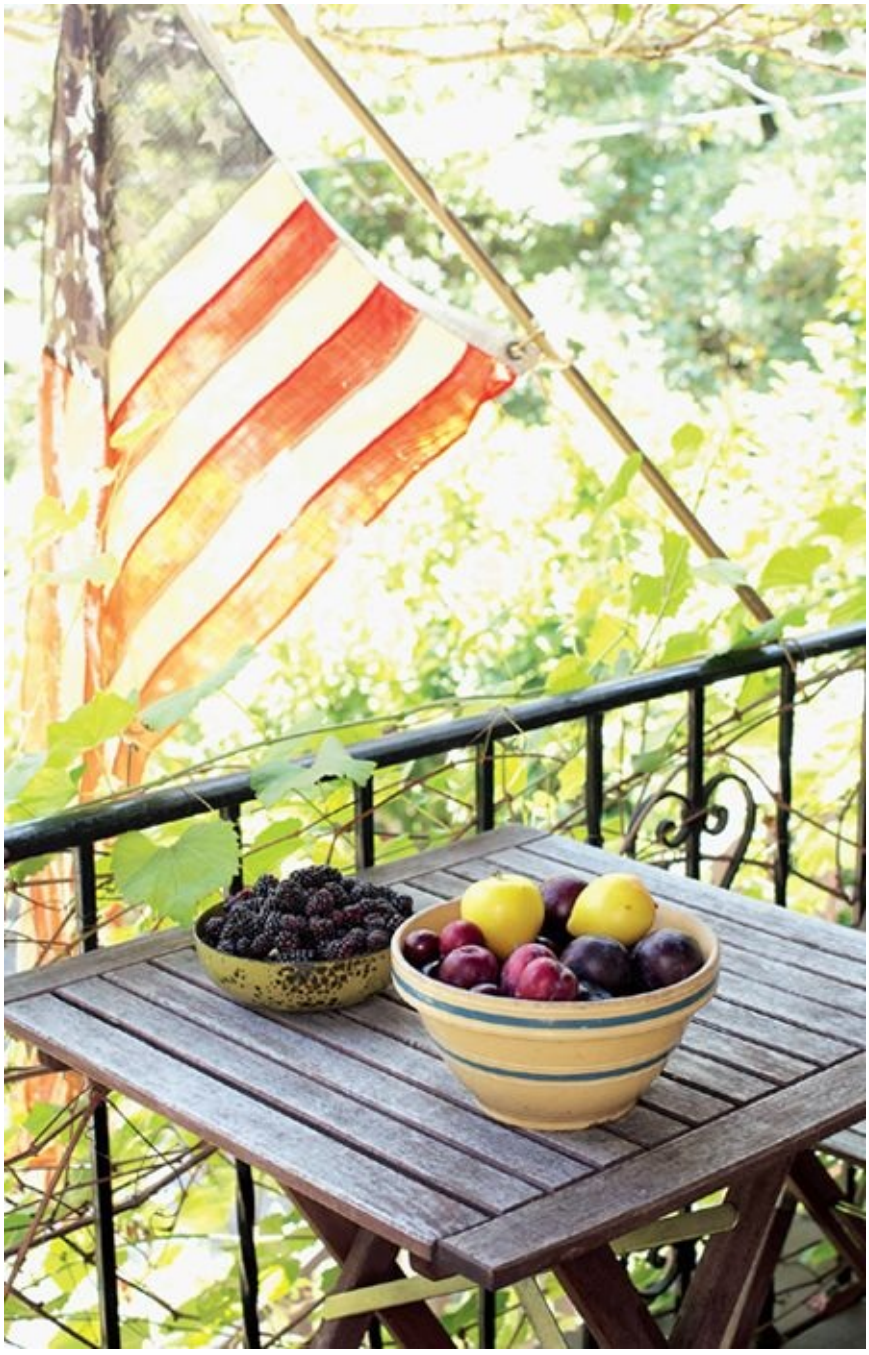
INTRODUCTION

SUMMER IS FRUITFUL. Summer is generous. Summer is exhausting. If you have a garden, too many things come in too fast. If you shop at a farmstand or farmers' market, it's easy to get carried away. In Southern California, summer can stretch from late May, when the first plums and peaches arrive, all the way to October, at which point there are still mountains of tomatoes to be had for a song. But across the season, the common theme is an almost overwhelming abundance. Look at just the two weeks in mid-June: the Santa Monica Farmers Market will have boysenberries and raspberries, two of my favorite fruits, as well as Kirby pickling cucumbers and flowering dill heads to season them. Two weeks later, there will be Blenheim apricots, Snow Queen nectarines, new okra, and purslane. It's hard to keep up. And it's not just the variety, but also the quantity. Backyard zucchini and fig trees fruit prodigiously. What else can you do with corn, once you've eaten your fill of it on the cob?

The recipes in this section respond to summer's bounty by alternating between fundamental techniques and flexible variations. I'll show you four kinds of pickled beets, for instance, and half a dozen fig jams. Our repertory expands with fermented vegetables or brined pickles, and relishes. We'll talk about what to do with a bushel of peaches or a gardenful of tomatoes. Wild berries also peak in summer, so we'll take road trips to the Sierra Nevada and the Blue Ridge to forage under open skies. There's a lot to get done, but summer's long days work to our advantage.



PICKLED BEETS

When I was sixteen, I got a summer job at the mall bookstore. The perks meant more to me than the wages: with my employee discount, I bought books that I would never read and, with dead time behind the counter, I read books that I never bought. Tom Robbins's *Jitterbug Perfume* was just then out in paperback. Its cover was tacky to this teenaged book snob, but the store sold a lot of copies, and I was curious why. Here are the opening lines: *The beet is the most intense of vegetables. The radish, admittedly, is more feverish, but the fire of the radish is a cold fire, the fire of discontent not of passion. Tomatoes are lusty enough, yet there runs through tomatoes an undercurrent of frivolity. Beets are deadly serious.*

I had no idea what Robbins was talking about, especially once he really got going—"The beet is what happens when the cherry finishes with the carrot"—but his feverish intensity turned my crank. I already liked Gran's "picklebeets," and everybody at home ate them by the quart, except for a squeamish few who wouldn't touch them with a ten-foot pole.

Beets pickle well because they shine in vinegar's company. Its piquancy offsets their earthiness, which includes a vegetal sweetness that can sometimes catch in the back of the throat. I find the texture of pickled beets odd but appealing. The glossy surface seems to promise crunch, but instead they cleave into neat chunks between the teeth. And so red! Beets stain everything they touch—fingers, lips, teeth, tongue, and all.

In keeping with summer's big theme of abundance and variety, following are several ways to prepare beets.

PICKLED BEETS WITH STAR ANISE | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

My friend Vishwa told me that his mother's secret ingredient for pickled beets is star anise. Now it's mine, too.

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6 pounds small beets (6 to 8 bunches) 2¼ cups red-wine vinegar 2¼ cups red wine or water 1 cup sugar 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon kosher salt 1 pod star anise

1 Trim the beet greens to 1 inch above the root, but leave the root's skinny "tail" intact to prevent bleeding. (Save the greens for dinner.) Boil the beets whole in unsalted water until a skewer pierces them easily, 30 to 40 minutes, depending on size.

2 Meanwhile, prepare the vinegar syrup. Combine all the remaining ingredients in a saucepan, and bring to a boil. Turn off the heat, and set aside to steep.

3 When the beets are tender, drain and plunge them into ice water. Slip them out of their skins, tidying up the root and stem ends with a knife as necessary. Halve or quarter the beets, depending on size, and pack them snugly into four prepared pint jars.

4 Discard the star anise, and bring the syrup back to a boil. Ladle it into the jars, gently shaking the jar as you fill it, to settle the beets. Leave ½ inch headspace. Run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside to release air pockets. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 30 minutes. Allow to cure for at least a week before opening.

Pickled Beets in Apple-Cider Vinegar

This is the less-is-more approach, inspired by my stepgrandfather Jack's sister's minimalist pickled beets from White Pine, Tennessee. The recipe and procedure are the same as for Pickled Beets with Star Anise, except that the syrup is made from:

2 cups apple-cider vinegar 2 cups water 1 cup brown sugar 1 tablespoon kosher salt 1 tablespoon fresh ginger root, peeled and cut into fine strips

Combine the vinegar and other ingredients to make a syrup, then ladle it over the cooked beets and proceed as directed.

Traditional Spiced Beets

The old-timey picnic favorite, like Gran used to make. The recipe and procedure are the same as for Pickled Beets with Star Anise, except that the syrup is made from:

2 cups white-or red-wine vinegar (an improvement on Gran's distilled white vinegar) 2 cups water 1 cup sugar 1 tablespoon kosher salt 3 inches cinnamon stick 5 cloves 5 allspice berries ½ pod star anise

Combine the vinegar and other ingredients to make a syrup, and follow the

procedure for Pickled Beets with Star Anise. When you ladle the hot syrup into the jars, pour it through a small fine-mesh sieve to capture the aromatics. Seal, and process the beets as directed.

GOLDEN BEETS WITH GINGER | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

Cider vinegar works well in this recipe because of its gentle piquancy and mild apple taste. Or you could indulge the golden beet with champagne vinegar instead.

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6 pounds small golden beets (6 to 8 bunches) 3 cups apple-cider, white-wine, or champagne vinegar 2 cups water ½ cup granulated white sugar ½ cup light-brown sugar 2-inch thumb of fresh ginger root, peeled and sliced 6 cloves 6 allspice berries 3 inches cinnamon stick 2 cardamom pods, lightly crushed 2 teaspoons kosher salt

1 Trim the beet greens 1 inch above the root (save them for other uses), but leave the root's skinny "tail" intact. Boil the beets whole in unsalted water for 30 to 40 minutes, or until a skewer pierces them easily.

2 Meanwhile, prepare the syrup. Combine all the remaining ingredients in a saucepan, and bring to a boil. Turn off the heat, and set aside to steep.

3 When the beets are tender, drain and plunge them into ice water. Slip them out of their skins, tidying up the root and stem ends with a knife as necessary. Halve or quarter the beets, depending on their size, and pack them snugly into four prepared pint jars.

4 Bring the syrup back to a boil, and ladle it into the jars through a fine-mesh strainer to catch the aromatics. Gently shake each jar as you fill it, to settle the beets. Run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside to release air pockets. If necessary, top up the jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process the jars in a boiling-water bath for 30 minutes. Allow to cure for at least a week before opening.

COOKING AND FREEZING HEARTY GREENS

The by-product of pickled beets is beet greens, which you cook like chard or kale.

Pick through the leaves, and discard any that are yellow or rangy. Trim the stems from smaller leaves, and strip larger ones by quickly and smoothly running the fingers of one hand up the stalk while simultaneously pulling the base of the stalk with the other hand. The greens will “unzip” satisfyingly. Wash the trimmed greens twice, and drain.

To prepare, blanch the greens for about 2 minutes in well-salted boiling water. Drain well. Once they’re cool enough to touch, firmly squeeze out as much water as possible. Cut the compacted bunch into 1-inch-wide strips.

To use, float a few greens in soup just before serving—they will bleed some—or strew them over cooked beans. Or make a warm salad by tossing the greens in vinaigrette with citrus sections, blanched carrot sticks, finely diced shallots, and herbs. Or sauté them quickly with olive oil, a crushed garlic clove, and chopped dried red chili, then dress with pickled ramps or thinly sliced Salad Onions. The blanched, sautéed greens could also go into an ad hoc pasta dish with bits of roast chicken pulled off a leftover carcass, green

onions, and bread crumbs.

The blanched greens also freeze well. Pack them in freezer bags in 1-pound servings, squeeze out the air, seal, and toss into the freezer.

HOT HAM-AND-CHEESE SANDWICHES (WITH BREAD-AND-BUTTER PICKLES)

A food stylist taught me that the secret to a golden, crunchy sandwich is smearing the bread with mayonnaise on *both* sides. The other secret is the mix of cheeses. Grate equal parts of mozzarella and Gruyère, then mix in about a third as much grated aged goat cheese, such as Midnight Moon from Cypress Grove Chevre. To make the sandwich: Lightly coat sourdough bread on both sides with mayonnaise. Sprinkle the bottom slice of bread with cheese. Layer on Bread-and-Butter Pickles and a slice of prosciutto. Cover with more cheese, then add the top slice of bread. Fry the sandwiches in generous butter for 10 minutes, or until golden, then add more butter, flip the sandwiches, and fry 10 minutes longer, or until the cheese is melted.

BREAD-AND-BUTTER PICKLES | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

Bread-and-butter pickles are the quintessential sandwich pickle for pulled pork, hamburgers, and hot ham-and-cheese. They are sweeter than dill pickles and seasoned with mustard seeds, ginger, celery seeds, and coriander. Turmeric tints them yellow, and onions are always part of the mix. I like to use little onions—some white and some red—and a combination of Kirby pickling cucumbers and squat lemon cucumbers when I can find them in late summer. A mandoline would be handy for the slicing work, and it also gives you the option of cutting old-fashioned ruffled slices, urbane smooth slices, or some of each.

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4 pounds Kirby pickling cucumbers 1 pound small onions, thinly sliced ½ cup kosher salt 1 cup water 3 cups apple-cider vinegar 1½ cups brown sugar 1 tablespoon ground turmeric 1 tablespoon mustard seeds 1 teaspoon celery seeds 1 teaspoon coriander seeds 1 tablespoon freshly grated ginger root 2 small fresh or dried red chilies, diced

1 Scrub the cucumbers well, and trim away the stem and blossom ends. Cut into 3/8-inch slices, and toss with the onions in a large bowl. Cover with a brine of ½ cup kosher salt dissolved into 1 gallon of cool water. (Don’t worry if some of the salt doesn’t dissolve immediately.) Crack two trays of ice over the top, and set aside for 2 hours. Stir from time to time, turning over the layers.

2 Meanwhile, combine the remaining ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, then remove from the heat and set aside.

3 Drain the vegetables, and rinse them with fresh water. Bring the vinegar syrup back to a boil, add the vegetables, and cook for 5 minutes.

4 Using a slotted spoon, divide the vegetables among four prepared pint jars, then ladle the syrup into the jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

CUCUMBER DILL SPEARS AND CHIPS | *YIELDS 2 QUARTS*

In Pickle Basics, I explain that processing your pickles in a hot-water bath rather than a boiling-water bath will give you a firmer texture. It follows that if you want pickles with real snap, don't process them at all.

These dill-pickle spears—or sandwich chips, depending on how you slice them—can be processed, if you want, for long-term shelf storage, but first try making a batch to keep in the refrigerator. They will be crisp, and the flavor of raw cucumber comes through. It's the freshest-tasting pickle in this book, and perhaps my favorite. The recipe can be scaled up.

¼ cup kosher salt 6 cups lukewarm water 2 teaspoons coriander seeds ½ teaspoon fennel seeds 3 large flowering dill heads (4 inches across) 3 pounds Kirby pickling cucumbers 4 cloves garlic, crushed 2 cups white-wine vinegar

1 Dissolve the salt in the water, and add the coriander, fennel, and dill. Set aside.

2 Scrub the cucumbers well, rubbing off any spines. Cut away a thin round from the stem and blossom ends, and slice lengthwise into quarters. Put the spears in a large bowl, and cover with the brine. Weight the cucumbers with a plate, cover the bowl with a kitchen towel, and set aside for 24 hours. If the bowl won't fit in your refrigerator, it's fine to leave it out at room temperature.

3 The next day, pack the cucumber spears into two scalded quart jars, saving the brine. Measure out 2 cups of the brine and reserve. Strain the remaining brine through a fine sieve to capture the aromatics, and divide them between the jars. Tuck a dill head and two cloves of garlic into each jar.

4 Mix the vinegar and the 2 cups reserved brine, and bring to a boil. Pour it over the pickles to cover. Seal the jars, and store in the refrigerator for a week

before using. For long-term shelf storage, leave ½ inch headspace when filling the jars, then seal. Process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes, or in a hot-water bath, between 180 and 185 degrees, for 30 minutes.

[Note] Instead of spears, you could slice your cucumbers into round coins, lengthwise “slabs,” or bias-cut ovals. Make the slices 3/8 inch thick and soak them in the brine for 12 hours instead of 24.

CORNICHONS | *YIELDS 2 QUARTS*

When I lived in Paris, there was a little *traiteur,* or takeaway food shop, near my apartment, and on nights when I didn't feel like cooking or going out, I'd pick up whatever they were offering as the *plat du jour*—coq au vin, duck confit, rabbit roasted with thyme, or potatoes baked in cream under a gratin of browned cheese. The shop also sold pâtés and, to go with them, always, a scoop of cornichons, which would be ladled out of an earthenware jug and would include, if you were lucky, a pearl onion among the tiny gherkins. After I moved to California, I wanted to make cornichons, but could never find the right-sized cucumbers, until farmer James Birch of Flora Bella Farm showed up at the market one June with a crate of real gherkins, spiny and gritty with sand. They were a smidge larger than the ones I ate in Paris, but their dense, crisp texture made cornichons that were exactly as I remembered them.

The secret is that you never cook the gherkins, or even heat the vinegar, which is instead poured on at room temperature and at full strength. The pickles' flavor depends on fresh tarragon, but not too much, and a very few cocktail-sized onions. If you can't find gherkins, you could also use Kirby cucumbers picked so small that the blossom is still attached.

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2 pounds small gherkins (3 inches or less) ¼ cup kosher salt 10 to 12 cocktail onions, peeled and trimmed 5-inch branch tarragon 2 teaspoons yellow mustard seeds ½ teaspoon black peppercorns 2 small bay leaves 4 cups white-wine vinegar

1 Wash the gherkins well, rubbing off the spines and blossoms. Drain, and place in a large mixing bowl. Add the salt, and stir the gherkins to coat them heavily. They will look frosted. Lay the gherkins in a colander, covering them with any excess salt from the bottom of the mixing bowl. Place the colander in the sink or over a bowl to drip for 2 hours.

2 Rinse the gherkins with fresh water, and pat them dry with a clean kitchen towel. Pack into a scalded ½-gallon Mason jar, layering the onions, tarragon, and aromatics throughout. (You could also use two quart jars.) Cover the

gherkins completely with the room-temperature vinegar, and seal. Allow to cure for at least a week before opening. The pickles will keep in the refrigerator for months.

BRINING BASICS

Fermenting vegetables for brined pickles requires us to rethink our belief that bacteria are bad. Micro-organisms surround us, and, indeed, they are a living part of us. Groundbreaking research announced in 2012 showed that the human

body harbors a hundred trillion bacteria, collectively weighing five *pounds*. They live on every external surface and cavity, and they mass in the gut, helping us to digest our food and synthesize vitamins. Stanford microbiologist Dr. David Relman goes so far as to say that humans are, like coral, "an assemblage of life-forms living together." A healthy microbiome wards off disease-causing pathogens, and may even help stave off chronic illness and conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome, asthma, and, possibly, obesity. Antibacterial soaps and chlorinated water affect our busy micro-helpers in ways that science has barely begun to consider.

Brined or fermented pickles—which include sour kosher dills and the other recipes in the pages ahead—also depend on beneficial bacteria. The process is sometimes called lacto-fermentation, because teeming colonies of lactobacillus bacteria, which also turn milk into yogurt and cheese, convert the fresh vegetables into pickles. The bacteria's metabolic function acidifies the pickling environment and makes it uninhabitable to dangerous microbes, including the bacteria responsible for botulism. Fermentation could be thought of as controlled decomposition, since the bacteria feed on the vegetable "substrate" and transform it from its fresh condition. But, ironically, their action also dramatically slows the less desirable kind of decay that leads to putrefaction. As a side benefit, fermentation gives brined pickles a characteristic tangy, rich, sometimes almost yeasty flavor. Sandor Katz, author of *The Art of Fermentation*, talks about fermenting as the "creative space" between fresh food and spoiled food. He also notes that fermentation is very safe: the Centers for Disease Control has never reported a case of food-borne illness caused by fermentation.

Submerging the vegetables in salted water—"brining"—protects them from mold spores and yeasts, which are present in the air. Salt also regulates the microenvironment, encouraging a natural succession of beneficial bacterial colonies to bloom. An alternative approach is to salt and bruise the vegetables to extract their natural liquids, as in making sauerkraut and kimchi, which are discussed later in the book. Some people call this approach "dry brining," although the vegetables will still be covered by their own liquids.

Brined vegetables are easy and nearly fail-safe, because the bacteria necessary for fermentation already exist on the ingredients. Your cucumbers, green beans, and turnips come "preloaded" with the seeds of a successful ferment. All you have to do is encourage the bacteria to go to work.

A few brining basics apply generally.

VEGETABLES: As with all preserving, good results begin with good ingredients. Choose fresh, young, crisp vegetables picked at the height of their growing season. They should be scrubbed to remove grit and dirt. Trim the blossom end of cucumbers and zucchini to remove enzymes that may cause the pickles to soften. Vegetables can be cut into chunks or slices, or they can be fermented whole, as cucumbers often are.

Although we most often think of pickling cucumbers or green beans, almost any vegetable can be fermented, and probably has been. Squash, beets, carrots, onions, greens, corn, green tomatoes, cabbage, and other garden vegetables, sometimes combined with apples and other fruit, can be fermented in the all-purpose brine described below and used in the recipes that follow. The simple technique for brining has nearly unlimited applications.

SALT: Salt plays several roles. It adds flavor and hardens vegetable pectins, making pickles crunchier, but its most important function is to regulate the speed of fermentation. Saltier brine slows down the ferment, which develops flavors and extends the life span of your pickles. Less salt allows fermentation to progress more rapidly, but it also means the pickles will reach the end of their fermentation cycle sooner—they won't last as long.

The standard pickling brine is a 5 percent solution, or approximately one and a half ounces of salt per quart of water. I give the quantity of salt in weight, rather than volume, because the shape and size of the particles make a big difference in how the salt measures out. As an experiment, I weighed one cup of different salts. Here's what I found:

Diamond Crystal Kosher Salt: 6½ ounces • Morton's Coarse Kosher Salt: 8½ ounces • La Baleine coarse sea salt: 9½ ounces • La Baleine fine sea salt: 10 ounces

That much variation will make a difference in the fermentation process and flavor, so weighing your salt will give better, more predictable results.

Also bear in mind: Iodized table salt may darken and soften the pickles. Kosher salt is the salt that dissolves most readily in water. Unprocessed sea salts contain trace amounts of minerals that may improve texture, flavor, and nutritional value. My advice, though, is to use whatever noniodized salt is on hand.

Also, remember that there is no single "right" quantity of salt to add, so you can play around and discover salt's effects.

WATER: Most tap water from municipal water systems contains anti-microbial agents, such as chlorine or chloramine, which may interfere with the microflora you're trying to encourage. Use distilled water or bottled spring water for surer results.

QUANTITIES: Fermentation works on any scale, and you can successfully ferment a quart or a barrel of vegetables at a time, provided that you scale up the amount of brine. I usually make a couple of pounds of pickles in a batch, enough to be worth the effort but not so many that I can't eat them within a reasonable time. The amount of brine called for in my recipes should be enough to cover the vegetables by a few inches, ensuring that they stay submerged even as you skim the surface frequently during fermentation.

VESSEL: I love using the old-fashioned straight-sided pottery crocks that I pick up at yard sales and antiques shops, but any sort of glass jar or food-grade plastic container will work, provided that it's large enough to hold the vegetables and brine comfortably. Particularly if using a crock without a fitted lid, choose one that's deep enough to leave a few inches of headspace, so that you can move the container, if you need to, without sloshing out the brine.

Whatever container you use will need to be covered. If it doesn't have a lid, place a plate or board over the mouth, and drape a clean dish towel over the top to keep out flies or other unwanted visitors.

If you're using a Mason jar or other sealable jar, screw on the lid loosely, so that gases produced during fermentation can escape. A tightly sealed glass jar could explode.

The German company Harsch makes attractive fermenting crocks that come with ceramic "stones" to keep the vegetable submerged and feature a nifty moated rim that fits the lid to form an airlock, allowing gases to escape while preventing air (and airborne mold spores) from entering. They are available at www.canningpantry.com, and I've used them, but I don't find them intrinsically better than other crocks.

SEASONING: You can add any variety or amount of aromatics to the vegetables, including fresh herbs (especially dill), spices (dill seeds, black peppercorns, caraway seeds), allium (garlic, onions), and chilies. Look to my recipes for guidance, but don't feel constrained by them.

WEIGHTING: As mentioned, the vegetables must be kept submerged at all times, because contact with the air will cause the pickles to darken, mold, and get mushy. Weight the vegetables with a ceramic plate or a well-scrubbed smooth stone, such as a river cobble. Other weights could include a sealed Mason jar full of water, or a Ziploc bag filled with brine instead of water (in case of leaks), mixed in the same 5 percent ratio as the pickling brine.

TEMPERATURE: Temperature affects the speed of fermentation, with cooler temperatures slowing it down, and faster temperatures speeding it up. The ideal range for fermentation is on the cool side of our comfort range: somewhere between cellar temperature, about 55 degrees, and room temperature, about 75 degrees. A refrigerator is too cold for fermentation, although you may want to store the mature pickles in the fridge for longer keeping.

It's hard for me to tell you exactly how quickly your pickles will ferment, but think of it this way: If you need a sweater, they will take more time. In shorts weather, they'll be ready sooner.

WHAT TO EXPECT: After you prep the vegetables and cover them with brine, your two main responsibilities are to keep them submerged and to skim the brine daily. Once the ferment gets going, after three or four days, bubbles will burp up from the deep, and patches of foam will float like spittle. A gossamer crepe of yeast will grow on the surface of the brine, spreading like a glacier to cover the entire surface overnight. The occasional polka dot of mold will appear. Don't worry about these signs of life. Skim off the floaters, and wipe the walls of the crock if necessary. Once the brine is fully soured, which might take two to three weeks, refrigerate the mature pickles to halt the florid growth.

VIGILANCE: The motto for fermentation is "Tend your crocks." The best advice I've gotten came from Shizue RocheAdachi, who works at the Berkeley pickle emporium Cultured. In an e-mail, she wrote: "You cannot leave your pickles be, without a thought, and expect them to turn out right. They require constant vigilance. It only takes a few minutes a day to see how they are doing, and it is a crucial step that people often ignore, leaving them with unsatisfactory results."

Look at your crocks every day. Skim the brine, as described below. Smell it. Taste it. Eat a pickle. How else are you going to know when they're ready?

SKIMMING: As already mentioned, you'll need to skim the brine daily. You can use a slotted spoon or a flat skimmer, although I find that the best tool, as so often in kitchen work, is your own clean hand. Lift out any mold specks and the yeasty scum. You won't get it all, but don't worry: you'll skim again tomorrow. Wipe down the walls of the crock with a damp paper towel if you find any mold growing there. I also like to rinse the weight any time I remove it to taste the pickles, at least every other day.

LIFE CYCLE AND STORAGE: You might think of fermentation as a life cycle that runs from fresh vegetables to old pickles. The flavor, texture, and palatability of the product changes along the way, and you may find that you prefer fresh, "half-sour" pickles, or mature pickles that are very tangy and perhaps even slightly soft. When you're happy with what's in the crock, you can halt fermentation by refrigerating the pickles. Pack them into scalded jars, and cover completely with brine. (Strain the brine if you like, and feel free to transfer the aromatics to the jar, or not.) Seal the jars, and store in the refrigerator. They will keep for several months.

FURTHER READING: Linda Ziedrich's *The Joy of Pickling* includes many useful recipes for fermented vegetables. For an exhaustive exploration of the subject from the recognized authority, see Sandor Katz's *The Art of Fermentation.* His previous book, *Wild Fermentation,* is a more concise but no less useful handbook.

SUNSHINE PICKLES | *YIELDS ABOUT 3 QUARTS*

In Paris, I had a friend named Frank Schork, a retired American librarian who first saw France as a GI in World War II and went back to live his late years on the Left Bank, even going so far as to become a French citizen, so that the upper-crust Parisians he knew could no longer condescend to him as *un Américain.* Frank was in his eighties when we first met and astonishingly fit, with all his wits, manners, and antique discipline firmly intact. Every day at 6 p.m., he walked into a certain hotel to drink two—always two—gin-and-tonics while reading the day's newspapers. He'd walk out for dinner a few minutes before 8. So regular were his habits that I would tell friends visiting Paris to go to the hotel, look for the gentleman reading his papers, and introduce themselves. Frank never failed to be there, or to charm his guests. He was a man of another era.

As is this recipe. When I first told Frank about my canning work, he remembered that his mother made sunshine pickles at home in Ohio during the Depression—had I heard of them? I had not. He vaguely explained the technique over the phone, and it sounded odd: put cucumbers in a glass jar with a slice of bread, cover with brine, and leave in the sun. A day or two later, Frank called again to say that he had found a version of his mother's pickle technique in a Hungarian cookbook. Would I like to see it? The book arrived in the mail a week later.

Kovászos uborka, pickled dill gherkins, are a fermented pickle. When they're fully sour, after 4 to 5 days, the result is similar to a kosher dill without the garlic, but they can also be eaten half sour, when they retain more cucumber flavor. It's traditional but not essential to layer a few grape leaves or cherry leaves among the cucumbers before fermenting, since their tannins improve the texture.

Ironically, the dill season in Los Angeles coincides with an annual meteorological phenomenon called June Gloom that causes gray skies to settle over the Southern California coast. I know from experience that Sunshine Pickles can be made in the shade, although they will ferment more slowly.

One tip: Most tap water has been treated with anti-microbial agents, such as

chlorine, that could slow or prevent fermentation. Use bottled spring water or distilled water for surer results.

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3 pounds Kirby cucumbers, 4 to 5 inches long 3 large flowering dill heads (or 3 to 5 dill fronds plus 1½ tablespoons dill seeds) 2 slices stale rye bread (made without preservatives) Optional: 6 fresh grape leaves or a handful of cherry leaves 2 quarts bottled water 2¼ ounces noniodized salt

1. Scrub the cucumbers, rubbing off the spines, and trim the stem and blossom ends. Slash each cucumber lengthwise to allow the pickling brine to penetrate. Pack the cucumbers and dill heads into a scalded gallon jar or crock. Lay the bread slices on top and cover with the grape or cherry leaves, if using.

2. Warm the water, and stir in the salt to dissolve. Ladle the brine over the cucumbers to cover completely. Seal, and set the jar in a warm, sunny spot. Small bubbles will rise in a day or so, and the pickles will be sour in a few days more. Remove the bread, strain the brine, and return the brine to the jar with the finished pickles. Store in the refrigerator, where they will keep for several months.

KOSHER DILL PICKLES | *YIELDS ABOUT 4 QUARTS*

You can adjust the seasoning to taste in this fermented pickle: add a flowering fennel head, for example, or ¼ cup mustard seeds, or even a few bags of smoky Scottish breakfast tea. Note that the brine will taste very salty at first, but the cucumbers absorb some of the salt, and everything comes out tasting right.

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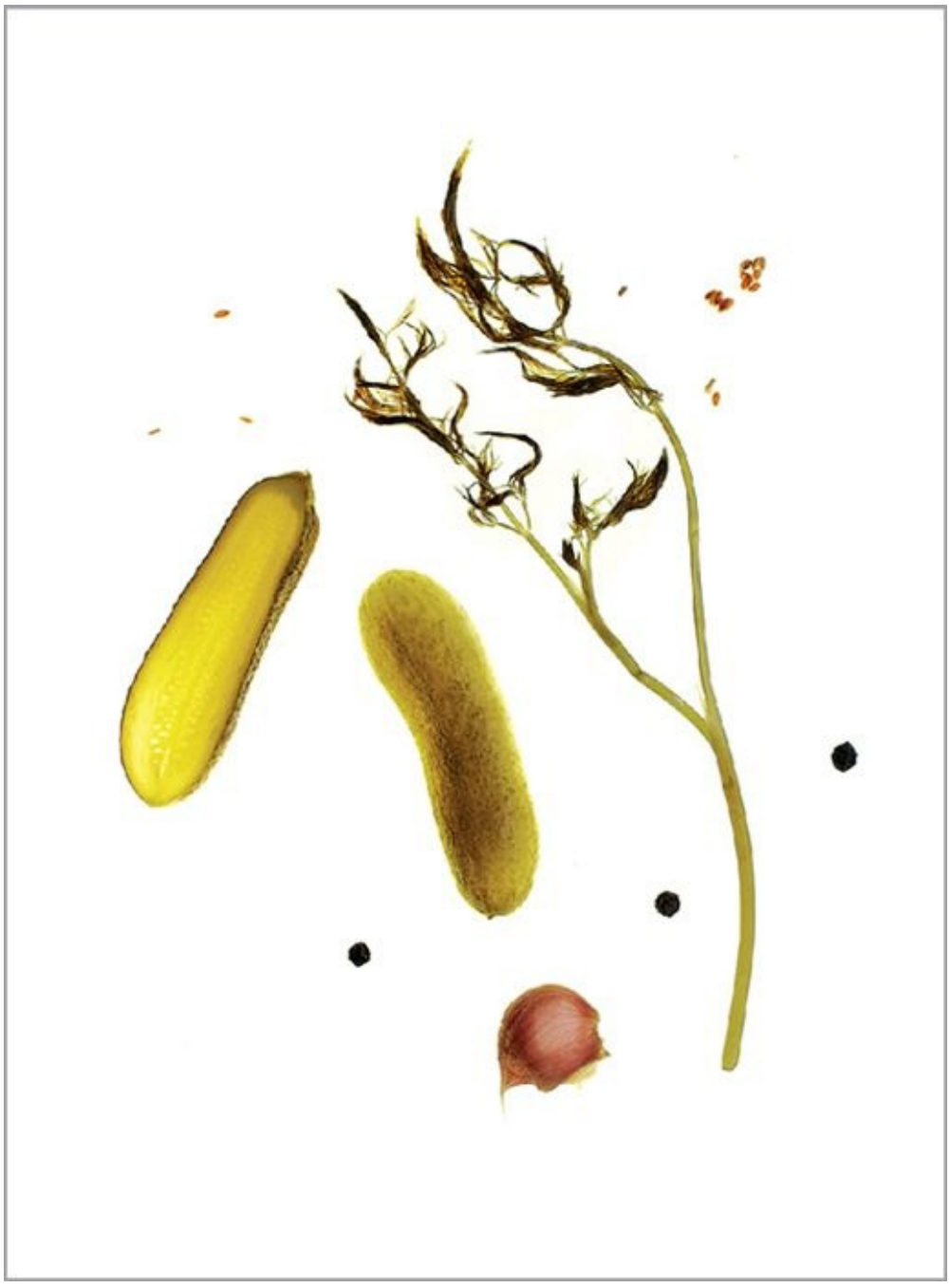
5 pounds small, firm Kirby cucumbers 1 gallon bottled water 6 ounces salt 4 flowering dill heads (or 6 to 8 dill fronds plus 2 tablespoons dill seeds) 6 to 8 cloves garlic Optional: 2 small dried red chilies, or 1 teaspoon black peppercorns Optional: fresh grape or cherry leaves

1 Heat the water just enough to dissolve the salt. Allow to cool to room temperature.

2 Wash the cucumbers and rub off the spines. Trim the stem and blossom ends. Place the dill, garlic, spices, and leaves in the bottom of a 2-gallon-capacity crock or jar. Lay in the cucumbers, packing them closely. Cover with the brine, and weight. Cover the crock with a plate, or loosely seal the jar. Store at room temperature, 65 to 70 degrees.

3 Check the crock every day, and skim any bubbles or scum. Don’t be alarmed by floating specks of mold. Skim them, and wipe down the walls of the crock if any mold forms there. The pickles will begin to sour within a week, and they will be fully soured in 2 to 3 weeks. You can eat them at any point in the process. To keep, transfer the pickles to scalded quart jars and cover completely with the brine. Store in the refrigerator for up to several months.



ZUCCHINI DILL SPEARS | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

The zucchini plant is tireless, and down south people compete for new ways to describe how fast zucchini grow. My mom says that, after you pick a plant clean and walk away, you can glance back over your shoulder and see new ones that already need picking.

A single zucchini plant could feed a family, but conventional wisdom calls for four: one for the cutworm, one for the crow, one to rot, and one to grow. Conventional wisdom fails to tell you what to do if all four grow. It's impossible to eat so many zucchini, and once the garden gets up to speed, you literally cannot give them away—everyone else has his or her own to contend with. By summer's end, the vine's prodigious output seems almost sinister. An untended zucchini will bloat to the size of your calf in a matter of days. A kitchen can never have enough zucchini recipes.

When they're small, zucchini make a delicious pickle. Choose the smallest ones you can find, less than 4 inches, to fit into pint jars. (Larger zucchini can be cut into spears.) Soaking them in cold brine will firm the texture, and on a scorching summer day, the ice-water bath also does wonders for the preserver, leaving both you and the zucchini as cool as a cucumber.

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3 pounds small zucchini ¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon kosher salt 12 fresh dill fronds 2 teaspoons dill seeds 2 teaspoons mustard seeds 1 teaspoon coriander seeds ¼ teaspoon saffron threads 4 cloves garlic, peeled and halved 4 small dried chili peppers, split lengthwise 2½ cups white-wine vinegar 1 cup water ¼ cup sugar

1. Scrub the zucchini well, and cut away the blossom ends. If they're small enough to fit into the jar, cut them in half lengthwise. Otherwise, slice them into 4-inch spears. Toss the trimmed zucchini in a bowl with ¼ cup of the salt, the dill fronds, and a double handful of ice cubes. Add cold water to cover, and weight the zucchini with a plate. Leave for 2 hours.

2. Drain the zucchini in a colander, and rinse. Distribute the dill fronds and all the remaining aromatics among four prepared pint jars.

3 Combine the vinegar, water, sugar, and the remaining tablespoon of salt in a saucepan, and bring to a boil. Working in batches, cook the zucchini for 2 minutes, until khaki colored and pliable. Pack them snugly into jars.

4 Once all the zucchini are cooked, ladle the hot syrup into the jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. For a firmer texture, you can instead use a hot-water bath, between 180 and 185 degrees, for 30 minutes.

PICKLED GREEN BEANS | *YIELDS 6 PINTS*

A lot of people know pickled green beans as “dilly beans,” but dill isn’t the only way to go. Fresh tarragon tastes like spring; basil is summer. Thai basil is my favorite. If you chopped the beans into rounds, then you’d have Snap Bean Relish.

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3 pounds green beans or yellow wax beans, stem ends removed 2 tablespoons kosher salt, plus more for blanching 6 cloves garlic, peeled 6 small dried chili peppers 6 sprigs fresh herbs, such as basil, dill, tarragon, Thai basil, or cilantro 3½ cups white-wine vinegar 3½ cups water 1 tablespoon sugar 1 tablespoon yellow mustard seeds 30 black peppercorns 30 coriander seeds

1 Blanch the beans in well-salted boiling water (3 tablespoons of kosher salt to 1 gallon of water) for 60 to 90 seconds, until they are bright and pliable but not cooked through. Drain, and shock in an ice-water bath. Trim to 4-inch lengths if necessary to fit into pint jars.

2 Divide the garlic, chilies, and herbs equally among six prepared pint jars. Pack the beans into the jars.

3 Combine the vinegar, water, 2 tablespoons salt, sugar, mustard seeds, peppercorns, and coriander in a saucepan, and bring to a boil. Ladle the hot syrup over the beans, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

FERMENTED GREEN BEANS | *YIELDS 3 QUARTS*

This is my favorite of all the summer fermented pickles. The technique is the same as for kosher dills, but there is something uniquely appealing about the green bean's appetizer size and the rich, almost yeasty, fermented flavor.

Adjust the seasonings with more or less dill, chilies, peppercorns, or other spices.

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1 gallon bottled water 6 ounces salt
2 pounds small green beans or yellow wax beans 4 flowering dill heads (or 4 to 6 dill fronds plus 2 tablespoons dill seeds) 6 small cloves garlic, crushed 3 dried red chilies, such as cayenne or chile de árbol 1 teaspoon black peppercorns, crushed

1 Heat the water just enough to dissolve the salt. Allow to cool to room temperature.

2 Trim the stem ends from the beans. Layer them and the other ingredients in a 2-gallon crock or jar. Cover with brine. Weight the beans. Cover the crock with a plate, and set aside at room temperature.

3 Bubbles will begin to show in 4 or 5 days. Skim daily. The beans will be fully pickled in about 2 weeks.

4 Lift the beans out of the brine, using a slotted spoon, and pack them into three scalded quart jars. Strain the brine, and pour it into the jars to cover the beans completely. Store in the refrigerator for up to several months.

BRINED BABY TURNIPS | *YIELDS ABOUT 1 QUART*

This fermented pickle uses small all-white Japanese-style globe turnips along with their greens. The best thing about young turnips is that they taste good at every stage of fermentation, from fresh to fully sour.

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2 quarts bottled water 3 ounces salt
2 pounds small turnips with their greens 1 tablespoon dried chili flakes 2 cloves garlic 2 tablespoons apple-cider vinegar, preferably unpasteurized, such as Bragg

1 Heat the water just enough to dissolve the salt. Allow to cool to room temperature.

2 Wash the turnips and their greens, then trim and quarter the turnips. Sort through the greens, and discard any that are yellow or rangy. Trim the stems if tough. Pack the turnips and greens into a small crock or gallon jar. Add the chili flakes, garlic, and vinegar. Cover with brine. Weight the vegetables. Cover the crock with a plate, and place in a cool spot.

3 Bubbles will begin to show in 4 or 5 days. Skim daily, as needed. The turnips will be fully pickled in about 2 weeks.

4 Lift the turnips out of the brine using a slotted spoon, and pack them into a scalded quart jar. Strain the brine, and pour it into the jars to cover the turnips completely. Refrigerate for up to several months.

SPICY SWEET SQUASH PICKLE | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

This is an old-fashioned pickle inspired by picnics and church socials in Tennessee. It's sweet, strongly flavored with the traditional pickling spices, and hot enough to sting. Where I differ from tradition is that I don't like to leave the woody spices in the jar. Cinnamon, allspice, and especially clove continue to infuse in unpredictable ways and, to my taste, become overbearing with time. Instead, I like to steep them in the vinegar syrup for a couple of hours while the squash soaks in brine, then strain them out of the syrup. The less aggressive aromatics—including mustard, dill, fennel, and peppercorns—can go in the jars.

If you like the flavor of this brine, it could be used with practically any other vegetable, from cucumbers to onions. It's fine to skip the processing on this recipe, as long as you store the jars in the refrigerator and allow them to cure for 2 weeks before opening.

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3 cups apple-cider vinegar ¾ cup water, plus more for the brine 1 tablespoon kosher salt, plus more for the brine ½ cup sugar 2 teaspoons yellow mustard seeds ½ teaspoon coriander seeds 3 cloves ¼ teaspoon fennel seeds ¼ teaspoon dill seeds 4 allspice berries 2 inches cinnamon stick 10 black peppercorns 1 shard of mace, or a few fresh gratings of nutmeg 1 cardamom pod, crushed to release the seeds 2 dried red chilies, split, plus more if desired 1 bay leaf 3 pounds small yellow crookneck squash, 3 to 4 inches long 1 small red onion, about ¼ pound 4 cloves garlic, peeled

1 Combine the vinegar, the ¾ cup water, the 1 tablespoon salt, sugar, and all the spices and aromatics except the garlic in a large saucepan, and bring to a boil. Turn off the heat, and allow to steep until you need it later.

2 Scrub the squash well. Cut away and discard the stem and blossom ends. Slice the trimmed squash into thin rounds, ¼ inch or less. Peel the onion, and slice it into thin rings. Put the vegetables in a large bowl, and cover them with a brine of 3 tablespoons kosher salt dissolved in 1 quart water. Crack a tray of

ice cubes over the top, and set aside for 2 hours. Drain, and rinse with fresh water.

3 Pick out the cloves, allspice, cinnamon, mace, cardamom pod, red chilies, and bay leaf from the pickling syrup, and discard. Bring the syrup back to a boil, and add the squash rounds and onions. Return to a boil, and cook for about 5 minutes, until the squash is heated through.

4 Using a slotted spoon, divide the vegetables among four prepared pint jars. Tuck a garlic clove into each jar. (Also add a new dried chili to each jar, if you'd like more heat.) Ladle the hot syrup over the top, leaving ½ inch headspace. Run a skewer or other small implement around the inside edge of the jar to release any air pockets, and top up with more syrup as necessary.

5 Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. Turn off the heat, and allow the jars to rest in the water for 5 minutes before removing. Allow to cure for at least a week before opening.

SALAD ONIONS | *YIELDS 3 PINTS*

One year, in early July, I got ten bunches of small onions—not quite as large as Ping-Pong balls—at the farmers' market. The next day, my friend Claire and I went for a hike, and out of the blue she said, "Know what I want you to pickle next? Onions." The day after that, I was talking food with Beatrice, a friend who was raised in Mexico, and I asked her what her favorite pickle was. Onions, she said. Who knew pickled onions were so popular?

I like to keep small pickled onions on hand for salads. Toss your greens with extra-virgin olive oil, and then toss them some more with thinly sliced pickled onions and a good pinch of salt. That's it. Sliced pickled onions are equally good in wintry warm salads of blanched kale, chard, or spinach—maybe sprinkled with a handful of raisins and toasted pine nuts on top.

I've done Salad Onions with both champagne vinegar and sherry vinegar, since that's what I like for a vinaigrette dressing. The sherry vinegar will darken the onions, but it's not so noticeable once they're sliced.

Note that this recipe requires three days.

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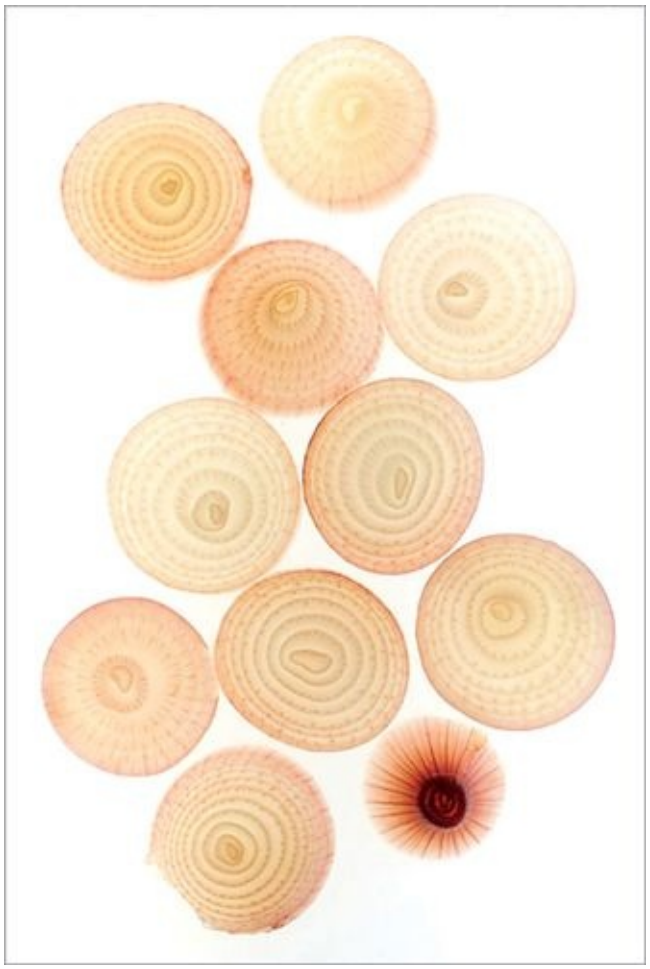
2 pounds small onions (1½-inch diameter or less) 8 cups water ½ cup kosher salt 3 cups champagne or sherry vinegar 2 tablespoons sugar 3 small dried red chili peppers 3 bay leaves 6 allspice berries 3 cloves 15 black peppercorns 1 cardamom pod, crushed ¾ teaspoon brown mustard seeds

1 Peel and trim the onions, leaving them whole. Place them in a nonreactive mixing bowl, and cover with a brine made from 4 cups of the water and ¼ cup of the salt. Set aside overnight at room temperature.

2 Also on the first day, combine the vinegar, sugar, chilies, and spices, except the mustard seeds, in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil, then remove from heat. Cover, and set aside at room temperature until needed.

3 The next day, drain the onions and cover them with a fresh brine of 4 cups water and the remaining ¼ cup salt. Leave overnight again.

4 On the third day, drain the onions and rinse them with fresh water. Pack them snugly into three prepared pint jars, and divide the mustard seeds among the jars. Bring the vinegar syrup to a boil, and ladle it over the onions, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.



ROASTED OKRA WITH PIMENTÓN | *YIELDS 3 PINTS*

This is not the traditional pickled okra. To intensify okra's mild but distinctive flavor and subdue its slimy texture, I parch it before pickling. The brine is spicy with dried chilies and smoky with pimentón, the smoked paprika from Spain. (You can buy pimentón at gourmet-food shops, or online at www.tienda.com and other sites.) Use the smallest okra pods you can find—2 inches or less.

To make classic pickled okra with dill, mix up the vinegar brine for Pickled Green Beans. Pack the whole, raw okra pods into regular-mouth pint jars along with a small head of dill, fill the jars with boiling liquid, leaving ½ inch headspace, and process the sealed jars in a boiling-water bath for 15 minutes. It will take about ¾ pound of fresh okra and 1 cup of liquid for each pint jar.

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2 cups white-wine vinegar ¾ cup water 1 tablespoon kosher salt 3 teaspoons pimentón (smoked Spanish paprika) 2¼ pounds small okra 1 small onion (1½ inches in diameter) 3 cloves garlic in their skin 3 dried red chilies, or more to taste 1½ teaspoons yellow mustard seeds 15 black peppercorns

1 Combine the vinegar, water, salt, and pimentón in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, remove from the heat, and set aside. Wash the okra, and drain it well. Peel the onion, and slice into quarters.

2 Spread the okra in a single layer on a baking sheet, and tuck in the garlic and sliced onion. Place the sheet in a 500-degree oven for 10 to 15 minutes, until the okra is scorched.

3 Loosely pack the hot okra into three prepared regular-mouth pint jars, leaving a generous ¾ inch headspace. To each jar add a clove of roasted garlic, a piece of the sliced onion, a whole dried chili, ½ teaspoon of mustard seeds, and 5 peppercorns.

4 Bring the vinegar brine back to a boil, and ladle it over the okra to cover, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath

for 15 minutes.

WATERMELON RIND PICKLES | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

I don’t recall eating watermelon rind pickles when I was growing up, but people have often asked me about “those watermelon pickles from the South,” so I decided I should develop a recipe. They are a picnic pickle to serve with cold fried chicken, sliced ham, and creamy church-supper dishes like macaroni salad and squash casserole. Traditional watermelon rind pickles are almost candied: mine are less sweet, and I use red-wine vinegar as the base.

Note that this is a two-day process.

3½ pounds prepped watermelon rind (see procedure below), from a 12-to 14-pound watermelon ¼ cup kosher salt 6 cups water 2½ cups red-wine vinegar 1½ cup sugar 2 tablespoons molasses ½ teaspoon allspice berries ½ teaspoon black peppercorns 5 cloves 3 to 5 dried red chilies 1 inch cinnamon stick

1 Using the photograph that follows as a guide, break down the watermelon into slices. First cut the melon in half, then into quarters. Cut each quarter in half, and cut the resulting chunk into 1-inch slices. Using a sharp knife, slice the peel away from the flesh. (Save the flesh to eat.) Finally, use a vegetable peeler to remove the outermost dark-green rind, and discard the peelings. What's left to use for the recipe is the pale-green inner rind. Cut each piece of rind into 1½-inch pieces, and place in a large mixing bowl.

2 Make a brine of the salt and water, and pour over the rinds. Weight them with a plate, cover the bowl with a clean dish towel, and set aside overnight.

3 The next day, drain the rinds and rinse with fresh water. Combine the vinegar, sugar, and molasses in a large saucepan, and bring to a boil. Crush the spices in a mortar, and add them to the pan. When the vinegar syrup boils, add the rinds to the pan, cover, and cook gently for 10 minutes, turning them over regularly, until the rinds are translucent. Lift out the rinds with a slotted spoon, and pack them into four prepared pint jars, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace.

4 Bring the syrup back to a boil, and pour it over the rinds to cover, leaving ½ inch headspace. Run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jars to release any air pockets, and top up with more syrup as necessary. If you run short of syrup, top up the jars with straight red-wine vinegar. Wipe the rims, seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. Wait a week or two before eating.

PICKLED PEPPERS | *YIELDS 2 QUARTS*

In case the tongue twister about Peter Piper ever made you wonder, a peck is ¼ bushel.

These pickled peppers were inspired by the Chileño peppers that are locally famous in California's Eastern Sierra, where I attended Deep Springs College and returned to work for two summers as a cowboy in the White Mountains and two more as a mule-packer and backcountry guide in the High Sierra. Chileños are a variety of medium-spicy pepper first brought to the area by South American sheepherders, and they are still grown and pickled in the Owens Valley. Their characteristic flavoring is garlic and oregano—lots of it. (The authentic local recipes use distilled white vinegar.) Practically any of the late-summer peppers can be pickled using this recipe, provided they're small enough to fit into jars.

1½ pounds small peppers, either hot, mild, or a combination 8 fat cloves garlic, roughly chopped 4 teaspoons dried oregano 3½ cups white-wine vinegar 1 cup water 2 tablespoons kosher salt

1 Wash the peppers, and trim the stems to about ¼ inch. Slash each pepper, to allow the pickling brine to seep in.

2 Divide the garlic and oregano between two prepared quart jars. Pack the raw peppers into the jars, pressing them down quite firmly as you go.

3 Combine the vinegar, water, and salt in a pot, and bring to a boil. Ladle the hot brine into the jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and keep the jars in the refrigerator for the best texture, or process in a hot-water bath, between 180 and 185 degrees, for 30 minutes. Allow the jars to cure for a week.

PICKLED PURSLANE | *YIELDS 1 QUART*

I have a soft spot for weeds, at least the edible ones—dandelions, nettles, lamb's-quarters, mallow, and purslane. Radical ecologist and forager Nance Klehm calls them "spontaneous plants," and points out that most of them came to America after 1492. "We brought them with us and caused them to be as successful as they are," she said during a lecture at the Huntington Botanical Gardens, near Los Angeles. "They are here by our design—and thriving." Nance explained that weeds instigate the ecological succession on disturbed land. That's why they follow humans along roadways and railroad tracks, colonizing vacant lots and gardens, all places where we have scratched the soil bare and, in effect, reset the succession of plant life. Weeds leap up, says Nance, "growing out of apparently nothing." With such a storehouse of vitality, many of them are highly nutritious and have use as tonics, stimulants, or medicines.

Purslane was once considered a delicacy, with its fleshy leaves and tangy flavor. The ancient Egyptians and classical Greeks cultivated it, and early American cookbooks include recipes for pickled purslane. Today gardeners tend to hoe it up as a nuisance. When I pointed out to my uncle David in Tennessee that purslane is edible, he said that, after so many years of warring against it, he was afraid to taste it now, because the weed just might recognize him and take its revenge.

This is a fresh pickle, so it doesn't need processing but should be stored in the refrigerator. It's crisp and mild—perfect for eating with sandwiches or charcuterie.

½ pound purslane leaves, picked from the stems 3 or 4 fresh dill fronds 1 fresh or dried red chili pepper 1 clove garlic, crushed 1½ cups white-wine vinegar 1½ cups water 1 teaspoon kosher salt ½ teaspoon dill seeds ¼ teaspoon black peppercorns, crushed ¼ teaspoon fennel seeds ½ teaspoon coriander seeds 1 allspice berry, crushed

1 Rinse and drain the purslane leaves. Pack them into a scalded wide-mouth quart jar with the dill fronds, chili, and garlic.

2 Combine the remaining ingredients in a saucepan, and bring to a boil. Pour into the jar to cover the purslane completely. Seal, and allow to cool. Store in the refrigerator for at least a week before using. This will keep for up to several months.

LINDA ZIEDRICH: A VIEW FROM THE GARDEN

The first canning guide I bought was Ball's *Complete Book of Home Preserving,* which promised four hundred "delicious and creative recipes." Some were tasty, but from the start I was less interested in the bare how-to of *recipes* than in the underlying logic of *techniques.*

Eventually I found something better in Linda Ziedrich's *The Joy of Pickling* and *The Joy of Jams, Jellies, and Other Sweet Preserves,* which together constitute a complete guide to mastering the art of home canning. I took to calling Ziedrich "Linda the Great" on my blog and, before long, my reporter's impulse got the best of me. I e-mailed her to ask for an interview, and she e-mailed back with an invitation to lunch at her farm in Oregon's Willamette Valley.

I found Ziedrich in the place where her canning career began—the garden—tending her berry patch on a thirty-seven-acre homestead where she and her family have lived the past seventeen years.

"I try to be as comprehensive as possible in my books," she said as she gave me a tour of the property, with its large vegetable garden and heirloom fruit trees. "With *The Joy of Pickling,* I wanted to write a book that explained the process of pickling and collected pickle recipes from all over the world."

Before *The Joy of Pickling* came out in 1998, Ziedrich knew of only one other pickling book in print. Her work, revised in 2009, includes 250 recipes that draw on American, European, and Asian traditions, along with detailed but readable explanations of the science of canning and fermentation. It ranges confidently through vinegar pickles, fermented pickles, quick pickles, freezer pickles, and piquant condiments. Ziedrich re-creates a nineteenth-century recipe for walnut ketchup and throws in an equally old-fashioned method for pickling green walnuts. She describes pickled grape leaves and German-style pickled pumpkin; Italian *giardiniera* and French *jardinière;* Chinese fermented daikon, Korean pickled turnips, and Vietnamese soured mustard greens; four kimchis plus kimuchi; half a dozen sauerkrauts as well as Turkish pickled cabbage; pickled figs, quinces, peaches, apricots, cherries, orange slices, and plums. Notwithstanding more recent pickling books, including Sandor Katz's hefty *The Art of Fermentation,* Ziedrich's book remains indispensable.

Also in 2009, Ziedrich released a sequel, *The Joy of Jams, Jellies, and Other Sweet Preserves.* Organized alphabetically from apples to zucchini, *The Joy of Jams* surveys the range of things one can do with fruit and sugar, with niche chapters devoted to oddball fruits such as quinces and medlars. Its two hundred recipes feel lived in and, indeed, in the preface, Ziedrich writes, “I have been working on this book for so long that I can’t remember why I started.”

APART FROM OVERALL SCOPE, what distinguish Ziedrich’s two *Joys* are the intangible qualities of ambition and authority, traits common to all enduring cookbooks. (After moving to Oregon, she trained to become a certified Master Food Preserver.) For her own part, Ziedrich says that she’s pleased by a different aspect of her work, one that may not be evident to most readers. “I think what’s special about me is the connection I have to the dirt.”

Years before the current interest in backyard chickens and front-yard vegetables coalesced into a trend called urban homesteading, Ziedrich had already come to view home canning as the flip side of home gardening. Wanting to feed her family with fewer trips to the grocery store meant spending more time in the garden.

“I know how these plants grow,” explained Ziedrich, taking in her garden with a sweeping gesture. “I have a sense of when to harvest and how to store things. I’m interested in the history of plants. Chefs, who have been so influential lately, don’t have that real connection to the soil. They don’t have the whole picture.”

Ziedrich’s canning life started in the early 1990s, after her family moved to Santa Cruz, California, and into a house that came with fruit trees. A natural bent toward frugality and self-sufficiency moved her to start preserving the plums and pears that grew in her backyard, but her husband was the family’s first pickler. “I hated pickles,” said Ziedrich. Her toddler son did not. Dilly beans were his first solid food, and after tasting cucumber pickles at a fair, he wanted more. Both Ziedriches already shared what she calls “a family interest in fermenting”—making bread, beer, and wine—and soon she was putting up cucumber pickles and fermenting crocks of garden vegetables.

“My interest in pickling was born out of a sort of anthropological curiosity,” she commented once we sat down for lunch beneath a grape arbor. “What struck me was that people like really different foods, not because they have different tastes biologically but because they’ve been brought up in certain ways. If they ate something [as a child] and then can’t buy it in the supermarket, they develop this nostalgia. I decided there was a need for a pickling book.”

Ziedrich’s worldview is literally local. She stays close to the backyard garden, less a spokesperson for the ongoing canning revival than its exemplar. Her typical summer work includes growing as many as one hundred tomato plants and putting up cases of canned tomatoes, spaghetti sauce, pizza sauce, ketchup, and so on. The rest of the year, she said, there are weeks when she doesn’t have to go into the city at all, because “we go shopping in the pantry.” She doesn’t allot much time to promoting her work.

“It’s become so much a part of our life that I haven’t felt any need to defend it or even question it,” she concluded, as lunch wound down with a dessert of preserved cherries. “Now there’s this movement, and it’s wonderful to see younger people asking questions and experimenting. I think some of them will go further than I’ve ever gone.”

APRICOT JAM

Beauty in a work of art entails not just what is included, but what is left out. The creative imagination strives sometimes toward pure form, and other times toward adornment. The one impulse leads to the sober formality of the Acropolis, the other to the Palace of Versailles.

The cook, too, sometimes yearns for purity, distilling a single flavor to its most intense essence—

Food should taste like what it is.

—NICOLAS DE BONNEFONS, LES DÉLICES DE LA CAMPAGNE, 1654

—and at other times attempts to balance complexity.

> *The science of the cook consists today of deconstructing foods, turning them into quintessences … and blending them together so that none dominates the others.*
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> *—INTRODUCTION TO FRANÇOIS MARIN, LES DONS DE COMUS OU LES DÉLICES DE LA TABLE, 1739*

The first recipe that follows, for Classic Apricot Jam, intensifies the singular taste of Blenheim apricots, an heirloom variety that is remarkable for its gorgeous flavor, luscious texture, and short shelf life. It's the jam I most look forward to making every year.

The two recipes that follow that are variations that blend multiple "quintessences." Lemon verbena and sweet wine in the first variation provide weightless layers of flavor, akin to the translucent atmospherics in a Turner painting. Maple syrup, brandy, and vanilla in the next tend toward the smudgy palette of Rembrandt's world. Each has its place—the latter, perhaps, served with cake and brandy cream after one of December's celebratory meals.

You may ask why gild the apricot, and the question is fair. A perfect Blenheim—such as those dry-farmed by Mike Cirone at See Canyon Ranch, near Paso Robles—doesn't need any embellishment. But, then, fruit isn't always perfect. Bland, commercially grown apricots in particular may need improvement.

CLASSIC APRICOT JAM | *YIELDS 3 PINTS*

3½ pounds apricots 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice 3 cups sugar Optional: blanched apricot kernels from the reserved pits Optional: 1 tablespoon Blume Marillen apricot eau-de-vie

1 Rinse the apricots, slice into quarters, and remove the pits. Toss the fruit with lemon juice, stir in the sugar, and set aside to macerate for 30 minutes or up to overnight. If you want to use the kernels, crack the pits open with a nutcracker and extract the moist “almond.” Blanch the kernels in a small pan of boiling water for 1 minute, then allow to cool and slip them out of their skins. Add to the macerating fruit.

2 Turn the fruit-sugar mixture into a preserving pan, and rapidly bring to a boil. Cook over a high flame, stirring frequently, until sufficiently reduced, 8 to 10 minutes after the boil. Apricot jam will not achieve a firm gel set, but will develop a thick, silky consistency.

3 Stir in eau-de-vie, if using, and boil for 1 minute longer. Remove the pan from the heat, and continue to stir for another 2 or 3 minutes if you would like to break down the fruit for a smoother texture. Ladle the hot jam into six prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Apricot Jam with Honey and Lemon Verbena | *YIELDS 3 PINTS*

3½ pounds apricots 2½ cups sugar 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice ¼ cup honey 2 tablespoons sweet wine, such as Muscat de Beaumes de Venise 6 to 8 leaves fresh lemon verbena, or a sachet of verveine herbal tea

Follow the preceding recipe, adding the honey along with the sugar and lemon juice when you macerate the fruit. Reduce the jam in a preserving pan, as usual, adding the wine and lemon verbena in the last 2 to 3 minutes of cooking. Distribute the lemon-verbena leaves equally among the jars, or

discard the spent sachet of verveine tea. Fill and process the jars as for Classic Apricot Jam.

Smooth Apricot Jam with Maple and Vanilla | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

2½ pounds Blenheim apricots 1 cup sugar ½ cup maple syrup 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice 1 vanilla bean, split lengthwise 2 tablespoons brandy

1 Follow the recipe for Classic Apricot Jam, adding the maple syrup and vanilla bean to the macerating fruit-sugar mixture. Reduce the jam as usual, for 6 to 8 minutes.

2 Before it's fully reduced, remove the pan from the heat and allow the jam to cool slightly. Discard the vanilla bean, then run the jam through the medium blade of a food mill to produce a coarse purée. There should be almost no waste, so keep at it until the skins are broken down. (You could also lightly process the jam with an immersion blender, taking care not to liquefy it, or else skip this step entirely for a textured jam.) 3 Return the purée to the pan, bring it to a boil, and finish reducing. A teaspoonful on a chilled plate should mound and not leak liquid at the edges. Add the brandy, and stir it through the hot jam. Fill and process the jars as for Classic Apricot Jam.

OLIVE OIL CAKE | *YIELDS ONE 8-INCH CAKE*

Honey, almond meal, and olive oil give this cake a rustic, vaguely Spanish flair. Baker Melissa Cortina, founder of the Pig and Pastry Pie Co. in Los Angeles, developed it to go with Seville Orange Marmalade, but it is also delicious with apricot jam. It's an easy cake, about on a par with making muffins, and it mixes up in a single bowl. Note that the batter is beaten more than most. A strong Spanish olive oil will give the best flavor, and I prefer the minutely speckled almond meal made from whole almonds, with their skins,

rather than the meal of pure white blanched almonds.

2 large eggs ½ cup honey ¼ cup milk ¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil, preferably Spanish, plus more for pan 3¼ ounces almond meal (about 1 cup), plus more for pan 4½ ounces all-purpose flour (about 1 cup) 2 teaspoons baking powder ½ teaspoon kosher salt Confectioners' sugar, for dusting the cake

1 In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the eggs, honey, and milk. While continuing to whisk, add the olive oil in a thin, steady stream until it is all incorporated. Add the dry ingredients, except the confectioners' sugar, all at once. Whisk them into the wet ingredients until you have a smooth, thin batter almost like a pancake batter.

2 Pour the batter into an 8-inch cake pan that has been oiled and dusted with almond meal. Center the cake pan on a baking sheet, and bake in a 350-degree oven for 40 to 45 minutes, until it is lightly browned and a skewer stuck in the center comes out dry. Allow the cake to cool for a few minutes, then turn it out of the pan to continue cooling on a rack. Before serving, dust confectioners' sugar over the top.

THE BLENHEIM APRICOT

"I have deep compassion for our town dwellers who know so little of fruit at its best."

—EDWARD BUNYARD, *THE ANATOMY OF DESSERT* [1929]

Apricots used to be "apricocks," derived from the Latin *praecox,* meaning "early ripening." The trees bloom precociously, at the first flush of spring, and they ripen as the earliest "soft" stone fruit of summer. In most of the country, their impulsive blooming makes them a precarious crop to grow. My dad says that, in his part of eastern Tennessee, the trees might escape late cold snaps and bear fruit one year out of seven. Thomas Jefferson planted hundreds of seeds and young trees at Monticello as early as 1778, including the Moor Park, the variety discussed around a dinner table in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park.* Despite his considerable horticultural skill, Jefferson's 1811 census of the mature orchard recorded only seven survivors, according to Peter J. Hatch's *The Fruits and Fruit Trees of Monticello.* Apricots need mild, predictable Mediterranean climates, and they thrive in California, Southern Europe, the Middle East, and Western Asia between the Black and Caspian Seas, the presumptive homeland of *Prunus armeniaca.*

"Apricocks" once ranked very high with aristocratic fruit connoisseurs. An elaborate court scene in *The Duchess of Malfi* revolves around a gift of apricots and their folkloric association with pregnancy.

The fruit became "apricots" in the nineteenth century, the new word probably borrowed from the French *abricot.* The old aristocratic air lingered, however, and the American apricot industry relied on two unusually highborn trees. The first sprouted sometime before 1830 on the grounds of England's Blenheim Palace—pronounced "BLEN-*im*"—the grandiose seat of the Dukes of Marlborough and birthplace of Winston Churchill. For a while it was named the "Shipley," after the gardener's daughter who tended the seedling, but eventually the statelier name stuck. Either way, everyone agreed that it was one of the best apricots grown, with deep color, rich flavor, dense flesh, and the distinctive trait of ripening from the inside out.

The Blenheim was extraordinary but not quite unique, being nearly identical

to a fruit grown from the seed of a Pêche de Nancy planted in 1808 by the director of the Luxembourg Garden. It was known as the “Royal,” a name the French gave to the finest fruit reserved for the king’s table.

Both the Blenheim and the Royal made their way to California, but the democratic citizens of the state lost track of the distinction between a duke and a king. By the 1920s, the catchall name Royal Blenheim covered both types. Everyone still agreed that they were the best apricots grown. According to pomologist David Karp, there are subtle differences—the Blenheim is larger—but each ripens from the inside out, so the distinction “is hardly worth worrying over.” The varieties are equally delicious and comparably perishable. The latter trait became their downfall when the California fruit industry shifted away from local processing, such as canning and drying, and came to rely on long-distance shipping to “town dwellers,” in Bunyard’s phrase, east of the Rockies. Growers ripped out the old orchards to open ground for newer varieties with fruit firm enough to travel. Taste was a secondary consideration; the results are demonstrated by any supermarket apricot.

The heart of California’s apricot industry was the Santa Clara Valley, better known today as Silicon Valley. The area’s last sizable Blenheim orchard belongs to a foundation established by the late billionaire David Packard, cofounder of the Hewlett-Packard Company. The public is excluded, but every year during the brief harvest in late June or early July, a few boxes of the Packard-owned Blenheim/Royal apricots make their way to Chez Panisse in Berkeley. A friend of mine, who is the courier, says that they are Alice Waters’s favorite fruit of the year.

APRICOT KERNEL "BITTER ALMONDS"

If you crack open the pit of a peach, plum, nectarine, apricot, and cherry, you will find a moist, nutlike kernel that more or less resembles an almond. The real almond, *Prunus amygdalus*, is a close relative of the stone-fruit clan. This familiar "sweet" almond descends from the ancestral wild bitter almond, and bitter almonds are still cultivated for almond extract.

Apricot kernels, which have a strong almond-extract flavor and a bitter taste, are commonly, although incorrectly, known as "bitter almonds." Nineteenth-century recipes for apricot preserves sometimes called for the kernels, and the practice is still common in England and Europe. Here in the United States, where public health and risk avoidance take top priority at the regulatory agencies overseeing food production, apricot kernels are discouraged, on the grounds that they are poisonous. What to make of the differing viewpoints?

Several years ago, I decided to test both sides of the debate by making a batch of apricot jam with kernels. I opened a jar and braved a taste. It was delicious. It didn't kill me. I wanted to find out more.

THE MOLECULAR CHEMISTRY OF APRICOT KERNELS: Stone-fruit kernels contain a glycoside called amygdalin, one of a class of molecules known as cyanogens because they release deadly hydrogen cyanide when broken down. Dr. Thomas Gradziel, a professor at the University of California, Davis, who specializes in peach and almond genetics, explains that when the stone-fruit kernel is damaged (as by chewing), amygdalin comes into contact with an enzyme stored separately within the kernel that catalyzes its rapid breakdown into cyanide and benzaldehyde, a bitter-tasting molecule.

In simpler terms, the poison is a biological self-defense mechanism activated when the kernel is chewed, and the bitter flavor is a warning signal not to eat more kernels.

Analytic data published in the U.K. by the Committee on Toxicity, an independent scientific committee that advises governmental departments and agencies, estimate that whole apricot kernels have a mean cyanide content of 0.5 milligram per kernel.

THE CULTURAL USES OF APRICOT KERNELS: In Western cuisine, stone-fruit kernels and bitter almonds are used as flavoring agents. In small quantities, benzaldehyde provides the pleasantly bitter almond taste characteristic of marzipan, almond paste, and commercial almond extract. Amygdalin-rich kernels are also used to flavor amaretti cookies, amaretto liqueur, and other preparations, including preserves.

Furthermore, advocates of alternative medicine claim that amygdalin, sometimes called Laetrile or vitamin B_{17}, fights cancer. The claims are unsubstantiated, and the FDA denounces Laetrile as "quack medication." The agency has taken enforcement actions against companies and individuals who sell Laetrile as a cancer remedy.

Incidentally, the true bitter almond produces higher levels of amygdalin than stone-fruit kernels. The cultivated "sweet" almond has none and likely arose from a genetic mutation that has allowed almonds to be cultivated and consumed in quantity since the Bronze Age. Commercial almond extract that is derived from bitter almonds processed to remove the cyanide will be labeled "pure." "Natural" extract is made from cassia bark, another source of benzaldehyde, and "imitation" extract is synthesized in the lab.

THE POTENTIAL HEALTH EFFECTS: After consumption, cyanide disperses rapidly through the body and in sufficient quantity can cause coma and death. A lethal dose is estimated to be in the range of 0.5 to 3.5 milligrams per kilogram of body weight (approximately 34 to 238 milligrams for a 150-pound person). The Committee on Toxicity cites clinical cases of adults suffering from acute cyanide poisoning after consuming between twenty and forty kernels, but no fatal apricot-kernel overdoses are cited.

Chronic cyanide exposure may possibly lead to cumulative health effects including diabetes, neurological disorders, and goiter, but such effects have been noted only among populations that rely heavily on cyanogenic staple crops, such as cassava. The COT writes, "There is no available evidence in adequately nourished humans to show that chronic intake of cyanogenic glycosides causes a cumulative hazard above that of repeated acute toxicity."

CYANIDE-EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT: The Committee on Toxicity's report concludes: "Taking the available evidence together, consumption of 1 kernel per day … would be unlikely to be of concern." However, the report adds that eating ten kernels a day, an intake of 5 milligrams of cyanide, represents one-sixth of

the lowest potentially lethal dose, and could cause a consumer to exceed the recommended total daily intake for cyanide: “Such intake would therefore be hazardous.”

In our correspondence, Dr. Gradziel wrote that he regularly sampled bitter almonds as a matter of course in his work, with no apparent ill effect. “I personally have no qualms about consuming low levels of amygdalin,” he writes, noting that his statement should not be read as a blanket recommendation to others.

APRICOT KERNELS IN JAM: When asked about the potential toxicity of jam made with apricot kernels, molecular biologist Eric E. Conn, professor emeritus of biochemistry at UC Davis and a member of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, explains that if the kernels were ground, the cyanide released during cooking would volatize—evaporate—and thus not accumulate in the jam. What happens to the amygdalin in a whole kernel during cooking is, he admits, hard to predict, but he suggests that most of the amygdalin would be broken down, causing the cyanide to evaporate. In either case, his conclusion is that eating one whole kernel with a serving of jam would not be enough to poison a person.

LAB TESTING OF MY JAM SAMPLE: One jar of my Classic Apricot Jam pulled off the shelf at random contained nine apricot seeds. As I thought about it, I found it a stretch but not impossible to imagine eating the entire jar in one sitting. If I did so, that would put me on the threshold of the ten-pit limit that the COT considers “hazardous.” (That’s still well below the estimated potentially lethal dose for a person of my weight, which would be 37.5–262.5 milligrams of cyanide, or 75 to 525 kernels—although fewer might still make me sick.) The real question in my mind was how cooking had affected the kernels. The COT estimates were for raw kernels. Dr. Conn’s advice was that a single kernel that had been cooked in jam would be safe, but what about a whole jar?

In August 2011, I sent a 200-gram (7-ounce) jar of homemade Classic Apricot Jam containing nine whole apricot kernels to Silliker, Inc., an established food-science laboratory. The jam was made according to this recipe, with kernels that had been blanched in boiling water and peeled before being cooked with the jam. I asked the company to test the sample for total cyanide content. Their lab explained that their process was to mix the product for twenty-four hours, distill it with water, and test the distillate for cyanide.

The results were striking. The level of cyanide in the jar was less than 1 milligram per kilogram, which was the lab's lowest detectable limit. In other words, according to the test, my 7-ounce jar had a total cyanide content of less than 0.2 milligram—a trace.

YOUR CHOICE: My conclusion is that eating apricot kernels that have been cooked in jam does not pose a health risk. All the same, I urge you to make your own informed decision about whether to use the kernels, and whether to consume them as part of the finished product.

In any of my recipes that call for apricot, plum, or cherry kernels, the ingredient is listed as optional, and the recipe can be made without it.

APRICOT BUTTER | *FOUR CUPS PURÉE YIELDS ABOUT 2 PINTS BUTTER*

You know the concept of the cook's treat? It's the tasty bit a cook takes for himself—the soft carrots at the bottom of the stockpot, or the charred scraps of fat from a sliced roast. Apricot Butter is my cook's treat.

Fruit "butters" are made by stewing fruit, then puréeing it and reducing with sugar. The name refers to a fruit butter's spreadable texture—there's no dairy involved. (The analogy continues with the sliceable fruit pastes the English call "fruit cheese.") For butters, you can use "ugly" fruits that might not pass muster otherwise. Usually while making apricot jam, I set aside any fruit with sun freckles, scars, or green patches, or very soft fruit with brown spots that will need to be cut away. My dad's thrifty neighbors in Sharps Chapel, Tennessee, make fruit butter from the parings left after peeling peaches to can.

The beauty of this recipe is its flexibility. Since you measure cups of fruit purée to cups of sugar, there's no need to plan anything in advance. You just make a batch with whatever fruit you happen to have.

I use apricot butter to glaze fresh apricot tarts. Apricot butter is also my mother's favorite, so I always set aside a special batch for her. It's what winemakers might call the family reserve—or, in this case, the family preserve.

Fully ripe apricots Sugar Freshly squeezed lemon juice Optional: a pale, mild honey, such as sage honey

1 Pit and halve the apricots. Cook the fruit in a pot with a few tablespoons of water, just enough to prevent scorching at the start of cooking, until it is very soft, 15 to 20 minutes. Pass the fruit through a food mill, and measure the purée. Note the quantity.

2 Combine purée, sugar, and lemon juice in the following proportion: 2 cups purée : 1 cup sugar : 1 tablespoon lemon juice Or, if you prefer, 2 cups purée : ¾ cup sugar : 2 tablespoons honey : 1 tablespoon lemon juice 3 Bring the fruit-sugar mixture to a boil in a preserving pan, stirring constantly, until sufficiently thickened, roughly 20 minutes after the mixture first boils. To test

the consistency, place a teaspoon of the hot butter on a cold saucer. If, after 1 minute in the freezer, the butter leaks liquid around its edge, keep cooking. When it's ready, ladle the hot preserve into prepared ½-pint jars and seal, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

APRICOT CROSTATA | *YIELDS ONE 10-INCH TART*

A crostata is the lazy man's tart. You roll out the dough, lay the filling in the middle, and fold back the edges to form a partial crust.

2 ounces (¼ cup) unsalted butter, chilled 1¾ ounces (¼ cup) lard, chilled ¼ cup cold water 4½ ounces (1 cup) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting ¼ cup sugar ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt ¾ pound apricots, pitted and halved ⅓ cup Apricot Butter (preceding recipe) Optional: 1 teaspoon apricot eau-de-vie

1 Slice the butter and lard into small pieces. Put them in the freezer for 10 minutes. Measure out the water, and also keep it in the freezer until ready.

2 Mix the flour, ½ teaspoon of the sugar, and salt in a bowl. Add half the butter and lard. Using quick, light movements, work it in with your fingers until the texture resembles cornmeal. Work in the remaining fat, leaving pea-sized bits. Add most but not all of the ice water—you want just enough moisture to hold the dough together. Gather the dough into a ball, and wrap it in plastic wrap. Flatten it into a disk, and refrigerate for 2 hours.

3 Roll out the dough into a 14-inch circle, and dust it well with flour. Wrap the dough around the rolling pin, and transfer it to the baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Generously sprinkle the dough with more flour. Starting at the middle of the dough, lay down the apricots in a single layer, leaving a 2-inch margin at the edge. Fold the edges in toward the center. Sprinkle the remaining sugar over the top.

4 Bake the crostata in a 375-degree oven for 40 to 45 minutes, until the crust

is golden and the apricots are lightly caramelized. Mix together the Apricot Butter and eau-de-vie, if using. While the crostata is still hot from the oven, brush the butter mixture over the exposed apricots as a glaze. Place on a rack to cool, and serve at room temperature with crème fraîche.

APRICOT JELLY | *YIELDS 1½ PINTS*

In the kitchen, the idea of thrift is not just about saving money. It's also about the practice of extracting the maximum flavor and nutrition from each ingredient: making stock from the leftover carcass of a roast chicken, or garnishing stewed baby turnips with their leafy tops softened in butter. Thrift is a kind of discipline, a way to honor nature's bounty and the farmer's (and migrant laborer's) work. It's an expression of Gran and Papa's commitment to "waste not, want not." It's a way of giving thanks for the abundance we enjoy—my way of saying grace over the food.

This pair of recipes is *thrifty* because it uses the same batch of fruit twice. Apricot Jelly revives an old-fashioned technique that would have been familiar to American housewives living between the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. Eliza Leslie's 1828 cookbook *Seventy-Five Receipts for Pastry, Cakes, and Sweetmeats,* which went through over twenty editions in the nineteenth century, has a similar recipe for peach jelly. It concludes: "Put the jelly warm into your glasses, and when cold, tie them up with brandy paper." Unlike firm, limpid Apple Jelly, this Apricot Jelly will be soft and opaque.

Apricot Chew is what you do with the leftover pulp. Slowly reduced and then dehydrated in the sun, the dense preserve becomes a tangy, candylike fruit leather—a chew.

Underripe fruit, still showing a bit of green on the shoulder, will give the best results. Avoid soft fruit. You could also use firm peaches or greengage plums in this way.

Note that the recipe is a multiday process.

3½ pounds firm apricots, including some underripe fruit Optional: 12 apricot kernels
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice Optional: 6 to 8 fresh lemon verbena leaves 4 cups sugar

1 Pit and quarter the apricots. Crack the pits, if using, remove the kernels, and lightly crush them with the back of a wooden spoon. Combine the apricots, lemon juice, and kernels in a mixing bowl. Stir in the sugar, and refrigerate overnight.

2 Pour the fruit-sugar mixture into an ovenproof dish, and heat in a 200-degree oven for 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Turn off the heat, and leave the apricots inside until cool, or as long as overnight. Strain the liquids through a damp jelly bag or a colander lined with damp cheesecloth, and allow to drip for 15 minutes. You should have about 4½ cups. Save the pulp for making Apricot Chew.

3 Pour the liquid into a preserving pan, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce to the gel point, 7 to 9 minutes. Place a fresh lemon verbena leaf, if using, into each of three prepared ½-pint jars. Ladle the hot jelly into the jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10

minutes.

APRICOT CLOVER CLUB | *YIELDS 1 COCKTAIL*

One night my friend Stephen Ringer took me to a tiny cocktail bar called Varnish in downtown L.A. to meet Alex Day, a twenty-something bartender with the look of a Cheever-era Ivy Leaguer and a reputation for mixing the most precise cocktails in town. Alex said that he was exploring ways to use preserves in his work, and I later dropped off jars for him to play with. Several weeks after that, he came to Greenvalley to share the results of his research.

As Alex unpacked a case of bottles and arrayed his tools with a surgeon's care, he explained that preserves have subtler and richer flavors than the bartender's standard syrups, because they are not "extracted" but "reduced."

"The cool thing about jams and preserves," said Alex, "is that the process of making them creates new flavors. I'm interested in having those in my arsenal."

Alex trained in New York, where serious cocktail students venerate technique above all else, and he has impeccable credentials on that front. But on a trip to Thailand, the exotic open-air markets blew the lid off his urbane classicism and opened his eyes to what he called a more "whimsical" approach to bartending, more in line with California's bar culture. Now he keeps a foot in each camp.

Of the half dozen perfectly balanced cocktails Alex made with my apricot jelly and Scotch marmalade, my favorite was the Apricot Clover Club, a variation on the pre-Prohibition gin cocktail. Note that you shake it twice. The first time is a "dry shake," without ice, to emulsify the ingredients.

1 teaspoon Apricot Jelly
½ ounce simple syrup (a 1 : 1 mixture of sugar and water) ½ ounce freshly squeezed lemon juice ½ ounce dry vermouth 1½ ounces gin 1 tablespoon egg white

Combine the apricot jelly, simple syrup, and lemon juice in a cocktail shaker. Stir to mix. Add the vermouth and gin, and stir. Add the egg white, and shake until frothy, about 30 seconds. Add a handful of ice cubes, and shake until cold, another 30 seconds. Strain into a chilled coupe or cocktail glass.

APRICOT SHRUB | *YIELDS 1 COCKTAIL*

A shrub is an old-fashioned soft drink made from fruit, sugar, water, and vinegar. If you add brandy, the soft drink becomes a cocktail.

The word first came into the language in the eighteenth century, from the Arabic for “drink,” *shiraab*. The Anglicized version of the exotic concoction, now dubbed a “shrub,” took off in England and then found an audience in America, where its popularity is attested by many nineteenth-century recipes.

This shrub is inspired by a cherry shrub in Mary Randolph’s *The Virginia Housewife*.

To make the shrub, stir 2 tablespoons Apricot Jelly into 1 cup sparkling water. Add a splash of apple-cider vinegar and, if you like, a splash of brandy. Stir to combine, and serve over ice. Garnish with fresh rosemary sprigs.

APRICOT CHEW | *YIELDS ABOUT 1 POUND*

Pulp remaining from 1 recipe Apricot Jelly

1 Pass the pulp through the fine blade of a food mill, pound it through a chinois, or pulse it briefly in a food processor. Place the purée in an ovenproof dish and into a 250-degree oven. Cook for the next 2 to 3 hours, stirring occasionally, until very thick, almost stiff.

2 Pour the hot purée onto a baking sheet or cutting board lined with parchment, and spread to ½ inch thick. Allow to cool, uncovered, overnight.

3 Dry in a sunny spot for a day, or in a 175-degree oven for a few hours. When it is barely tacky to the touch, flip the pliable slab and dehydrate the second side until it, too, is dry to the touch. Cut the slab into strips, and wrap in parchment paper. The chew will keep for several months in the cabinet or refrigerator.

PLUM SAUCE AND PLUM JAM | *YIELDS 3 PINTS*

My mother, after years of wanting to leave the suburbs, finally moved out to “the country” in 2008. How country? It’s only thirty minutes from her office, but the new house has a little property with a grizzled plum tree, figs, a blackberry patch, and a thicket with wild persimmons. It’s country lite, at least.

My first visit there was over a July Fourth weekend, and when I arrived, my mom told me she was getting married. I’d known something was up, because she hadn’t been calling as much as usual, and when she did, she would vaguely say something about having been away for the weekend with a friend. She didn’t say “with Rhonda” or “with Jane” or with anyone else I knew. It was just “a friend.” I had guessed what that meant. When I visited, she explained that at her fortieth high-school reunion, the previous November, she had met—or, really, remet—a former classmate named Don. Both were single, and the romance was speedy. That spring, they bought the house with the plum tree.

The weekend I visited, plums were pelting the ground in a literal windfall, so I decided to put up a stock of plum jam as a wedding present. Together we picked perhaps twenty pounds. Feeling pressured to get it all put up quickly, I rushed the first batch of jam, and it didn’t set. The result was more of a sauce, which I found disappointing, but Don loved it, so I made a case of plum sauce instead of the planned wedding jam. Every year since, I’ve put up a few jars of plum sauce for Don.

What’s a bit uncanny about the story is that the decrepit plum tree that produced abundantly for my mom and Don’s wedding hasn’t managed to put on another crop since. It’s as if Methuselah had roused himself for one last jig before sinking back into a geriatric torpor.

The recipe below will make Plum Sauce or Plum Jam, depending on how long you cook it. Longer reduction gives a firmer set—a useful demonstration of how pectin works. And how there’s no such thing as a mistake.

In California, I use Santa Rosa plums, but most any other sweet-tart variety with reddish skin and yellow flesh would also work. If what you have are sweet plums with dark skin and amber flesh (such as Black Beauties or Elephant Hearts), leave out the cinnamon, since those varieties have a natural whiff of

vanilla when cooked. For the purple-skinned, purple-fleshed plums (such as Burgundy or Catalina), see the variation that follows.

Incidentally, most commercial plums grown in America are the Asian species *Prunus salicina*, which was brought to California in the nineteenth century. California fruit breeder Luther Burbank introduced over a hundred hybrids, including the Santa Rosa and Elephant Heart, between 1885 and 1926. European plums, including greengages, below, and mirabelles, are of the species *Prunus domestica*. (See Tart Plum Jam with Mint and Damson Cheese.) Wild American plums, including beach plums, belong to their own taxonomic subgroup.

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4 pounds Santa Rosa or other plums 3 cups sugar 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice 3 inches cinnamon stick

1 Pit and quarter the plums, then toss them with the sugar, lemon juice, and cinnamon stick. Set aside to macerate for 1 hour.

2 Turn the fruit-sugar mixture into a preserving pan, and reduce at a full boil, stirring frequently. For plum sauce, check for a loose set 5 to 6 minutes after the full boil; for jam, check for a firm set at 8 to 10 minutes. When the plums have thickened to your liking, discard the cinnamon and ladle the hot preserve into three prepared pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Burgundy Plums with Rosemary | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

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3 pounds purple plums 2 cups sugar 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice Optional: kernels from the cracked pits One or two 4-inch branches fresh rosemary

1 Pit and quarter the plums, then toss them with the sugar and lemon juice. Crack the pits and remove the kernels, if using, and stir in. Set aside to macerate for as long as overnight.

2 Turn the fruit-sugar mixture into a preserving pan, and reduce at a full boil, stirring frequently, until it reaches the gel point, about 8 minutes. When it's thickened to your liking, turn off the heat. Bruise a 4-inch rosemary branch, and swish it through the hot jam for 30 seconds, then discard. Chill a teaspoon of jam, taste it, and flavor with another rosemary branch if you'd like a stronger taste. (Be careful not to overdo it.) Ladle the hot preserve into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[Note] You can also use other herbs in this way—for instance, lemon thyme with Santa Rosa plums.

“LAZY”

BY LU YU [1125–1210]

Sung Dynasty scholar-poet Lu Yu left behind some eleven thousand verses. American poet and critic Kenneth Rexroth (1905–82) translated this one at least twice. An earlier version, from 1956, gave the title as “Idleness.” The 1970 translation reprinted below is more self-assured and wistful—perhaps a measure of Rexroth’s advancing age.

Once we had a knocker On the gate.
Now we seldom Open it. I don’t want people
Scuffing up the green moss.
The sun grows warm. Spring has really Come at last. Sometimes you Can hear faintly on the gentle
Breeze the noise of the street.
My wife is reading the classics.
She asks me the meaning Of ancient characters.
My son begs for a sip of wine.
He drinks the whole cup before I can stop him.
Is there anything Better than an enclosed garden
With yellow plums and purple plums Planted alternately?

“THIS IS JUST TO SAY”

BY WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS [1883–1963]

This famous poem by William Carlos Williams adopts the offhand form of an apology note, except that the speaker doesn’t actually apologize. It’s a tiny masterpiece of evasion.

I have eaten
the plums
that were in
the icebox

and which
you were probably
saving
for breakfast

Forgive me
they were delicious
so sweet
and so cold

TART PLUM JAM WITH MINT | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

I have vivid childhood memories of certain foods, none more so than crème de menthe and mint jelly. To the young me, both were excitingly green and indisputably fancy. Mr. and Mrs. Holcombe of Spartanburg, South Carolina, served the former over vanilla ice cream in the parlor of their white-columned mansion, and while eating it I was permitted to sit on the camel-saddle stool they had brought back from Egypt. Mr. and Mrs. Follit in Armonk, New York, instructed me to try mint jelly when they served it alongside roast lamb at their long mahogany table set with silver and real cloth napkins.

I haven't tasted crème de menthe in decades and don't care to. But because I like lamb, I thought about mint jelly again when I started preserving. One approach is to prepare homemade Apple Jelly with Mint. Better still is a minty jam of yellow plums, adapted from a recipe by France's Queen of Confiture, Christine Ferber.

Ferber uses green-skinned plums, which are not "green" in the sense of immature. They are pale members of the European branch of the plum family, which also includes the purple damson. "Mirabelle" is the pretty name the French give to their small, late-season yellow-green plum with a rich taste and tart skin. The Reine Claude, which is scarcely grown in America, is what the English call "greengages."

In my local markets, I can find green and yellow plums, but they haven't proved to be true European green plums; rather, they are Asian plums or the small myrobalan "cherry plum," *Prunus cerasifera* (see the photograph). I use cherry plums, which make a jam that is bracingly tart at first and then expands and resonates. The taste of mint rises out of that depth.

Serve it with lamb and lamb sausages, or omit the mint for a jam that goes with pork.

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3 pounds small, tart yellow or green plums 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice 2½ cups sugar ¼ cup tangy white wine, such as a Sauvignon Blanc or Albariño Ten 3-inch sprigs fresh mint

1 Halve and pit the plums. Or, since small cherry plums are a pain to pit, you

might instead try a trick from Eliza Acton's *Modern Cookery for Private Families.* Acton slashed her plums and cooked them whole. As you stir, the pits will work themselves free and float to the surface of the hot jam. It's still work to fish them out with a fork, but perhaps easier than pitting.

2 Toss the prepped fruit with the lemon juice, stir in the sugar, and macerate for ½ hour. (Before adding the sugar, taste the plums. If they aren't naturally tart, reduce the sugar, and add another tablespoon or more of lemon juice.) 3 Put the fruit-sugar mixture into a preserving pan, and rapidly bring to a boil. Reduce for 5 minutes, stirring regularly, then add the wine and continue reducing to the gel point, about 5 minutes longer.

4 When it's sufficiently reduced, lightly bruise 6 of the mint sprigs, then stir them through the hot jam for a minute. Taste to decide if you want to add more. Discard the spent mint. Put a few fresh mint leaves in the bottom of four prepared ½-pint jars, and ladle in the jam, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process the jars in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

PLUM LIQUEUR | *YIELDS ABOUT 1½ QUARTS*

There's a grower who shows up at the Santa Monica Farmers Market every year, in early summer, and she sells an endless succession of plums through the end of the season, in midautumn. It took me about five years to learn her name—she was always just the Plum Lady.

I particularly like the wild plums she brings for two weeks at the end of June. What "wild" means in this case is hard to tell. Indigenous? Feral? Spontaneous hybrid? It doesn't matter. The plums are deeply flavored and hardly larger than a Bing cherry, which is why I wouldn't bother pitting them for jam. It's quicker to drown them in alcohol for plum liqueur.

The idea of using gin as the base comes from Marye Cameron-Smith's apricot liqueur recipe in the out-of-print *Complete Book of Preserving*, a good book written by a sensible Englishwoman—hence the gin—who knows her stuff. Following her lead, I add cracked plum pits (or leftover apricot pits) for their bitter-almond flavor. Don't spend the money for top-shelf alcohol, since the fruit, sugar, and spice smooth out its flavor with aging, a necessary step for all homemade liqueurs.

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1 pound small, dark plums 1 bottle Chilean Sauvignon Blanc ¾ cup sugar ¼ teaspoon allspice berries, crushed A few black peppercorns, crushed 2 cups gin Optional: the cracked plum pits, or 20 blanched apricot kernels

1 Halve the plums, and place them in a saucepan with the wine, sugar, allspice, and pepper. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in the gin and cracked pits or apricot kernels, and pour into a ½-gallon jar or crock. Cover closely, and set aside for a week.

2 Strain the liquids through a colander, pressing the fruit with a wooden spoon. Strain a second time through a fine-mesh sieve. Pour into scalded bottles or jars, filling the vessels completely, and seal. Store in a cool, dark place for at least a month. The liqueur will throw sediments, so if you are fastidious, you might want to strain it through a damp jelly bag before serving.

[Note] For an even mellower cordial, replace the gin with an equal quantity of Irish whiskey, and the Sauvignon Blanc with a lean red such as Cabernet Franc. Put it up in bottles, then forget about it until the weather turns cool. Both versions of this liqueur improve with age, up to a year or longer.

NOCINO | *YIELDS ABOUT 5 CUPS*

June 24 is the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist, the traditional day to harvest green walnuts for making nocino, a delicious liqueur invented at a congress of witches, according to Anna Tasca Lanza, the doyenne of Sicilian cooking. Lanza's witches were Italian, but other countries from Croatia to France to the chilly Teutonic regions equally claim green-walnut liqueur as their own. I learned to make it at the Institute of Domestic Technology, a cooking school in Altadena, California, where I also teach.

When you harvest the nuts—working barefoot, according to some folklore—they are smaller than eggs, smooth to the touch, and crisp like apples, because the shells have not yet hardened. The nutmeats, at this stage, are jelly.

Like most liqueurs, nocino is easy but requires patience. You slice the nuts and cover them with strong booze, sugar, and spice, and allow the mixture to infuse for forty days, until it is nearly black. The real test of patience begins after you bottle it. Ten-year-old nocino is said to be the best, and certainly you would never drink this summer's batch before cold weather sets in this fall. Mature nocino has a complex flavor of nutmeg, allspice, coffee, and caramel. Drink it neat as a digestif, or use it to flavor desserts. A few tablespoons of nocino lightly whisked into a cup of heavy cream will cause it to seize, as if magically transformed into cooked custard. The thickened cream is called "posset," and can be used as a sauce alongside cakes or other desserts.

My nocino recipe is based on those from the Institute of Domestic Technology and Lanza's Sicilian cookbook *The Garden of Endangered Fruit.* Its fundamentals are green walnuts, 80-proof grain spirits, and sugar. (My secret ingredient is coffee beans.)You can change the aromatics if you like, but use small quantities, because the spices can take over.

Green walnuts are sometimes available at farmers' markets, or can be ordered online at www.localharvest.org.

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2 pounds green English walnuts, 1½ inches or less in diameter (about 30) 750 milliliters 80-proof vodka 3½ cups sugar Zest of 1 lemon, in strips Zest of 1 orange, in strips 5 cloves ¼ whole nutmeg 1 heaping teaspoon whole dark-roast coffee beans

1 Quarter the walnuts and place them in a large glass jar, at least 3-quart capacity. Add the remaining ingredients and stir. Don’t worry that the sugar won’t immediately dissolve. Seal the jar, and place it in a sunny place for 40 days. The liquid will first turn a sinister green, then black. Once every 10 days, agitate the jar by inverting it a time or two. You can taste the alcohol at any stage and add more aromatics if you like.

2 After 40 days, strain the contents of the jar through a damp jelly bag and catch the liquids in a bowl. Funnel the liqueur into scalded bottles, and seal. Store in a cool, dark place for several months; Lanza suggests opening them on All Saints’ Day. Before serving, you may want to strain the liqueur through a coffee filter to remove sediments, but it isn’t necessary to do so. The liqueur will keep indefinitely without refrigeration.

BERRY BASICS

I’m not sure I had ever seen a raspberry before the summer I turned twelve and went to Woodstock, Vermont, to stay with the Keefer clan. The family’s clapboard farmhouse sat across the rural two-lane from a red barn, and an actual scarecrow patrolled the garden. A trout stream ran behind the house, and the hillside beyond rose to stone-walled pastures and sugar-maple woods. A raspberry patch grew near the back porch. Eating raspberries off the vine was for me as much fun as larceny.

The only unpleasant moments from that summer were when the New Englanders nettled me about my Southern accent. I struggled to pronounce the difference between “pen” and “pin,” “cement” and “some mint.” Even now, three decades later, every time I taste raspberries I think about concrete.

RASPBERRIES, BLACKBERRIES, and their kin—see Appendix I—are among the summer's signature fruits. They all make delicious jam and are more or less interchangeable in the recipes that follow. The general technique is to crush the berries with about half their weight in sugar and reduce the mixture as quickly as possible. You may want to add acid in the form of lemon juice or rosé wine, a special friend to boysenberries. Or add scented geranium leaves or rose petals. Or add a little liqueur—framboise (raspberry eau-de-vie), Chambord (black raspberry liqueur), or kirsch. Or don't add anything at all. Perfect berries don't need doctoring.

A few berry basics apply generally.

- Berries grow on canes, well off the ground. They are clean fruit, and I never wash organic berries but instead pick through them to remove debris, bugs, or overripe bits. If you feel that you must wash them, dunk one handful at a time into a basin of cold water and immediately place them to drain in a colander. Spread the drained berries on a clean cloth to dry before continuing.
- Berries are highly perishable. Cook them the day you pick them or bring them home. If you absolutely can't, the best alternative is to sugar the berries and allow the mixture to macerate overnight, covered closely with parchment or plastic wrap.
- I always crush berries with a potato masher before cooking them. In my experience, trying to keep them whole can result in a lumpy, overcooked consistency. (Even my mother, who loves her jam chunky, came around to my point of view after crushing a batch of wild blackberries.) If you would prefer a more whole-fruit texture, crush half the berries with the full measure of sugar, and reduce to the gel point. Then add the remaining whole berries and reduce over medium-high heat for a few more minutes, while shaking, not stirring, the pan.
- With the exception I've just noted, I always stir the preserving pan vigorously after the fruit-sugar mixture comes to a full rolling boil, to speed evaporation

and minimize cooking time. The fruit-sugar mixture will typically reduce by about 50 percent in volume, and I like a batch to cook in 8 to 10 minutes after the full boil, to preserve the best flavor.

- Boiling off that much water quickly requires that you scale your batch size to your pots: the initial fruit-sugar mixture should be no more than 1½ inches deep.
- In the final stage of cooking, I'll often turn off the heat entirely and continue stirring for another 2 or 3 minutes, as the residual heat continues to throw off steam and the hot jam reduces to the right consistency.
- Raspberries have more pectin and set up more firmly than blackberries. Among the hybrids, the predominant parent shows through: tayberry jam is firmer than boysenberry.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Boysenberries, black raspberries, olallieberries, blackberries

RASPBERRY JAM | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

2½ pounds raspberries 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice 2 heaping cups sugar 3 to 5 rose geranium leaves

1 Pick over the raspberries to remove any debris or overripe fruit. Crush the berries with the lemon juice and sugar, and turn the mixture into a preserving pan.

2 Reduce over high heat, stirring constantly to the gel point, about 8 minutes. Remove from the heat, bruise the rose geranium leaves, and stir through the hot jam for 1 minute. Remove and discard.

3 Ladle the hot jam into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

WHOLE-FRUIT RASPBERRY JAM | *YIELDS ABOUT 1½ PINTS*

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2 pounds raspberries 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice 2 cups sugar

1. Pick over the raspberries to remove any debris or overripe fruit. Crush half of the berries with the lemon juice and sugar, and turn the mixture into a preserving pan.
2. Bring to a boil over moderate heat, and then reduce over high heat, stirring constantly, to the gel point, 6 to 8 minutes.
3. Lower the heat to medium-high and add the remaining whole berries. Shake the pan to incorporate them into the hot jam, then continue reducing, shaking gently but regularly, to the gel point, 6 to 8 minutes longer.
4. Ladle the hot jam into three prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Blackberry, Olallieberry, or Black Raspberry Jam | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

2½ pounds blackberries, olallieberries, or black raspberries 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice 2½ cups sugar

Follow the instructions for Raspberry Jam.

ANNA KARENINA BY LEO TOLSTOY [1828–1910], TRANSLATED BY CONSTANCE GARNETT

At this point in the novel, Kitty and Levin have been married, and the princess is now installed as the lady of the Levin household. His longtime housekeeper, Agafya Mikhailovna, is forced to adapt.

Apparently, Kitty and Agafya Mikhailovna have previously clashed over the correct way to make strawberry jam. Agafya Mikhailovna has always added water when she starts cooking, in order to prevent scorching. Kitty's way is not to add water—leading me to conclude that she must macerate her fruit as I do, which draws enough liquid to prevent scorching.

At any rate, Kitty has insisted on her technique and obliges Agafya Mikhailovna to make a batch of raspberry jam without adding water. To make matters worse, Agafya Mikhailovna has to do her work under Kitty's watchful eye—and in the company of Kitty's friends, who have gathered on the terrace to knit and sew. The indignity!

> On the terrace were assembled all the ladies of the party. They always liked sitting there after dinner, and that day they had work to do there, too. Besides the sewing of baby clothes and knitting of swaddling bands, with which all of them were now busy, jam was being made on the terrace by a method new to Agafya Mikhailovna, without the addition of water. Kitty had introduced this new method, which had been in use in her home. Agafya Mikhailovna, to whom the task of jam-making had always been entrusted, considering that what had been done in the Levin household could not be amiss, had nonetheless put water with the strawberries, maintaining that the jam could not be made without it. She had been caught in the act, and was now making jam before everyone, and it was to be proved to her conclusively that jam could be very well made without water.
>
> Agafya Mikhailovna, her face flushed and angry, her hair untidy, and her thin arms bare to the elbows, was moving the preserving pan over the brazier with a circular motion, looking darkly at the raspberries and devoutly hoping they would stick and not cook

> properly. The princess, conscious that Agafya Mikhailovna's wrath must be chiefly directed against her, as the person responsible for the raspberry jam-making, tried to appear to be absorbed in other things and not interested in the jam, talked of other matters, but cast stealthy glances in the direction of the stove.

Boysenberry Jam | *YIELDS ABOUT 4 PINTS*

Boysenberries are exceptional for baking and preserving, but they have a very brief season in Southern California. I figure I'll get one crack at boysenberries in June, and I like to make a lot when I can. This recipe is sized for a flat of berries, so you'll need a large preserving pan. Otherwise, halve the quantities below.

In place of lemon juice, I like to use a good rosé wine, such as Bandol. The recipe requires only ¼ cup of wine, so the remainder should be good enough to drink.

5 pounds boysenberries 4 cups sugar ¼ cup dry French rosé wine

Follow the general instructions for Raspberry Jam, omitting the lemon juice. Reduce the fruit-sugar mixture over high heat for 5 minutes after the full rolling boil, then add the wine. Continue reducing over high heat to the gel point, another 3 to 5 minutes.

Layered Berry Jams

If you're making both Raspberry and Blackberry jams at the same time, this is a striking way to put them up in a single jar.

First fill a prepared ½-pint jar halfway with hot raspberry jam, and allow to cool for a few minutes;

then top up the jar with blackberry jam, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Berry–Stone Fruit Jam

Like the preceding recipe, this one puts two jams in one jar, except that here you fold them into each other in the preserving pan. It requires some coordination, but the advantage over cooking the berries and stone fruit together is that each jam retains some of its independent character. Try combining whatever is in season at the moment: apricot with raspberries, peach with blackberries, and so on.

1 batch of stone-fruit jam, such as apricot or peach 1 batch of berry jam

Make each jam according to the recipe. When both are ready, gently swirl one into the other. Ladle the hot preserve into prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[ROAD TRIP]

WILD BLACKBERRIES

GREENVALLEY TO THREE RIVERS, CALIFORNIA It was early July, right in the heart of stone-fruit season, and farmer James Birch asked me if I would show him how to make jam. A few days later, I left L.A. at dawn to reach Three Rivers, a confluence of streams just outside Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, before the heat of the day set in.

Farmer James met me at the end of the dirt driveway leading to his Flora Bella Farm, and we walked through the orchard, where Blenheim apricots, Santa Rosa plums, and Elberta peaches were hanging full. A few trees were split almost in half, and I thought the damage must have been caused by the sheer weight of a bumper crop.

I thought wrong.

"The bears break branches," said James, pointing out tracks underfoot.

Flora Bella has been certified organic since 1991, and the farm has the unruly look of vegetal health—nothing like the sterile order of industrial agriculture that I saw driving through the San Joaquin Valley. Farmer James lets weeds grow among the crops, since, he explains, they shade his tomatoes and squash from sunburn. Not having to spend hours weeding the rows no doubt protects Farmer James from sunburn as well.

As we reached the perimeter of the farm, I spotted a mound of brambles that, from a distance, looked familiar. Yes, confirmed Farmer James, they were wild blackberries.

"I keep 'em because of a beneficial insect that lives on them," he said.

"You mind if I pick a few?" I asked.

"Go right ahead," he said.

We got buckets and worked our way around the edge of the patch.

"I need to get out in the center," I said. "Do you have a piece of plywood I could lie on?"

“I got an extension ladder,” James said.

We laid the ladder against the center of the blackberry patch—it was probably twelve feet high—and I eased myself up as the network of canes twisted and pitched beneath me. You know how they say that there are no atheists in a foxhole? Nor are there atheists atop a ladder surrounded by blackberry briars. I prayed.

In the end, for the cost of a few light scratches, I got enough blackberries to do a run of blackberry jam. A quick look around the farm turned up everything else I needed: wild bay leaves, pink peppercorns from a California pepper tree (*Schinus molle,* a South American native that is unrelated to true black pepper, *Piper nigrum*), and even a few green apples for extra pectin.

That afternoon, I showed James how to make white-nectarine preserves and Santa Rosa plum jam with lemon thyme. The next day, I returned home to Greenvalley to work up the blackberries.

The result was an old-fashioned, long-cooked jam. The yield was low, because I sieved out the tough seeds, and the soft-set texture slumped like molasses on the spoon. But the flavor reminded me of breakfasts at Gran and Papa’s farm. As Gran cooked, Papa would sit at the head of the table and tip black coffee from his cup into a saucer to cool, then lift the saucer to his lips to drink. It was a dainty gesture from a large man who had already been working outside for several hours. After his plate of biscuits and gravy, he’d spread another biscuit with Gran’s wild blackberry jam for dessert. The distinctive flavor of wild blackberry preserves, an herbal quality that you smell in the brambles, takes me straight back.

FLORA
BELLA

WILD BLACKBERRY MOLASSES | *YIELDS ABOUT 3 PINTS*

The most common wild blackberry, which grows almost everywhere across the country, is not a native species. The Himalayan blackberry, *Rubus armeniacus*, was introduced to North American gardens in 1885 and promptly escaped captivity to make itself at home in the New World. The jam it yields excuses the trespass.

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2 hard green apples, such as Granny Smith 1 cup water 1 bay leaf 2 juniper berries 10 pink peppercorns 4 pounds wild blackberries 3 cups sugar 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 Coarsely chop the apples, including the peels and cores, and simmer with the water for 20 minutes, or until soft. Add the aromatics and the blackberries, crushing the berries with a potato masher. Bring back to a boil, and simmer for 15 minutes longer, until all the fruit is collapsing.

2 Pound the cooked fruit through a chinois, or pass it through the medium blade of a food mill. You will have about 6 cups of purée. (Reserve the seeds for Simple Blackberry Cordial.) Combine the purée in a preserving pan with the sugar and lemon juice, and rapidly bring to a boil. Stirring constantly, reduce over high heat to the gel point, 10 to 12 minutes.

3 Ladle the hot jam into six prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

SIMPLE BLACKBERRY CORDIAL OR BLACKBERRY VINEGAR | *YIELDS 1 PINT*

Seeds left over from Wild Blackberry Molasses (preceding recipe) Vodka or white-wine vinegar

Pack the seeds into a scalded quart jar, and cover with a pint of alcohol or vinegar. Allow to steep for a week, then strain. For a cordial, sweeten to taste. Store the cordial or strained vinegar in an airtight bottle or jar.

RAPHAELLE PEALE [1774–1825]

BLACKBERRIES, C. 1813

The painter Raphaelle Peale was a disappointment to his father, the charismatic and influential early-American portraitist Charles Willson Peale, but with that crushing name, how could he not be? (Raphaelle's brothers included Rubens and Rembrandt, a successful portraitist like the patriarch. Another Peale son, Titian, died too young to prove himself, although Peale used the name again for his sixteenth and final offspring, the naturalist Titian Ramsey Peale II.) Yet, from the long perspective of history, what made Raphaelle a failure in his own day makes him notable in ours: he was America's first professional still-life painter—and one of the finest.

Born on the eve of the American Revolution, Raphealle Peale came of age in an artistic milieu that aped European artistic conventions in reckoning history, mythology, and religion as the worthiest subjects for painting. Portraiture and landscape were less important; the still life—which treated everyday domestic objects in a realistic style—was held to be beneath ambition.

What prompted Peale to take up still-life painting despite the contemporary prejudices against it is unclear, writes art historian Nicolai Cikovsky in the catalogue for a 1988 exhibition of Peale's work at the National Gallery of Art, Washington. Peale likely took some inspiration from European still lifes by Dutch masters and the Spaniard Juan Sánchez Cotán, which he might have seen at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. But that doesn't explain why he stuck with a genre that provided neither fame nor riches. Peale's stubborn persistence suggests strong conviction, or rebellion against an overbearing father.

Whatever his reasons, Peale's still lifes endure because of their formal elegance, illusionist brilliance, and an almost Minimalist preoccupation with empty space. They recall Cotán's stark work but also seem oddly modern.

Beyond that, what makes Peale a supremely American artist—even a revolutionary one—is that he boldly threw aside the eighteenth-century hierarchies and conventions of the European artistic elite and replaced them with an American democratic vision inspired by what he saw around him.

And what he saw was food: watermelons, wild blackberries, apples, and peaches. These objects still today symbolize the bounty of the American soil, and speak across time in the common language of the American experience.

BLACKBERRY POEMS

Late August, given heavy rain and sun For a full
week, the blackberries would ripen.
At first, just one, a glossy purple clot Among others,
red, green, hard as a knot.
You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet Like
thickened wine: summer's blood was in it Leaving
stains upon the tongue and lust for Picking. Then
red ones inked up and that hunger Sent us out with
milk cans, pea tins, jam pots Where briars scratched
and wet grass bleached our boots.
Round hayfields, cornfields and potato drills We
trekked and picked until the cans were full, Until the
tinkling bottom had been covered With green ones,
and on top big dark blobs burned Like a plate of
eyes. Our hands were peppered With thorn pricks,
our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.

We hoarded the fresh berries in the byre But when
the bath was filled we found a fur, A rat-grey
fungus, glutting on our cache.
The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush The
fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.
I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair That all the
lovely canfuls smelt of rot.
Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would
not.

—SEAMUS HEANEY [1939–], "BLACKBERRY-PICKING"

August is dust here. Drought stuns the road, but
juice gathers in the berries.

We pick them in the hot slow-motion of

midmorning.
Charlie is exclaiming:

for him it is twenty years ago and raspberries and Vermont.
We have stopped talking

about *L'Histoire de la vérité,* about the subject and object and the mediation of desire.

Our ears are stoppered in the bee-hum. And Charlie, laughing wonderfully,

beard stained purple by the word *juice,* goes to get a bigger pot.

—ROBERT HASS [1941–], "PICKING BLACKBERRIES WITH A FRIEND WHO HAS BEEN READING JACQUES LACAN"

God goes 'mong the worlds blackberrying.

—*MOBY-DICK,* CHAPTER 99, "THE DOUBLOON"

RASPBERRY VINEGAR | *YIELDS ½ PINT*

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6 ounces ripe raspberries Optional: ½ cup tightly packed unsprayed rose petals About 1 cup good red-wine vinegar

Pack the raspberries into a scalded pint jar. If using rose petals, pack them first, then add the raspberries. Cover the fruit with the red-wine vinegar, close tightly, and leave in a cool, dark place for 1 week or more. Strain the vinegar through a damp jelly bag or several layers of damp cheesecloth, and squeeze lightly. Store the vinegar in a scalded bottle or jar. It will keep for a year without refrigeration.

RASPBERRY SHRUB | *YIELDS 1 COCKTAIL*

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2 tablespoons Raspberry Vinegar (above) 2 to 3 tablespoons simple syrup (a 1 : 1 mixture of sugar and water) Optional: 1 tablespoon brandy

Sparkling water or Prosecco Lemon slice and herb sprig as garnishes

Combine the vinegar, simple syrup, and brandy, if using, in a highball glass. Add crushed ice and top with sparkling water or Prosecco. Garnish with a lemon slice and a sprig of an herb, such as mint, tarragon, or lemon verbena.

MULBERRY-PLUM JAM | *YIELDS 1½ PINTS*

Persian mulberries are like fruit from a fairy tale: a familiar thing—the summer berry—transformed by preposterous imagination into something strange and enchanting. A besotted Titania orders the elves to fetch them for her beloved Bottom in *A Midsummer Night's Dream: Be kind and courteous to this gentleman.*

Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,
With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries;
The honey-bags steal from the humblebees,
And for night tapers crop their waxen thighs,
And light them at the fiery glowworm's eyes,
To have my love to bed and to arise;
And pluck the wings from painted butterflies
To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes.
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

Unlike the boysenberries they resemble, Persian mulberries, *Morus nigra,* grow in trees and are so fragile that they can hardly be picked without bursting. The taste seems almost too sweet, but then a dark inner core emerges, winelike and poignant.

Don't count on finding mulberries at the grocery store; their shelf life is measured in hours. If you find them at a farmers' market, they will cost you dearly—perhaps ten dollars a half-pint basket, which works out to thirty to forty dollars a pound. If, however, you're lucky enough to have a tree in your yard, then you can make a preserve unlike anything else.

Farmer Bettina Birch, who grows mulberries at her Bee Green Farm in the Sierra foothills, told me that she preserves whole mulberries in plum syrup. What extravagance! Here I use some dark plums to stretch the mulberries and add pectin for the set. Quantities could be doubled, if you have the berries.

1½ pounds mulberries 1½ cups sugar 1 pound dark-skinned, red-fleshed plums

1 Pick over the mulberries to remove leaves, debris, and overripe fruits. Crush the berries in a bowl with 1 cup of the sugar, and set aside.

2 Cut the plums in half, but don't bother pitting them. Stew the plums with ¼ cup water for 10 to 15 minutes, until the pulp is very soft. Using your hands, rub it through the bottom of a colander, which will break up the skins and leave the pits scraped clean. Discard the pits.

3 Put the puréed pulp into a small preserving pan with the remaining ½ cup sugar. Bring to a boil, and reduce for 2 minutes or so, to thicken. Add the mulberries, and reduce another 4 or 5 minutes, until a teaspoon of hot jam chilled in the freezer for 30 seconds is thickened and develops a light skin that wrinkles when you push your finger through it. Don't overreduce.

4 Ladle the hot jam into three prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process for 10 minutes in a boiling-water bath.

STALKING THE WILD MULBERRY

My friends Jeremy Floto and Cassandra Warner, who work together as architectural photographers under the byline Floto + Warner, are avid preservers who harvest mulberries from untended trees growing near Manhattan's George Washington Bridge. They sent me an e-mail to explain: *Finding the fruit for us was really just a matter of always keeping our eyes peeled for trees. They grow all over and are considered a nuisance by most people. They are resilient; birds spread the seeds.*

Cassandra spotted this grove a few years back on our way home from a motorcycle trip upstate. We also recently scouted a few white mulberry trees in Brooklyn. The season lasts only a few weeks in July.

The trees Jeremy and Cassandra found near the George Washington Bridge are probably native red mulberries, *Morus rubra,* which grow wild in the Eastern United States. The white mulberry, *Morus alba,* is native to China, and silkworms feed on its leaves.

Since Jeremy and Cassandra get all the mulberries they want for free, they make straight-up mulberry jam. If you should be so lucky, use the recipe for Boysenberry Jam, replacing boysenberries with an equal quantity of mulberries, and perhaps replacing the rosé wine with something darker, like a Grenache.

Jeremy and Cassandra flavor their mulberry jam with lavender and grated lemon zest. They also have a neat tip: if you skim aggressively during the foamy initial boil-up, you'll remove a good share of the seeds, which some people will be glad to do without.

BLUEBERRY JAM

[FOR BECKETT]

Mae West instructed Beulah to peel her a grape. The idea, though indulgent, is not crazy. A grape is a liquid reservoir; remove the skin and what is left is still a grape, because the fruit's primary quality of abundant juiciness remains undiminished.

Not so a blueberry. Its skin contains the pigment anthocyanin, an antioxidant esteemed by nutritionists. It seems obvious that the blueberry's passingly spicy sweet-tart flavor must also reside at the surface, if only because the pulp is pale and bland. It's not even juicy, just damp. Remove the skin from a blueberry and what is left might as well be nothing.

The superficial blueberry gives its best as long as you don't ask too much of it. Like most fruit, it enjoys the company of sugar, and when warmed, it sweats sweet ink. The skin does not break down with cooking, which is why blueberries are good for muffins and pancakes.

But longer cooking, as for jam, shrivels the blueberry into a wad. Even worse, its modest flavor can cook away entirely. The summer I set out to master blueberries, I suffered many disappointments and complained in an e-mail to Linda Ziedrich, author of *The Joy of Jams, Jellies, and Other Sweet Preserves.* She sympathized: *Blueberries are an odd fruit, I think, in that they are very appealing fresh off the bush or straight out of the freezer. Because they're fairly low in sugar and whatever causes gas, you can stuff yourself with them without feeling sick. But they are less interesting when they're cooked.*

I pondered my blueberry problems during a long road trip to Oregon, and decided that, since the skin is the best part of the blueberry, it should be distributed evenly by grinding the fruit through a food mill. My perfect blueberry preserve would not be a jam but a smooth spread—a fruit butter.

A second breakthrough came at the Eugene Farmers Market, where I bought a jar of local Sin Gin Blueberry Jam made by Byrd's Basket. The odd extra ingredient did wonders for the flavor. Back home, Harold McGee's *On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen* explained why. Blueberries get their distinctive spicy flavor from a class of molecules called terpenes, which

McGee says “provide pine-like, citrusy, floral, leaflike and ‘fresh’ notes to the overall flavor of many herbs and spices.” Terpenes are highly volatile and boil away with cooking. Gin also has terpenes—the source of its juniper flavor—so a shot added to blueberry jam at the end of cooking will restore a fresh blueberry taste.

BLUEBERRY JAM WITH GIN | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

2½ pounds blueberries ½ cup water 3 cups sugar 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice 3 inches cinnamon stick

1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon gin

1 Rinse the berries, and pick out any stems and leaves. Gently heat the berries with the water in a preserving pan until they sweat and burst their skins. Remove the pan from the heat, and allow the berries to cool somewhat; then run them through the coarse blade of a food mill.

2 Return the purée to the preserving pan, and add the sugar, lemon juice, and cinnamon stick. Reduce the fruit-sugar mixture at a full boil, stirring constantly, until a gel set is achieved, 5 to 8 minutes.

3 Discard the cinnamon stick, and stir in the gin. Ladle the hot jam into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Blueberry Jam with Lime and Coriander | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

If you'd rather not use gin, this alcohol-free approach was inspired by a blog reader, Tom, who uses lime juice and zest instead of lemon juice when making blueberry pie. Lime and coriander both contain the terpenes discussed. Lemon does not.

2½ pounds blueberries ½ cup water 1 teaspoon coriander seeds, finely ground Juice and zest of 1 lime (1 tablespoon juice)

Follow the recipe above, with the following changes. In step 2, add the ground

coriander seeds instead of the cinnamon stick. In step 3, replace the gin with the lime juice and zest.

[ROAD TRIP]

WILD BLUEBERRIES

GREENVALLEY TO PISGAH NATIONAL FOREST, NORTH CAROLINA Many years ago, when I was knee-high to a duck, my mom took me blueberry picking near Mount Pisgah, in westernmost North Carolina, where expanses of wild blueberries fruited in a staggering abundance that could not be exhausted by birds, rodents, or larger mammals, including us.

I know most people will think of the wild blueberry as a Yankee fruit. So it is, for the blueberry evolved in a cold climate. But the highlands of the Blue Ridge Mountains include the highest point east of the Mississippi River, Mount Mitchell, and harbor alpine plant communities typically found much farther north. These isolated ecological “islands” are remnants of an ancient ice-age landscape, and they include the chill-loving genus *Vaccinium*—blueberries, huckleberries, and cranberries, among others.

Mid-August is when the Blue Ridge blueberries “come in,” as they say locally, so I timed my visit to coincide. One morning, I drove up the Blue Ridge Parkway toward Shining Rock Wilderness, the roadless heart of Pisgah National Forest, where author Charles Frazier set his novel *Cold Mountain.* The views were from another era: row upon row of pristine mountains seen through a hazy atmosphere that colored the ridges blue and bluer as they retreated into the distance.

At the trailhead to Black Balsam Knob, a group of spry retirees were already returning with full buckets. One of them told me that black bears gorge themselves on blueberries, then loll about in the August heat as the contents of their stomachs ferment to make them drunk. Could it have been true? Another in the group gave me directions to where he’d been picking, with the advice to “keep an eye on the weather.”

I did, and as I hiked a mile down the trail, I watched clouds gather and drench me. I hardly cared, though, because blueberries were everywhere, from ankle level to above my highest reach. At least two and perhaps three species of *Vaccinium* crowded for sunlight among thickets of mountain laurel and rose. Pads of moss grew underfoot. A single file of conifers trudged up the ridgeline.

As birds fed in the bushes around me, I was doing work that humans had done for hundreds of thousands of years, and I felt myself slipping in and out of time.

> Standing on the bare ground—my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite space—all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God.
>
> **—RALPH WALDO EMERSON, *NATURE***

I didn’t see any drunken bears.

THE BLUEBERRY RAKE

If you get serious about harvesting wild blueberries, you may want a blueberry rake, a handheld aluminum scoop with tines along its leading edge. The Hubbard Rake Company in Jonesport, Maine, manufactures rakes for low-bush and high-bush blueberries, as well as for cranberries and huckleberries.

WILD BLUEBERRIES IN LIGHT SYRUP | *YIELDS 5 PINTS*

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3 cups water

1 cup sugar

1½ inches cinnamon stick 1½-by-¾-inch strip fresh lemon peel 2 fat pinches of ground coriander

3 pounds wild blueberries

1 Make the syrup first: combine the water, sugar, and aromatics in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, remove from the heat, and set aside to steep for 15 minutes.

2 Rinse and pick over the berries to remove any leaves and stems. Pack them raw into five prepared pint jars, leaving ¾ inch headspace.

3 Discard the cinnamon stick and lemon peel, and bring the syrup back to a boil. Ladle it over the berries, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 15 minutes. To prevent venting, leave the jars in the bath for 5 minutes before removing.

WILD BLUEBERRY PRESERVES | *YIELDS 1½ PINTS*

Wild blueberries are smaller than the domesticated. Picking them is a slow, slow business best approached as a kind of quasi-spiritual practice—be sure to turn off your BlackBerry. This recipe is for a small batch, but you could double it. It’s a preserve instead of a jam, and I don’t expect a preserve to set, but wild blueberries may have enough pectin for the syrup to cool as a barely congealed jelly.

1½ pounds wild blueberries ½ cup water

2 cups sugar

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime or lemon juice

1 Rinse the berries, and pick them over to remove stems, leaves, and other odd bits. Gently heat them in a preserving pan with the water until they are soft, 2 to 3 minutes. Turn off the heat, and remove the berries from the pan with a slotted spoon.

2 Add the sugar to the liquid remaining in the pan, stir to dissolve, and reduce over high heat for 2 to 3 minutes, until it thickens. Return the berries and any juice they have released to the preserving pan. Bring the mixture back to a boil, and cook rapidly for another 2 to 3 minutes, shaking occasionally to prevent the fruit from sticking.

3 When the syrup has thickened again and the berries appear slightly deflated, add the lime or lemon juice, and give the pot a few good swirls to mix it in. Ladle the hot preserves into three prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

HUCKLEBERRY JAM | *YIELDS ½ PINT*

> What sort of a country is that where the huckleberry fields are private property?
>
> —HENRY DAVID THOREAU, “HUCKLEBERRIES”

Huckleberries, wild blueberry relatives, inspired one of Thoreau’s last and most prescient essays, about the need to conserve wild lands for the public to use and enjoy. Huckleberries are also popular in the northern Rockies with hikers, homesteaders, and grizzly bears. One species, *Vaccinium membranaceum,* is the state fruit of Idaho. But I’d never tasted a fresh huckleberry until one August when the wild mushroom vendor at the Santa Monica Farmers Market brought some in from Siskiyou County, near Mount Shasta—the heart of California’s bigfoot country. They were priced like illegal contraband, but what can you do? Later, at home with my tiny batch of jam, I understood at last why Mark Twain named his favorite character Huckleberry.

The very small quantities given for this recipe can be scaled up to match your supply, although a single batch should not be more than three pounds.

½ pound wild huckleberries

2 tablespoons water

¾ cup sugar

1 Pick over the berries, and gently heat them with water until they burst their skins, about 5 minutes. Mash them lightly with a fork, leaving some whole.

2 Stir in the sugar, bring the mixture to a boil, and reduce to the gel point, about 5 minutes. Ladle into a prepared ½-pint jar (or two 4-ounce jars) and process either size in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

BLUE JELLY | *YIELDS WILL VARY, BUT 1 POUND FRUIT WILL MAKE ABOUT ½ PINT JELLY*

Southern California doesn't offer the forager much compared with the epic wild berry harvests in the Pacific Northwest, but even here one can find wild berries to exploit. Late spring brings the golden currant, *Ribes aureum*, a scrawny bush with a glasslike berry that would make good jelly if you could gather enough. (I never have.) In summer the Mexican elderberry, *Sambucus mexicana*, is more plentiful.

Elders grow across the Northern Hemisphere, and have a very long cultural history. Prometheus used a hollow elder twig to carry the spark of godly fire to man, and Linneaus named the elder clan after a Roman wind instrument made from its wood. Opera fans may have heard the following:

> *How lovely the elder smells, so mild, so strong and robust!*
>
> —RICHARD WAGNER, *DIE MEISTERSINGER*

Elder flowers can be fried as fritters, fermented into wine, distilled into liqueur, and dried for tea. The berries, which ripen in shades of blue, are for pies and preserves, and advocates of natural medicine claim that elderberry syrup is a cold remedy. Folklorists note that elderberries repel witches.

At Greenvalley, elderberries go into Blue Jelly along with foraged Oregon grapes, *Mahonia aquifolium.* Depending on where you live, you might be able to find wild blueberries and huckleberries (some of which may be more red than blue) or, in the Pacific Northwest, a wild heather known as salal, *Gaultheria shallon.* All of these berries are pectin-rich and stainingly blue—see the cloth in the photograph, which had been used to strain the juice. This rustic jelly won't be clear, like apple jelly, but opaque and a bit oozy. It's especially good on waffles and pancakes. You can stretch the wild fruit with equal quantities of domestic blueberries.

Note that raw elderberries can have an emetic effect if eaten in quantity, and some varieties are considered toxic. Other wild berries you encounter may also

be toxic, so consult expert opinion before consuming wild foods.

Mixed wild and domestic blue berries Cinnamon stick Freshly grated mace or nutmeg Sugar Freshly squeezed lime or lemon juice

1 Strip the berries from their stems, being very methodical with elderberries, since the stems smell rank. Rinse the berries, and drain. Put them in a pot, and crush with a potato masher. Add a stingy amount of aromatics—for instance, to 3 pounds of berries, add a 2-inch cinnamon stick, and a few gratings of nutmeg. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 10 minutes, until the berries are soft. Crush them again.

2 Strain the berries through a damp jelly bag, or a colander that has been lined with damp cheesecloth, and catch the juice in a bowl. Allow to drip for ½ hour, or until cool enough to handle, then squeeze out as much juice as possible.

3 Measure the juice, and combine in a preserving pan with an equal volume of sugar, plus 1 teaspoon of lime or lemon juice per cup of juice. If you have a large quantity of berry juice, work in 3-cup batches.

4 Bring the juice-sugar mixture to a boil over high heat, stirring regularly, and reduce to the gel point, 8 to 10 minutes. Ladle into prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

FRUIT SYRUPS, LIQUEURS, AND RELATED BEVERAGES

Before soda pop took over the world, fruit syrups were the base for all manner of homemade soft drinks. You would pour one over crushed ice and, as the saying goes, just add water. Fruit syrups also give character to the inexpensive, light wines you drink from a sweating glass to take the edge off the heat. The best-known example is Kir, a Parisian bistro favorite made with crème de cassis, black currant liqueur.

Fruit syrups make good use of small or seedy berries. In the canyons around Greenvalley, wild elderberries ripen in early July, and Elderberry Syrup is handy for Independence Day gatherings: mix it with fizzy water for kids and teetotalers, with wine for the festive drinkers.

ELDERBERRY SYRUP | *YIELDS ROUGHLY 1 QUART*

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3 pounds elderberries

⅓ cup water 1 or 2 pods star anise

2 cups sugar

1 Rinse the berry clusters, and methodically strip them from their stems, which smell rank. Place the berries in a large pot with the star anise, and crush with a potato masher. Add a modest amount of water, a scant ⅓ cup for 3 pounds of fruit, and bring to a boil. Lower the heat, and simmer for 10 minutes, mashing the fruit several more times. Strain the juice through a damp jelly bag, and let it hang until cool; then squeeze the bag to extract the remaining juice. You should have about 3 cups.

2 Bring the juice to a boil in a preserving pan, and stir in the sugar. When the sugar has dissolved, ladle the syrup into scalded bottles. Seal, and store in the refrigerator for up to 2 months. For long-term shelf storage, ladle the hot syrup into prepared pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

ELDERBERRY KIR | *YIELDS 1 COCKTAIL*

Pour 1 to 2 tablespoons Elderberry Syrup (preceding recipe) into a glass of light white wine, such as Sauvignon Blanc.

ELDERBERRY FIZZ AND ELDERBERRY ROB | *YIELDS 1 COCKTAIL*

Pour 2 tablespoons Elderberry Syrup (preceding recipe) into a glass over crushed ice. Add ¼ teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice, and top up with ½ cup sparkling mineral water. Rub the rim with a twist of lemon peel, and then drop it in as a garnish. If you use flat water instead of sparkling, you've made Elderberry Rob.

CRÈME DE CASSIS AND CASSIS JELLY

Crème de cassis is the liqueur made from black currants. In Burgundy, where black currants thrive, a splash of the liqueur in a glass of chilled Aligoté—a lean, dry white—is called Kir. The drink honors Canon Kir, a hero of the French Resistance and mayor of Dijon. Made with champagne, the drink becomes Kir Royale. Monsieur Kir's memory does not extend beyond white wines, however. Crème de cassis in a glass of red is *un cardinal.*

Black currant jelly has a delicious winey flavor. Currants are pectin-rich, so the jelly sets up reliably. For more details on making jelly and judging the gel set, see Jelly Basics.

CRÈME DE CASSIS | *YIELDS 7 CUPS*

2 pounds black currants

2½ cups Everclear (151-proof grain alcohol) 1¾ cups water 4½ cups sugar

1 Strip the currants from their stems. Place them in a ceramic or glass bowl, and crush with a potato masher. Transfer the fruit and every drop of juice to a quart Mason jar and add the Everclear. Seal the jar, and leave it in a cool, dark place for a week or two. Agitate the jar every other day.

2 Strain the contents of the jar through a damp jelly bag, and squeeze out as much liquid as possible. Put the liquid in a saucepan with the water and sugar. Heat over medium heat, stirring constantly, just until the sugar dissolves. Ladle the hot liqueur into scalded bottles. Seal with a cork or stopper. Age at least 6 months in a cool, dry place.

[Note] You could make a variation on Crème de Cassis by using elderberries, wild blackberries, or dark Balaton sour cherries in place of black currants.

CASSIS JELLY | *YIELDS 1½ PINTS*

2 pounds black currants

3½ cups water

3 cups sugar

1 Strip the currants from their stems. Place in a pot, and cover with the water. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 20 minutes. Strain the berries through a damp jelly bag. Squeeze the jelly bag lightly. You should have 3 cups of pectin stock (see Jelly Basics).

2 Combine the pectin stock and sugar in a preserving pan. Bring to a boil, stirring frequently, and reduce over high heat to the gel set, 6 to 8 minutes. Working quickly now, ladle the hot jelly into three prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

PEACH JAM | *YIELDS 3 PINTS*

When I was twenty, I took a year off from college, which turned into two years as I hung around Berkeley, California, vaguely hoping to find my way into the food scene there. The benefactor of my ambitions, such as they were, was David Tanis, who in 2011 retired from Chez Panisse after some thirty years, to write cookbooks full-time. David hooked me up with two *stages*, pronounced in the Gallic manner like “stahj”—restaurant lingo for unpaid internships.

The first was at Greens, the legendary vegetarian restaurant cofounded in 1979 by Deborah Madison, an alumna of Chez Panisse and the San Francisco Zen Center. In the history of American meat-free cookery, Greens was arguably the first American restaurant to justify the previously oxymoronic phrase “vegetarian cuisine.”

The day I was there, the kitchen smelled of simmering stockpots and baking winter squash. I was assigned a flat of wild mushrooms to prep, which was a lot of wild mushrooms when you consider that they were small, fragile, dirty things. A cook—I wish I could remember his name—demonstrated the light brushing technique for cleaning them. Then he gave me a word of advice.

“Treat each fruit individually,” he said.

That he classed the mushroom as “fruit” was striking enough, a pretty high-class way to put it, or so it seemed to me at that impressionable age.

But, more important, that he saw the mushrooms in front of us as *specific* and not *generic* shifted my worldview on its axis. That is to say, I saw a tiresome number of one thing—mushrooms—that needed to be improved. He saw many individual things that were unique in themselves and therefore complete.

“Treat each fruit individually” thus represented an important epistemological distinction between Plato (there is a perfect Mushroom, but perhaps no single such mushroom) and Buddha (every mushroom that is, is yet another aspect of Mushroom in its infinite expressions). In the Greens worldview, food comes from nature, and the ideal function of the cook is to reveal an ingredient’s inherent qualities as unobtrusively as possible. Over time, that worldview has become my own.

My second *stage* taught me something technical, so it’s easier to explain. David got me into the kitchen at Chez Panisse one particularly busy Saturday afternoon when extra bodies were needed to—literally—peel potatoes. I was nervous to be in the *sanctum sanctorum* of new American cooking, and as I worked, I let potato peelings drop everywhere, creating a mess that drew Alice Waters’s attention as she swept through the kitchen.

She pushed me aside and crisply put everything in order, whole potatoes in one tidy pile and peelings in another.

“Do everything neatly always,” she said before darting off.

I’d nominate that sentence as the single best piece of kitchen advice ever imparted.

Fifteen years passed before I went into a restaurant kitchen again, when my friend Akasha Richmond, proprietor of Akasha Restaurant in Culver City, asked me for a lesson on making jam. I was a bit nervous to be there as an instructor rather than a student, and frankly intimidated by the huge pile of Elberta peaches we had for making a restaurant-sized batch of jam. I forgot to consider each fruit individually. I wasn’t neat in all things. And it showed in the jam, which tasted good but had a sloppy, farmhouse look. Disappointed, I suggested to Akasha that we run it through a food mill to improve the appearance.

“No, I like it,” she said. “It’s rustic.”

And that was the third lesson I’ve learned in professional kitchens. The jam that we made didn’t need improving, because there’s no such thing as the perfect Jam. Instead, every jam that is, is yet another aspect of Jam in its infinite expressions.

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5 pounds ripe peaches

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

3½ cups sugar

1 To peel the peaches, slash a shallow “X” in the pointed end of each fruit. Working with a few at a time, blanch the peaches for 60 to 90 seconds in boiling water, or until the skin loosens. Lift the peaches out of the water using a slotted spoon and set them aside to cool; remove the skins and pits. Slice each peach into quarters, then cut each quarter crosswise into fourths. Mix the fruit with lemon juice, stir in the sugar, and leave to macerate for 30 minutes.

2 Turn the fruit-sugar mixture into a large preserving pan, and rapidly bring to a full boil. Reduce over high heat to the gel point, 8 to 10 minutes at a full

rolling boil, while stirring constantly. If the jam is too chunky for your liking, turn off the heat and stir with a whisk for another minute, to break down the chunks. Ladle the hot jam into six prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Lord Grey's Peach Preserves

The 2nd Earl Grey, prime minister of the United Kingdom in the 1830s, is remembered for having received a diplomatic gift of Chinese black tea flavored with bergamot, a type of citrus. His famous tea adds to peach jam the subtle floral aroma of

bergamot.

Follow the recipe for Peach Jam. When the fruit-sugar mixture goes into the preserving pan, add five Earl Grey tea bags. I like to open one of the tea bags and scatter the leaves, so that you can see dark bits of tea in the finished product. Reduce the fruit-sugar mixture over high heat, as usual. Discard the tea bags before putting the hot jam into jars. Fill and process the jars as above.

Peach Jam with Champagne

In this variation on Peach Jam, champagne or other wine replaces the acidity in lemon juice.

5 pounds ripe peaches

3 cups sugar

¼ cup champagne, dry rosé wine, or Sauvignon Blanc

Follow the basic procedure for Peach Jam, omitting the lemon juice and adding the champagne or wine midway through the cooking.

Peach–Passion Fruit Jam | *YIELDS 3 PINTS*

Passion fruit is the egg-shaped pod of the vine *Passiflora edulis.* It got its name because early Jesuit missionaries to Brazil thought that the showy

passionflower evoked the Crucifixion in its every part: the five stamens represented Jesus's five wounds, the spiky corona was the crown of thorns, and so on. A related species of *passiflora* grows in parts of the South. When my parents were growing up, they called it "maypop," because of what happens when you step on it.

Passion fruits show up in my local markets late in peach season. The pods are shriveled and hold hardly any pulp at all, just a few edible seeds bathed in orange liquid. A dozen pods will give you only ½ cup of juice if you're lucky, but every drop of it is highly fragrant. Passion fruit is often paired with tropical mango, but it works equally well with peaches. The dark, edible seeds make this jam especially pretty on the shelf.

¾ pound passion fruits (about 12 large pods) 5 pounds yellow peaches 4 cups sugar

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

Cut open the passion fruits, and scrape the juice and seeds into a bowl. You will have about ½ cup. Follow the basic instructions for Peach Jam, adding the passion fruit pulp when the jam has reached the gel point. Stir the seeds into the hot jam, and cook 3 minutes longer. Check the gel set. Fill jars, and process as directed.

ULTRA-LOW-SUGAR WHITE NECTARINE OR WHITE PEACH COMPOTE | *YIELDS 1½ PINTS*

My feelings were hurt once when my good friend Bill Webb said that the jam I had just made using 3 pounds of rare Snow Queen white nectarines and a scant 3 cups of sugar was too sweet. I thought it was delicious, and I explained that, by our grandparents' standards, my jam was actually low-sugar. He said, "I want to taste nectarines, not sugar."

As an experiment, I made another batch of Snow Queen jam using 3 pounds of fruit and just 1 cup of sugar. It was also delicious, but not quite what I expected—more like compote. Maybe labels shouldn't matter in this case, because Bill ate an entire jar in one sitting. Still, I tend to think of this recipe as an ultra-low-sugar alternative to "real" jam. Try making a batch to calibrate your taste and see the effect of ultra-low sugar.

Note that this preserve will mold more quickly after opening. Put it up in small jars, and eat it within 2 weeks of breaking the seal.

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3 pounds white nectarines or peaches, pitted and cut into ½-inch cubes 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 cup sugar

1 tablespoon dry rosé wine

1. Mix the sliced fruit in a bowl with the lemon juice and sugar, and leave to macerate for 30 minutes.

2. Turn the fruit-sugar mixture into a preserving pan, and bring to a boil, stirring frequently. Reduce over high heat for 5 minutes. Add the wine. Continue reducing for 3 to 5 minutes longer, until the liquids are reduced to a thick sauce. Stir vigorously with a whisk for 1 minute if a smoother consistency is desired. Ladle the hot jam into three prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

PEACH OR NECTARINE CHUTNEY | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

When you're making preserves, fully 50 percent of your success is in the shopping—good fruit makes good jam. Technique matters also, and a sound recipe makes a difference. But the crucial remaining factor is organization. Especially when dealing with a large quantity of perishable fruits or vegetables, you have to think through your strategy and plot out your work. If you can't get everything put up immediately, you have to take into account how the produce will ripen—and soon fade—as it waits for you.

My strategy for how to use a bushel of peaches would look something like this: **First day/underripe fruit:** Pectin levels peak just before ripening, so I'd start with peach jelly, using the same technique as for Apricot Jelly. If you don't want to make jelly, give the peaches another day to ripen.

First day/just-ripe fruit: Peaches that are fragrant and slightly yielding but still firm enough to handle are ideal for canning in syrup, as either halves or slices in syrup.

Second day/fully ripe fruit: As the peaches become tender and fragrant, make jam.

Third day/dead-ripe fruit: By now, the peaches will likely have a few brown spots that will need to be cut away, so I'd work up a batch of chutney, which requires long, slow cooking that breaks down the fruit anyway.

Fourth day/tired fruit: Whatever peaches haven't been used by now will likely look a little sad, but even really soft, spotty ones can be trimmed for a batch of Spiced Peach Butter.

SOUTHERN PEACH CHUTNEY EVOLVED from an Indian relish called *chatni* that British colonials brought home during the days when the sun never set on the Empire. According to *The Oxford Companion to Food*, *chatni* is made fresh before a meal by grinding spices and adding them to a paste of tamarind, garlic, and limes or coconut. Pieces of fruit or vegetable may be incorporated, but the chief flavor characteristic is sour. The British turned that into a fruit preserve, explains the *Oxford Companion: British chutneys are usually spiced, sweet, fruit pickles, having something of the consistency of jam. Highest esteem is accorded to mango chutney. …*
Chutney later spread across the Atlantic to the West Indies and the American South, where the esteemed mango was replaced by the honorable peach.

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5 pounds yellow peaches or nectarines, peeled and cut into ½-inch cubes 3 cups organic or turbinado sugar

2 cups apple-cider vinegar

¾ cup raisins

1 cup chopped Vidalia onion

1 sweet banana pepper or ½ yellow bell pepper, diced 2 or 3 fresh green jalapeños, diced, or adjust to taste 2 cloves garlic, minced

2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger root

2 teaspoons freshly grated turmeric, or ½ teaspoon ground

4 tablespoons mustard seeds

1 teaspoon garam masala (a ground spice mixture containing pepper, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom, coriander, nutmeg, cumin, and star anise) 2 teaspoons Darjeeling tea (or 4 tea bags)

1 Combine all the ingredients in a deep pot, and bring to a boil. Moderate the heat, and reduce for as long as an hour, until all the excess liquid boils away and what remains is thick and jamlike in texture. Be sure to taste the chutney at several points, and adjust the seasonings to your preference. Chutney should be deeply flavored and complex, with at least a bit of spicy heat. If you like the bright taste of green chilies, add more minced jalapeños during the last 10 minutes of cooking.

2 Ladle the hot chutney into four prepared pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. Allow to cure for a month before eating.

SPICED PEACH BUTTER | *YIELDS ABOUT 2 PINTS*

Fruit butters should be spiced at the end of cooking, with light pinches of freshly ground whole spices. You can always add more if you like; you can't take any out. The bourbon is optional, but its vanilla and caramel flavors go perfectly with this rich but not overly sweet spread. The optional pits add an almond note.

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5 pounds very ripe peaches, peeled and sliced ⅓ cup water Optional: peach kernels, extracted from the cracked pits
1½ cups sugar

1 tablespoon molasses

1 allspice berry, ground Pinch of freshly ground cinnamon A few scrapings of nutmeg Optional: 2 tablespoons bourbon

1 Stew the peaches in a pot with the water for 20 to 25 minutes, or until very soft. Blanch the kernels, if using, in boiling water, and slip off their skins.

2 Crush the peaches with a potato masher. Stir in the sugar, molasses, and peach kernels. Bring back to a boil, and reduce over medium heat while stirring constantly. When the hot preserve is thick and darkened, 25 to 30 minutes, chill a spoonful in the freezer. If it leaks liquid around the edges, continue cooking. When it's ready, stir in the spices and bourbon, if using. Taste, and adjust the flavorings to your preference.

3 Ladle the hot preserve into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jar to remove air pockets. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

PEACHES IN SYRUP

Fruit can be canned in syrup using either a cold-pack or a hot-pack method. For cold pack, you fill your jars with sliced raw fruit, then cover them with boiling syrup. For a hot pack, the fruit is heated through in the boiling syrup before canning.

Both approaches have disadvantages. Raw fruit is easier to pack, but it will shrink during the water bath, leaving “empty” space in the jars. Heating the fruit for a hot pack will purge the air and water that cause shrinkage, so jars can be more closely packed. But the hot fruit is slippery to handle and prone to breaking.

I tend to cold-pack delicate white peaches and peach halves—recipes where appearances matter. Firm heirloom peaches such as Elberta, a classic canning fruit, can stand up to more handling. If I have a whole case of Elbertas to work through, I’ll put them up as hot-packed slices in order to maximize the contents of every jar.

In either case, you’ll want to use freestone peach varieties, which means that the pit lifts away from the fruit cleanly. With clingstone peaches, the pit adheres to the flesh and has to be cut out, as with plums. Cling peaches are grown today principally for commercial canneries, which prefer them for their firmer flesh. I don’t know a home method for pitting them cleanly.

To minimize browning, place the peaches as you slice them in acidulated water. Peaches come out of the jar firmer than they were when they went in because the sugar in the syrup permeates the canned fruit, to improve its texture and color. I use a medium syrup, but you can adjust the amount of sugar in the recipes.

You could also use pint jars or quart jars. I give processing times for both.

WHITE PEACH HALVES IN LAVENDER SYRUP (COLD PACK) | *YIELDS 4 QUARTS*

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2 stems dried lavender flowers (about 1 teaspoon florets) 4½ cups water

2 cups sugar

5½ to 6 pounds white peaches 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice, or ½ teaspoon citric acid

1 Wrap the lavender in a cheesecloth pouch, and put it in a pot with the water and sugar. Bring the syrup to a boil, then remove from the heat and cover until needed.

2 Slash an “X” in the pointed end of each peach. Working in batches, blanch them in boiling water for 60 to 90 seconds, until the skin loosens. Lift them out with a slotted spoon, and drain. When they are cool, peel and pit the peaches. Cut them into halves or slices, as you like. Halves are prettier to serve; slices are easier to handle. Place the peaches as you slice them in a quart of water acidified with the lemon juice or citric acid.

3 Remove the lavender from the syrup, squeeze it to extract its flavor, and discard. Bring the syrup to a boil. Pack the peaches into four prepared quart jars or eight prepared pint jars. When a jar is about one-third full, cover with some hot syrup and shake to settle the peaches. Repeat until full, leaving ½ inch headspace. Run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jar to release any air pockets, and top up with syrup if necessary. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 25 minutes for pint jars, 30 minutes for quarts. To reduce venting, turn off the heat and let the jars rest in the water for 5 minutes before removing.

YELLOW PEACH SLICES IN TEA SYRUP (HOT PACK) | *YIELDS 5 PINTS*

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5 pounds yellow peaches

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice, or ½ teaspoon citric acid 2 cups water 1 cup sugar

2 Earl Grey tea bags

1 Slash an “X” in the pointed end of each peach. Working in batches, blanch them in boiling water for 60 to 90 seconds, until the skin loosens. Lift them out with a slotted spoon, and drain. When they’re cool, peel and pit the peaches. Cut them into slices or halves, as you prefer. Place the peaches as you slice them in a quart of water with the lemon juice or citric acid.

2 Put the 2 cups water and sugar in a pot, and bring it to a boil. Working in batches, heat the sliced peaches in the boiling syrup for about 2 minutes, turning them over once or twice for even cooking. Lift the peaches out with a slotted spoon, and pack them into five prepared pint jars. Repeat until all the peaches are in jars. Add the tea bags to the pot, and allow to steep for 5 minutes, then squeeze out and discard.

3 Bring the syrup back to a boil, and ladle over the peaches, leaving ½ inch headspace. Run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jars to release any air pockets, and top up the jars with syrup if necessary. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 20 minutes for pint jars, 25 minutes for quarts. To reduce venting, turn off the heat and let the jars rest in the water for 5 minutes before removing.

[Note] Many variations on the preceding Peaches in Syrup recipes are possible. For brandied yellow peaches, replace ½ cup of the water with brandy, or more to

taste. For peaches in red wine, replace the 2 cups of water with a spicy red wine like a Côtes du Rhône. You could also replace the lavender or tea with other herbs or spices—cinnamon would be classic, but what about black pepper with red wine? A blogger named Kayti Downey e-mailed me to say that she adjusted my recipe by using herbes de Provence in place of lavender, to great effect.

SUMMER FRUIT COCKTAIL | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

As a variation on canning peaches in syrup, this fruit cocktail combines peaches with apples, pears, and homemade preserved cherries. It reminds me of the fruit cocktail I used to eat out of tin cans when I was little, except without the tinny taste.

The preserved cherries you use could be from any of the recipes from the spring section, including Maraschino Cherries, Cherry 'Shine, or Cherry Pie Filling.

If you'd like to add a spicy note, tuck a small cinnamon stick into each jar before sealing.

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2 pounds firm apples, half tart and half sweet (see Appendix I) 2 cups water, plus more for acidulated water 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice 2 pounds firm pears

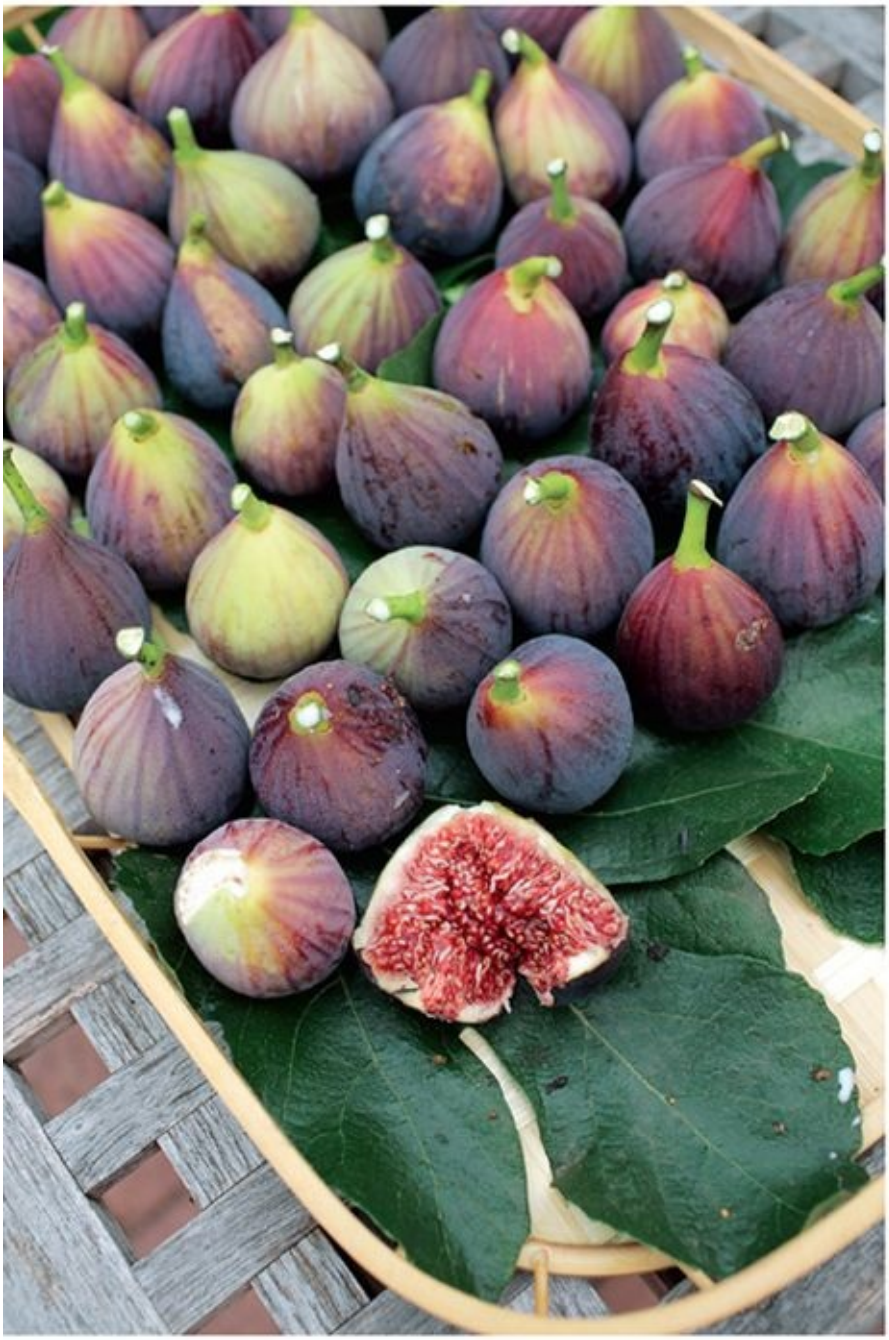
2 pounds firm canning peaches

¾ cup sugar ¼ cup preserved cherries (see headnote) Optional: 1 teaspoon kirsch

1 Peel and core the apples, and cut them into eighths. To prevent browning, immediately place the pieces into a bowl with 2 cups of water mixed with 1 tablespoon of the lemon juice. Peel and core the pears and cut them into eighths, placing them in a second bowl of acidulated water as you work. Peel and pit the peaches, and cut them into slices, placing them in the same bowl as the pears.

2 Bring the water and sugar to a boil in a roomy pot. Drain the apples, and add them to the pot; then return the mixture to a boil and cook for 1 minute, until the slices begin to soften and appear translucent. Drain the pears and peaches, and add them. Bring the pot back to a boil, then stir in the cherries and turn off the heat.

3 Using a slotted spoon, divide the fruit among four prepared pint jars, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace. Once all the jars have been filled, bring the syrup back to a boil, stir in the kirsch, if using, and ladle over the fruit, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 20 minutes.



BLACK MISSION FIG JAM | *YIELDS 2½ PINTS*

One day in August, at the end of my summer vacation on the East Coast, an e-mail arrived from my friend Amanda Marsalis. She wrote: *I wanted to let you know my fig tree is full of ripe figs. I am leaving tomorrow for at least 3 weeks, and I'm afraid that by the time I get home the figs will be gone. I need someone to enjoy them! You are welcome to come over any time and pick as many as you like.*

The next day, I flew back to L.A., dropped my luggage at home, and went straight to pick two trays—twelve pounds—of stupendous figs. Two days later, I went back for twelve pounds more. And two days after that … you get the idea. The fig is the zucchini of fruits: a single tree produces a superabundance that no one person could keep up with, although birds and insects and squirrels will take their share if you let them.

When you're picking: figs are best on the first day that the fruit begins to sag on the stem. A day earlier, and the rigid fruit is not yet sweet enough; a day later, the interior will be soft and browning, with a hint of winey fermentation. Picked at their peak, figs will keep overnight but not longer. Hurry.

Figs are among the best fruits for making sweet-savory preserves. Black Mission Fig Jam with Syrah would be great inside a grilled sandwich; Black Mission Fig Jam with Indian Spices could go with tandoori chicken. Brown Turkey Fig Jam with Honey and Wild Aromatics is great with cheese. Other possible flavorings might include black pepper and balsamic vinegar, cardamom, or cinnamon.

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3 pounds just-ripe figs

2 scant cups turbinado, demerara, or organic sugar

3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

Optional: zest of ½ lemon

1 Figs don’t need much prep: trim the stem end, quarter them, and then cut the quarters crosswise, to produce a textured but manageable jam.

2 Combine the fruit, sugar, lemon juice, and zest, if using, in a mixing bowl. Stir to combine, then cover closely and place in the refrigerator for a few hours or overnight.

3 Turn the fruit-and-sugar mixture into a preserving pan, and rapidly bring to a boil. Stirring constantly, reduce over high heat until the hot jam is thickened, 6 to 8 minutes; then lower the heat to medium, and reduce a few more minutes to the gel point.

4 Ladle into five prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Black Mission Fig Jam with Madeira | *YIELDS 2½ PINTS*

3 pounds just-ripe figs

2 cups turbinado, demerara, or organic sugar

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

¼ cup Madeira

Follow the recipe for Black Mission Fig Jam. In the last minute of cooking, when the hot jam is sufficiently reduced, add the Madeira, return the contents of the pot to a boil, and cook for 1 minute longer. Fill and process the jars normally.

Black Mission Fig Jam with Syrah | *YIELDS 2½ PINTS*

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3 pounds just-ripe figs

2 cups turbinado, demerara, or organic sugar

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

¼ cup California Syrah, Grenache, Zinfandel, or any other big, fruity wine with soft tannins

Follow the recipe for Black Mission Fig Jam. In the last minute of cooking, when the hot jam is sufficiently reduced, add the wine, return the contents of the pot to a boil, and cook for 1 minute longer. Fill and process the jars normally.

Black Mission Fig Jam with Indian Spices | *YIELDS 2½ PINTS*

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3 pounds just-ripe figs

2 cups turbinado, demerara, or organic sugar

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

¼ teaspoon garam masala

Follow the directions in the recipe for Black Mission Fig Jam. When the hot jam is sufficiently reduced, add the garam masala, and stir well to combine. Fill and process the jars normally.

Black Mission Fig Jam with Smoky Black Tea | *YIELDS 2½ PINTS*

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3 pounds just-ripe figs

2 cups turbinado, demerara, or organic sugar

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

½ teaspoon smoked black tea, such as Lapsang Souchong or Scottish Breakfast, finely crushed

Follow the directions in the recipe for Black Mission Fig Jam. When the hot jam is sufficiently reduced, stir in the crushed tea. Fill and process the jars normally.

[Note] The smoky flavor will continue to infuse in the jars, so be cautious about adding more tea than suggested. Black tea and the Indian spices from above also combine well.

Brown Turkey Fig Jam with Honey and Wild Aromatics | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

Fennel grows wild along the California coast, and its seeds ripen in late summer, when the figs come in. Don't be shy about collecting them: fennel is an invasive exotic and is considered a weed.

The native California bay laurel tree, *Umbellularia californica*, grows to enormous size in damp spots throughout California's coastal ranges. Every time I see one, I'll snap off a branch for the kitchen. If you're ever in Big Sur, roll down the windows and inhale the pleasantly camphorated air: the hills are lousy with bay. Store-bought fennel seeds and Mediterranean bay leaf will also work in this recipe.

Using honey as a sweetener is a nod to another native plant that's common in Southern California. White sage is a handsome shrub with tall flower stalks often abuzz with insects. The scientific name, *Salvia apiana,* comes from the Latin for bee, *apis*, and professional beekeepers value all the wild sages for

the mild and floral honey they produce.

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3 pounds just-ripe figs

1¼ cups turbinado, demerara, or organic sugar ½ cup sage honey or another pale, mild honey ½ teaspoon fennel seeds 3 bay leaves

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

Zest of 1 lemon

Follow the directions for Black Mission Fig Jam, adding the honey and wild aromatics when you macerate the figs with sugar. Reduce as usual, skimming the foam that honey always produces. Fill the jars, seal, and process normally.

> Miniature woman, all womb.
> I don’t see you, brown, uncamouflaged as the bottom
> or nipple in a dream, till the beetle’s buried himself to
> the neck in your soft flesh.
>
> —DANA GOODYEAR [1976—], “FIG”

WHOLE FIGS IN RED WINE SYRUP | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

2½ cups red wine 2½ cups water 3 cups sugar 1 bay leaf 1 sprig fresh thyme

12 black peppercorns

Pinch of fennel seeds

3½ pounds brown turkey figs 2 tablespoons red-wine vinegar, plus more if needed Four 1½-inch strips lemon zest

1 Combine the wine, water, 2½ cups of sugar, and spices in a large pot. Bring to a boil, then gently add the whole figs. Return to a boil, and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat, and allow to cool to room temperature. Cover, and refrigerate overnight.

2 The next day, add the vinegar and the remaining ½ cup sugar to the figs, and bring the pot to a boil. Taste the syrup, and add more vinegar to balance the flavor if you like.

3 Using a slotted spoon, pack the figs into four prepared regular-mouth pint jars, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace. Tuck a strip of lemon zest into each jar, and fill the jars with hot syrup, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

JUNE TAYLOR

No English man or woman is more English than one who lives abroad, perhaps because those who are separated from their countrymen take pains to inoculate themselves against foreign habits of mind. In the early years of her marriage to an American in Berkeley, California, Englishwoman June Taylor would come back from visiting her parents in London with marmalade in her suitcase—childhood food being a potent form of self-inoculation.

"That's my vision of travel," said Taylor when I met her at her Berkeley workshop one August morning after blackberry season but before the Gravenstein apples would start to arrive from Sonoma County. "What you do is go home and bring back food."

Now in her early sixties, Taylor is arguably the most distinctive jam maker in America—and the most English, although she has lived here longer than in her native "damp island," as she puts it. Taylor rejects commercial pectin—as well as aluminum pots, margarine, Red Delicious apples, and the very thought of frozen fruit—so her products tend to be loose, more like thick sauces. The samples she had opened for me to taste included strawberry-rhubarb jam, apricot jam with almond, apricot jam with Provençal lavender, Astrakhan apple butter, and blackberry-tayberry jam, as well as damson and quince "cheeses," as English fruit pastes are known. They're among her specialties, and she once served quince cheese to Prince Charles at a San Francisco dinner prepared by her friend Alice Waters.

Taylor is blessed with a nuanced palate that registers fugitive shades of flavor and scent, and she knows her fruit like an orchardist would. Coarse distinctions between white peaches and yellow peaches barely rank among her subtler taxonomies; one of Taylor's innovations was to market her preserves by varietal name, like a winemaker.

"You want blackberry?," she asked, a challenge. "OK, you're going to get five different choices from me because I've used five different blackberries this year."

She makes still finer distinctions based on what she notices during her "very demanding, very close, very intimate work" with the fruit. She speaks of "softening" the overbold flavor of one blackberry variety by blending in

tayberries, with their “zinfandel” quality. Blueberries that are underripe need warming vanilla as surely as overripe peaches want a “sprightly” boost. Taylor once observed that the blood oranges picked from the sun-facing side of a tree were more flavorful.

But all those distinctions boil down to a single keyword—seasonality—which Taylor takes to mean not just generalizations about the predicted harvest in any given month, but rather the individual character of a specific batch of fruit when it comes in her door.

“Nature presents you with goodies, and you have to know what to do with them,” she explained. “Getting it right each time is different.”

Taylor’s other touchstone idea has to do with sugar. Her approach, in a nutshell, is to use not much of it, and certainly never enough for her preserves to be “cloyingly sweet.”

“If you use a lot of sugar, then you get a different preserve,” said Taylor. “How do you want to eat the fruit? My choice is to eat the fruit in the most minimally preserved way. That’s my style.”

Taylor has lifted recipes from historical cookery books and pored over seventeenth-century manuscripts scratched out by housekeepers in rural manor houses, making her something of an archaeologist of preindustrial country life. That past must seem both familiar and exotic, because she grew up in a north London council flat, where the local landscape consisted of a greenbelt park overgrown with wild blackberries and her father’s small garden plot. “Partly what I do,” she said, “is to bring back things that are forgotten: flavors, fruits, techniques, methods for preserving fruit.” Mindful that preserving is a “humble” craft that once hedged against hunger, Taylor today holds herself to a zero-waste policy. Apricots of idealized beauty are poached whole in rose geranium syrup and peeled with lavish care; the ugly ones are put through the food mill for apricot butter.

“I come out of an era, a time and a class, where you didn’t waste your food,” she said. “You didn’t waste what was on the plate. You didn’t waste what came out of the garden.”

Taylor’s professional preserving life began around 1985, when she went to work at Santa Fe Bar and Grill for former Chez Panisse chef Jeremiah Tower. Shortly thereafter, she moved to the noted Oakland restaurant Oliveto and began making preserves as part of her regular bread and pastry duties. A photograph from Easter 1990 shows the beginnings of her own business: 150 hot-cross buns made at home for sale at the farmers’ market, along with a few jars of

marmalade. Over time, the ratio of her output has switched, with her baking limited to seasonal hot cross buns and Christmas cakes studded with her own candied fruit.

Annually, Taylor produces twenty thousand jars of preserves, made with help from assistants Magali Hernandez and Dianey Jimenez. She describes this quantity as the output of “a few women working.”

The modest statement glosses over the fact that, as proprietor, Taylor is more like the master of the manor house than the under-stairs help, but it highlights her sense of being heir to England’s preserving tradition. Tasting a piece of her vintage damson cheese, a remarkable product that had been aging since 2005, Taylor allowed her normally measured decorum to spill over with pride.

“When I eat this, I understand why Britain has been a great preserving nation,” she said. “This is my homeland.”

RELISH BASICS

Relish is a pickle by another name: it's a chopped vegetable preserved in vinegar.

The archaic origin of the word "relish" is revealing. Around 1300, "reles" entered the language from the Old French *relaisser,* "to leave behind." The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites a poem from the era: "Another vessel thenne there stode, Ful of baume ffresche and gode, And kest vpward his gode reles." The *OED* proposes that the meaning of "reles" here, although unclear, was probably "the sensation or impression left behind"—the aftertaste. From the sixteenth century onward, the word's spelling, pronunciation, and general sense of "to enjoy" became what it is today. "Hunger and Thirst are our best sauce," wrote the Reverend Nathaniel Ingelo in his religious allegory *Bentivolio and Urania* of 1660. "We still keep some to relish our next meal." Only in the nineteenth century did "relish" settle into its present culinary meaning.

In the meal, relish occupies a niche somewhere between condiment and side dish. A dab of Spicy Pepper Relish will do for a hot dog, but I eat Corn Relish by the spoonful. Relish is perhaps the vegetable equivalent of fruit chutney—both have a balance of sweet and sour flavors enhanced by spice, alliums, and chilies.

A relish served with rich or greasy foods will cut the fat, whereas it adds interest to a bland dish. Relish stimulates the appetite—and leaves behind a pleasant aftertaste.

Here are a few relish basics.

SAFE CANNING: All vegetables are low-acid foods, meaning that, in order to be safely processed using the boiling-water bath, they must be canned in a vinegar brine or syrup. Do not reduce the quantity of vinegar called for, because it is the essential ingredient for safe canning.

VINEGAR: For safety reasons, use only commercial vinegar that has a controlled acid content of at least 5 percent acidity. (Check the label.) Apple-cider vinegar works in almost any relish recipe, although I sometimes also use red-wine vinegar or white-wine vinegar instead. Avoid distilled white vinegar.

TEXTURE: Commercial relish is ground or minced. The home equivalent would be to pass the vegetables through a meat grinder. Dicing the vegetables into quarter-inch cubes gives a neater look. For corn relish, you need only slice the kernels off the cob. Green beans or skinny asparagus can be chopped into thin rounds. There's nothing to say you can't cut the vegetables in other ways, however. I cut roasted peppers in strips—the better to strew down the length of a hot dog. It's still relish.

CONSISTENCY: Commercial relishes often contain copious sugar and thickeners to add body to the canning liquid. Mine will be lighter, so you may want to serve them with a slotted spoon to drain off some of the liquid.

ADJUSTING SEASONINGS: It is acceptable to add more or less sugar, salt, or spice to a recipe. Taste and adjust. This is especially true of chilies: start by adding less than the total quantity given, then taste to decide if you want more. Keep tasting and adjusting the seasoning until you're happy with the result, right up to the moment the relish goes into the jars. *Do not, however, change the quantities of vegetables, vinegar, or water.*

JARS: For most relishes, I like pint-sized standard-mouth Mason jars because the "shoulder" will keep the relish submerged.

FILLING JARS: I like to divide the solid ingredients among the prepared jars first, then ladle the vinegar brine over the top. This ensures a more equal distribution of solids and liquids. Be sure to leave enough room when distributing the solids so that you can cover them with liquid and still have ½ inch headspace.

If you don't have enough liquid to fill all the jars, it is acceptable to top them up with straight vinegar or a mixture of one part vinegar to one part water. Do not use straight water.

CURING: Relishes improve if allowed to sit unopened for a few weeks while the flavors blend and mellow.

STORAGE: Store sealed jars in a cool, dark place for up to a year. Once they're opened, keep the jars in the refrigerator and use within a month.

CONFETTI RELISH | *YIELDS 5 PINTS*

This is a recipe for the August garden, when squash and peppers are everywhere. As long as you stick to the basic measurements, you can use any combination of zucchini, crooknecks, or pattypans and red, yellow, or green bell peppers. Diced by hand, the vegetables look like garden confetti. The chopping takes less time than you might fear, and probably not much longer than setting up, using, and washing a piece of kitchen gadgetry.

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3 pounds mixed zucchini and yellow squash (11 cups diced) 1 pound red onions (3 cups diced) 1 pound red or yellow bell peppers (3 cups diced)

3 tablespoons kosher salt

3½ cups apple-cider vinegar 1½ cups water 1 cup sugar 1 tablespoon brown mustard seeds

1 tablespoon yellow mustard seeds

1 teaspoon curry powder ½ teaspoon black peppercorns, finely ground 1 teaspoon coriander seeds, finely ground 3 cloves garlic, minced 2 fresh or dried chili peppers, finely diced

1 Chop the vegetables into ¼-inch dice and toss with the salt. Set aside in a colander to drip for 2 hours. Pour a kettle of boiling water over the vegetables to rinse them.

2 Combine the remaining ingredients in a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Add the vegetables, and cook over medium heat for 20 to 25 minutes, or until the vegetables are translucent and yielding.

3 Pack the hot relish into five prepared pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. Allow to cure for a few weeks.

ON DICING

TO DICE ZUCCHINI: Trim both ends and discard. Cut lengthwise into ¼-inch planks. Cut the planks lengthwise into ¼-inch sticks. Cut the sticks crosswise into ¼-inch dice.

TO DICE PEPPERS: Cut the pepper in half from stem to bottom. Pull out the seeds and white connective tissue, and discard. Cut into ¼-inch strips, and the strips into ¼-inch dice.

TO DICE ONIONS: Slice the onion in half, from top to root. Remove the papery skin, and discard. Trim the top and any dangling roots, but do not cut off the root union.

Steady one of the halves upright on its root end. Slice down through the onion at ¼-inch intervals, parallel to the flat, cut face. Do not cut through the root union, or the slices will fall apart. Now lay the onion flat side down. Cut across the rings—i.e., from top to root—at ¼-inch intervals, again taking care not to cut through the root union. To complete the dice, slice across the onion at ¼-inch intervals, finishing at the root union. It’s easier to do than explain.

CORN RELISH | *YIELDS ABOUT 6 PINTS*

Boiled corn on the cob is a summertime ritual. Some say that the only way to do it right is to boil a pot of water and then go pick your corn. That's more or less the way Gran and Papa did it at the farm. In midsummer, when the corn came in, Papa would go to the garden to pick a burlap sack of what he called "roastin' ears" and shuck them himself, one of the few kitchen tasks I can recall him doing. Gran would take them, and a few minutes later we'd all be picking bits of corn from between our front teeth.

For all the hoopla about how corn must be eaten ultra-fresh, it also makes a long-lasting relish. My version isn't the most traditional, because a California influence creeps in with roasted jalapeños, cumin, and cilantro. Any or all three of the ingredients could be omitted for a milder, more classic state-fair-type relish.

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12 ears corn

1 large red bell pepper, roasted, skinned, and seeded (see Spicy Pepper Relish) 3 jalapeños, roasted and skinned (see Spicy Pepper Relish), or to taste ½ pound red onions 2 fat cloves garlic 2 teaspoons cumin seeds

1 teaspoon coriander seeds

3½ cups apple-cider vinegar, or more if needed 1 cup water 1 tablespoon kosher salt

3 tablespoons sugar

1 heaping tablespoon finely chopped fresh cilantro Freshly ground black pepper

1 Shuck the corn, strip off the silks, and cut the kernels from the cob with a sharp knife. (This can be messy. My advice is to cut the corn into the bottom of your largest mixing bowl and work outdoors to avoid splattering the kitchen.) Slice the roasted red pepper into ¼-inch strips, and then dice. Mince the jalapeños, removing the seeds as you like to moderate their heat. Cut the onions into ¼-inch dice, and mince the garlic. Toast the cumin and coriander in a dry pan for a minute or two, until the seeds are browned and fragrant.

2 Combine the vinegar, water, salt, and sugar in a large pot, and bring to a boil. Add the corn, red pepper, jalapeños, onions, garlic, cumin, and coriander. Bring back to a boil, and cook for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat. Stir in the cilantro, and a generous grinding of black pepper.

3 Using a slotted spoon, pack the relish into six prepared pint jars, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace. Once all the relish is distributed, ladle in the cooking liquid to cover, leaving ½ inch headspace. Run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jars to release air pockets, and top up again. If you run short of liquid, make up the difference with straight apple-cider vinegar. Wipe the rims, seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 15 minutes. Turn off the heat, uncover the canning pot, and allow the jars to rest for 5 minutes before removing.

SPICY PEPPER RELISH | *YIELDS ABOUT 3 PINTS*

My friend and occasional canning buddy Sue Moore runs a hot-dog business called Let's Be Frank. Her Mumbai-spiced Devil Sauce was the inspiration for this more Mediterranean-style pepper relish flavored with red wine and fennel. I make it in high summer from a mixed bag of jalapeños and every type of mild pepper I can find: bell peppers, Anaheim green chilies, Hungarian peppers, lipstick pimientos, sweet banana peppers, and Italian long peppers. The devil is in the details.

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3 pounds mixed mild peppers, including red, yellow, and green bell peppers and any other "sweet" variety 4 to 6 ounces green or red jalapeños, to taste 1 pound onions 2 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon kosher salt

½ teaspoon wild fennel seeds (or store-bought) 4 to 5 cloves garlic, minced 2 anchovy fillets, mashed into a paste 1⅓ cups red-wine vinegar, or more if needed 1⅓ cups dark, earthy red wine, such as a Spanish Garnacha

1 Split the peppers and jalapeños in half, and lay them, cut side down, on a baking sheet lined with aluminum foil. (You'll probably need to work in two or more batches.) Put the peppers under the broiler and cook until they are thoroughly scorched and their skins blister. (See the photograph.) 2 Put the scorched peppers in a covered container, and allow to steam for 15 minutes. Remove the stems, seeds, and skins, which will slip off. *Wear rubber gloves when working with the jalapeños.* Slice the peeled peppers crosswise into ¼-inch strips. Dice the jalapeños. Set aside.

3 Peel and cut the onions into ¼-inch slices. Sauté in the olive oil over medium heat, and season with ¼ teaspoon of the salt. Stir frequently, and don't let the onions brown. After 5 minutes, add the fennel, minced garlic, and anchovies,

and season with another ¼ teaspoon of the salt. Cook for 5 minutes longer, then add the peppers, half the jalapeños, and the remaining salt. Cover with the vinegar and wine, and stir to combine. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat to a simmer and cook, partially covered, for 30 to 40 minutes. Midway through cooking, taste for the heat level, and add as much of the remaining diced jalapeño as you like.

4 When the liquid has been reduced and the onions are very tender, pack the hot relish into three prepared pint jars, using a slotted spoon, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace. Finally, cover the relish with the liquid remaining in the pot, leaving ½ inch headspace. Run a bamboo skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jars to release any air pockets, and top up again if necessary. If there isn't enough liquid to cover the relish, make up the difference with straight red-wine vinegar. Wipe the rims, seal, and process the jars in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. Allow to cure for at least a week before opening.

ROASTED RED PEPPER RELISH | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

I once took a jar of Roasted Red Pepper Relish to a potluck lunch. One person put it on toasted baguette rounds as crostini. A few others sprinkled it on chicken tacos. Somebody else toasted it on flatbread with goat cheese to make a simple pizza. A vegan spread it on cucumber slices with olive oil and a few strands of basil chiffonade. It went with everything. At home, I toss it with pasta and basil, serve it with fish, and put it on hamburgers. The word for this relish is "versatile."

Adjust the herbs, spices, or salt to taste, but for safety reasons don't change the proportion of vegetables to vinegar. The recipe can be doubled.

2¼ pounds red bell peppers

1 pound Roma tomatoes

1 small onion (4 ounces) 2 cloves garlic

1 tablespoon kosher salt

2 anchovy fillets, rinsed and drained 6 tablespoons red-wine vinegar

2 teaspoons sugar

½ teaspoon herbes de Provence or dried oregano Pinch of ground cayenne pepper Optional: 1 tablespoon chopped fresh basil

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 Cut the peppers in half. Lay the peppers (cut side down), tomatoes, onion, and garlic on a baking sheet lined with aluminum foil. (You will probably

need to work in two batches.) Cook under the broiler until the vegetables are scorched and blackened. Set aside the tomatoes, onion, and garlic to cool. Fold the aluminum foil around the peppers, crimp the edges to seal, and leave to steam for 15 minutes.

2 Peel off the tomatoes' charred skin with your fingers, slice the tomatoes in half, and squeeze out the seeds and juice. Discard the seeds and juice, and chop the flesh. Peel the onion, and mince. Peel the garlic, and mash into a paste with ¼ teaspoon salt and the anchovies. Combine the tomatoes, onion, and garlic-anchovy paste in a bowl.

3 Rub off the peppers' charred skin, and discard. Discard the seeds and white connective tissue. Chop the peppers into ¼-inch dice and add to the bowl with the other vegetables. You should have 4½ cups.

4 Put the chopped vegetables in a saucepan with the vinegar, the remaining salt, the sugar, the dried herbs, and the cayenne pepper. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Lower the heat, and simmer gently for 5 minutes, adding the optional basil, if you like, during the last minute of cooking.

5 Ladle the hot relish into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace. Run a bamboo skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jar to release any air pockets. Add 1 tablespoon olive oil to each jar, taking care not to spill oil on the jar rim. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

SWEET ONION RELISH | *YIELDS ABOUT 3 PINTS*

A cooked onion can taste “sweet” because of the fructose stored in the bulb. In certain parts of the country, a “sweet” onion is a mild one. Georgia farmers have marketed their mild “Vidalia” onions since the 1930s, and they may try to sell you one by claiming it’s as “sweet as an apple,” which, like most sales pitches, is hyperbole. Southerners also eat onion relish sweetened with too much sugar. This recipe uses sweet onions but very little sweetener.

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3 pounds Vidalia, Walla Walla, Maui, or Texas sweet onions 1 red bell pepper, roasted, peeled, and seeded (see Spicy Pepper Relish) 2½ cups apple-cider vinegar, or more if needed 3 tablespoons sugar 1 tablespoon plus 2 teaspoons molasses

1 tablespoon kosher salt

1½ teaspoons yellow mustard seeds 1 dried red chili, minced, or to taste

3 allspice berries

1 cardamom pod, crushed

2 cloves

Optional: ¼ cup golden raisins or dried currants Freshly ground black pepper

1 Cut the onions and the red bell pepper into ¼-inch dice.

2 Combine all the remaining ingredients except the black pepper in a large pot, and bring to a boil. Add the diced onions and bell pepper, return to a boil, and simmer for 30 to 40 minutes, until the onions are translucent but still have a firm texture. Remove from the heat, and discard the spent allspice, cardamom, and cloves. Add several grinds of black pepper.

3 Using a slotted spoon, pack the hot relish into three prepared pint jars, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace. Once all the jars are filled, distribute the vinegar syrup among them, leaving ½ inch headspace. (If there isn't sufficient syrup, top up the jars with straight cider vinegar.) Wipe the rims, and seal the jars. Process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

SNAP BEAN RELISH | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

A snap bean is what Gran called any of the summertime beans that you prepare for cooking by snapping into manageable lengths. Papa would have further distinguished between bush beans and pole or “runner” beans, depending on the plant’s growth habit. Snap beans were meant to be eaten pod and all, whereas shelly beans—or shelling beans—were allowed to dry on the bush, then stripped from the withered pod. Broad beans, like limas, were eaten whole when young or allowed to mature for shelling. I don’t know that I ever heard Gran or Papa refer to a filet bean, but it is a skinny bean favored by the French, who call it a *haricot vert* or “green bean”—although filet beans can also be yellow or purple. A skinny person is a string bean, which is also a type of snap bean with a fibrous thread running up the seam on either side. String beans are a bother to cook with, but stringy Kentucky Wonder pole beans were so tasty that Papa grew them and Gran put up with them. The first stringless bean was bred in 1894 by Calvin Keeney, and I haven’t seen a real string bean in years.

Use whichever kind of bean you want for this recipe, although filet beans may lose their crunch. I like to mix in some yellow wax beans, which are fortunately stringless.

This relish would also be good stirred into potato salad or tossed with crisp summer lettuces.

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2 pounds green beans or yellow wax beans, stem ends removed 2 teaspoons kosher salt, plus more for blanching ½ pound red onions (1 cup diced) 1 large yellow pepper, roasted, peeled, and seeded (see Spicy Pepper Relish) 4 cloves garlic, peeled and split 2½ cups white-wine vinegar 1½ cups water 2 tablespoons sugar

1 teaspoon yellow mustard seeds

¼ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper, or more to taste 1 heaping tablespoon chopped fresh opal basil Freshly ground black pepper

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 Blanch the beans in well-salted boiling water (3 tablespoons of kosher salt to 1 gallon of water) for 60 to 90 seconds, until they are bright and pliable but not cooked through. Remove the beans with a slotted spoon, and shock in cold water. Drain and set aside. Cut the onion into ¼-inch dice, and blanch in the same water for 60 seconds. Drain. Cut the yellow pepper into ¼-inch dice. Divide the garlic among four prepared pint jars.

2 Combine the vinegar, water, salt, sugar, mustard, and cayenne pepper in a large pot, and bring to a boil. Meanwhile, slice the beans into ¼-inch rounds.

3 Add the beans, onion, and yellow pepper to the pot with the vinegar syrup, and return to a boil. Cook for 5 minutes, then stir in the basil and a generous grinding of black pepper. Using a slotted spoon, divide the hot relish among the jars, leaving ¾ inch headspace. Ladle in the hot syrup, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace, then pour 1 tablespoon of olive oil into each jar. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

FENNEL RELISH | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

Fennel’s anise flavor pairs well with apples and apple-cider vinegar, and this relish goes with pork, fennel’s reliable friend. A more surprising use is to stir a spoonful of the relish into risotto at the final moment when you add the Parmesan and butter. The vinegar in the relish makes all the flavors pop.

Roasting the fennel brings out its natural sweetness.

1½ pounds Vidalia or other sweet onions 2 teaspoons plus 1 tablespoon kosher salt 4 large fennel bulbs (about 2 pounds trimmed of fronds and narrow stalks) 2 cups apple-cider vinegar 2 cups water 3 tablespoons honey 2 teaspoons fennel seeds 1 teaspoon mustard seeds

1 bay leaf

½ pound tart apples or crab apples, cored and diced but not peeled

2 tablespoons minced fennel fronds

Freshly ground black pepper

1 Dice the onions and toss in a colander with 2 teaspoons of the salt. Allow to drip for 2 hours, then rinse with fresh water and drain.

2 Remove the tough outermost rib from the fennel bulbs, cut away the narrow stalks and fronds, and trim the base. Cut the bulbs into ¼-inch slices from root to stem. Lay the slices on a cookie sheet lined with aluminum foil in a single layer, and roast in a 425-degree over for 30 minutes, or until the edges start to caramelize. Set aside to cool, then cut into ¼-inch dice.

3 Combine the vinegar, water, honey, remaining tablespoon salt, fennel seeds, mustard seeds, and bay leaf in a pot, and bring to a boil. Add the onions, fennel, and apples, return to a boil, and cook for 5 minutes. Stir in the minced fennel fronds and half a dozen grinds of black pepper. Using a slotted spoon,

divide the relish among four prepared pint jars, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace, then ladle the hot syrup over the top, again leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

DILL RELISH | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

Dill is like a character actor who appears briefly onscreen to punch a hole through the scene, making everyone else seem a bit wan by comparison. At the table, dill outshines the crab in crab salad. It lifts the beet above its humble origins. It transforms the workaday cucumber into a refined sandwich for the leisure classes. Fresh dill is a most frightfully elegant weed.

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3 pounds Kirby pickling cucumbers

1 pound Vidalia or other sweet onions ½ cup kosher salt 2 trays of ice cubes

3 cups white-wine vinegar

½ cup sugar 2 cloves garlic, minced 2 teaspoons dill seeds 1 teaspoon fennel seeds

1 tablespoon mustard seeds

¼ cup minced fresh dill weed

1. Scrub the cucumbers and rub off the spines. Trim the ends, and chop into ¼-inch dice. Dice the onions. Stir together the vegetables and salt in a large mixing bowl, and cover with ice cubes. Set aside for 2 hours.

2. Drain the vegetables in a colander, and rinse by pouring a kettle of boiling water over the top.

3. Combine the vinegar, sugar, garlic, dill seeds, fennel seeds, and mustard seeds in a large kettle. Stir to dissolve the sugar, then add the diced vegetables and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium, and cook for 5 minutes. Stir in the dill weed, and ladle the hot relish into four prepared pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

SALSA VERDE WITH NEW MEXICO GREEN CHILIES | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

The freezer section of the grocery store has a bad rap among the local-seasonal food set, but anyone with a garden knows the value of a home freezer. Gran filled her two big chest freezers with enough corn, beans, meat, and strawberry freezer jam to feed the family for the year. I freeze New Mexico green chilies. They are sometimes marketed as Hatch chilies—after a town in southern New Mexico that grows them on a large scale—but no one place has the monopoly. Hatch is to New Mexico chilies what Vidalia is to sweet onions, an appellation or agricultural brand name.

What do you do with frozen green chilies? When I was twenty-two, I went to Santa Fe one winter to visit chef David Tanis. The night I arrived, he served a rustic hominy stew called *posole:* a cauldron of bones and fatty hunks of pork simmered for hours with handfuls of whole green chilies. A pepper's heat comes from capsaicin, a sort of chemical armor that's concentrated in the seeds, so David's *posole* with whole chilies was delicious but incredibly hot. Today I use seedless and skinless chilies for *posole.* A good source for the dried hominy is www.ranchogordo.com.

I also use green chilies, fresh or frozen, in salsa verde with tomatillos or green tomatoes. It's basically another kind of relish. If you're pressed for time during the brief chili season, freeze them while you can and defrost them later for making salsa.

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3 pounds tomatillos (about 9 cups crushed and chopped) ½ pound red onion
1 pound fresh or frozen green New Mexico chilies, peeled, seeded, and chopped

1 cup white-wine vinegar

¼ cup freshly squeezed lime juice

2 tablespoons kosher salt

3 cloves garlic, chopped 1 teaspoon cumin seeds, toasted 1 teaspoon smoked paprika

1 teaspoon dried oregano

½ teaspoon black peppercorns plus a few coriander seeds, ground together Optional: 1 or more fresh or dried cayenne peppers, chopped ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro (about ½ bunch) Optional: ¼ cup *reposado* tequila or mezcal

1 Remove the tomatillos from their papery husks—they may be gummy underneath—and rinse them well. Crush the tomatillos with the flat edge of your knife, or smash them with your palm. Chop coarsely.

2 Combine all the ingredients, except the cilantro and tequila, in a pot. Bring to a boil, and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat and taste. Adjust the seasoning and spiciness to your liking. Add the cilantro and tequila, if using, return to a boil, and cook for 1 minute.

3 Ladle the hot mixture into four prepared pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 15 minutes.

CRUSHED TOMATOES | *YIELDS 1 PINT (OR SCALE UP)*

Fresh tomatoes are good for a few months—July through mid-September in most parts of the country—but canned tomatoes are indispensable throughout the year for soups, stews, pastas, braises, pizzas, and sauces. Home-canned tomatoes make one of the best arguments I know for learning to save the season.

This recipe is for plain peeled, crushed tomatoes. To be honest, it's hardly a recipe at all, but a standard technique you can find in any USDA-approved canning guide. (My one innovation is the messy, fun, hands-on crush.) I don't season my canned tomatoes, apart from a pinch of salt, because I prefer having a stockpile of the staple ingredient, which I'll season when it comes out of the jar.

If you're accustomed to buying whole canned tomatoes at the store, don't be put off by the term "crushed." The tomatoes are quartered or broken open to release their juices, so the results are chunkier than store-bought crushed tomatoes. To can whole tomatoes requires either the addition of water, which dilutes flavor, or else an extended 85-minute processing time. Crushed tomatoes win for taste and efficiency.

Choose Roma, San Marzano, or other plum-style varieties, which are firmer and less juicy than beefsteak tomatoes. Plan for about a pound of fruit per pint, or 2 pounds per quart.

There is one secret you need to know. Cutting or crushing tomatoes activates an enzyme that may cause the pulp and liquid to separate during the hot-water bath. Heat deactivates the villain enzyme, so your goal is to get the skinned, crushed tomatoes into a hot pot quickly, as described below. (The watery defect is purely aesthetic. If you get some separation, the tomatoes are still safe.) *It is important to remember that safely canning tomatoes with the boiling-water process requires the addition of bottled lemon juice, with its controlled acidity, or citric acid. Freshly squeezed lemon juice is not a safe substitute.*

This recipe is given for a pint. Scale it up to suit your quantities.

1¼ pounds Roma or other plum-style tomatoes 1 tablespoon bottled lemon juice, or ¼ teaspoon citric acid, *per pint jar*
Optional: heaping ½ teaspoon kosher salt per pint

1 Blanch the tomatoes in boiling water for 60 to 90 seconds, or until the skin splits. Lift them out with a slotted spoon, and set aside to cool. With large quantities, blanch one pound at a time. When cool enough to handle, slip the tomatoes out of their skins. Moving quickly now, tear the tomatoes into quarters with your hands, and put them into a pot. Add enough tomatoes to cover the bottom, and bring to a boil.

2 While the first batch comes to a boil, blanch and peel the next pound of tomatoes. Tear each one into quarters, and push it into the now simmering juices in the pot. Try to maintain a steady, slow boil throughout. Repeat until all the tomatoes have been added to the pot. Gently boil the tomatoes for 5 minutes longer, stirring periodically.

3 Meanwhile, prepare one pint jar for each pound of tomatoes, or one quart jar per 2 pounds. Add 1 tablespoon bottled lemon juice or ¼ teaspoon citric acid *per pint,* or 2 tablespoons bottled lemon juice or ½ teaspoon citric acid *per quart.* Add the salt, if using.

4 Ladle the hot tomatoes into jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 35 minutes for pints, 45 minutes for quarts.

“ODA AL TOMATE” / “ODE TO TOMATOES” BY PABLO NERUDA [1904–1973]

Between 1954 and 1959, the Nobel Prize–winning Chilean poet Pablo Neruda wrote three volumes of poems he called the *Odas Elementales* (*Elemental Odes*). Referring to them as “odes” was cheeky—even subversive—because since ancient times the ode had been considered a particularly fancy lyric form. Poets reserved the ode for high-minded subjects that they addressed in a high-flying rhetorical style. A good example would be Keats’s “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” the one that concludes “ ‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all / Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.’ ”

Neruda turned that tradition on its head when he wrote odes about humdrum things: “Ode to Firewood,” “Ode to the Onion,” “Ode to Laziness.” At times Neruda seems bemused by his own fascination with, say, a pair of socks. The odes are an old man’s testament to the transfixing beauty of everyday life. They are radically democratic, in that they address humble subjects in a simple style.

Perhaps my favorite elemental ode is “Ode to Tomatoes,” in which Neruda turns salad-making into a comic mock epic of the countertop. I think of it every August, when tomatoes pile up in the markets.

Neruda was eating his tomatoes in Chile, which is why the excerpt below begins with a reference to December—the height of summer in the Southern Hemisphere.

In December, unabated, the tomato invades

the kitchen, it enters at lunchtime, takes

its ease

on countertops, among glasses, butter dishes, blue saltcellars.

It sheds

its own light, benign majesty.

Unfortunately, we must murder it: the knife sinks

into living flesh, red

viscera,

a cool

sun,

profound, inexhaustible, populates the salads of Chile, happily, it is wed to the clear onion, and to celebrate the union we

pour

oil,

essential child of the olive, onto its halved hemispheres, pepper

adds

its fragrance, salt, its magnetism; it is the wedding of the day, parsley

hoists

its flag, potatoes

bubble vigorously, the aroma of the roast knocks

at the door, it's time!

come on!

HEIRLOOM TOMATO SAUCE | *TWO POUNDS TOMATOES WILL YIELD ABOUT 1 PINT SAUCE*

Early in the tomato season, I pay four dollars a pound for heirloom tomatoes at the Santa Monica Farmers Market. In mid-September, I can get the same tomatoes for sixty cents a pound. Time to make sauce.

Plum tomatoes are the usual sauce varieties, but one summer, at an engagement party for my good friends Claire and Ben, I got to talking to a couple, Cindy and Nick, from Northern California, who told me about the overwhelming productivity of their backyard heirloom-tomato garden. Cindy cooked them into sauce. I was shocked that she would "waste" them on sauce.

"But why?" she asked. "Heirlooms have the best flavor. They make the best sauce."

"It was in-CRED-i-ble," said Nick.

It turns out Nick and Cindy were right. Because each variety of heirloom tomato has a different flavor profile, the sauce from a mixed batch has the equivalent of a four-octave range. Romas and other plum-type tomatoes, if that's what you have, are also good.

When choosing heirloom varieties for sauce, weight the mix toward red tomatoes over lower-acid yellow ones. Ugly or bruised fruit is acceptable, as long as it hasn't started to develop the acrid smell of tomato rot.

Also remember that, in order to be safely canned using the boiling-water bath, every jar of tomato sauce must be acidified with bottled lemon juice or citric acid. Freshly squeezed lemon juice is not a safe substitute.

Ripe tomatoes 1 tablespoon bottled lemon juice, or ¼ teaspoon citric acid, *per pint* (double the quantities for quarts) Kosher salt to taste

1 Blanch, peel, crush, and heat the tomatoes, following the procedure in the recipe for Crushed Tomatoes. When all the tomatoes have been added to the pot, gently boil for 10 minutes longer, stirring periodically.

2 Grind the tomatoes through the fine blade of a food mill or pound them through a chinois. Return the purée to the pot, bring it to a boil, and reduce it by half, stirring occasionally. To gauge progress, stick a skewer into the pot to measure the initial depth, then compare as the contents reduce.

3 While the sauce reduces, line up your prepared jars and add 1 tablespoon of bottled lemon juice or ¼ teaspoon citric acid *per pint.*

4 Once the sauce is reduced by half, or to your liking, lightly salt it to taste.

5 Ladle the sauce into prepared jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 35 minutes for pint jars, 40 minutes for quarts. Turn off the heat, and allow the jars to rest in the water for 5 minutes before removing.

TOMATO JAM WITH SMOKED PAPRIKA | *YIELDS 1 PINT*

Think of tomato jam as high-class ketchup. The basic recipe below—flavored with salt, pepper, and smoked paprika—would be delicious with a crusty grilled-cheese sandwich. The variation, which is more highly flavored, with lime and ginger, is for my chic South African friend Jennifer Simchowitz, who asked for a condiment to make turkey burgers palatable.

Tomato jam is made exactly like any other fruit jam—you reduce the fruit with sugars. Tomatoes release copious water, so use a wide preserving pan. You'll know you've got jam when there's no excess liquid in the corners of the pot. If in doubt, put a teaspoon of jam on a chilled plate in the freezer for 90 seconds. If the mixture holds together, it's jam. If it leaks water at its edges, it's not yet done.

Don't overstir at the early stages of cooking, so that the jam stays chunky. The yield for this recipe is pitiful—5 pounds of tomatoes for 1 pint of jam.

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5 pounds Roma tomatoes

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

1½ cups sugar

1 teaspoon kosher salt

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper ⅛ teaspoon smoked paprika

1 Peel, seed, and chop the tomatoes. As you work, place the chopped pieces in a colander to drain. (To can the liquids, see Tomato Broth.) 2 Combine the tomatoes, lemon juice, and sugar in a preserving pan. Allow the mixture to macerate for 10 minutes, then bring to a boil over a high flame and reduce, stirring regularly. After 15 minutes, add the salt, pepper, and paprika. Continue reducing until thickened, 10 to 15 minutes longer. Taste, and add

more paprika if you would like. Ladle the hot jam into two prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

SUMMERTIME GRILLED CHICKEN WITH TOMATO JAM

The night before grilling, cut a small fryer into quarters, and toss the pieces with a generous sprinkling of whole fresh rosemary leaves, freshly squeezed lemon juice, crushed garlic, salt, freshly cracked black pepper, and a few pinches of smoked paprika. Douse everything with extra-virgin olive oil, and mix to coat well. Cover the chicken, and refrigerate overnight, stirring a few times to distribute the flavor.

The next day, remove the chicken from the refrigerator an hour before cooking. Grill the pieces over medium-hot coals for 10 to 12 minutes per side, or until the juices run clear. Transfer to a platter. Once the chicken is cool enough to handle, chop the breasts into rustic halves and slice the legs from the thighs. Toss the chicken and its juices in a large bowl with abundant paper-thin lemon rounds, several fresh rosemary sprigs, a sprinkling of salt and pepper, and a splash of your best-quality extra-virgin olive oil. Serve warm, at room temperature, or cold, dressed on the side with Tomato Jam with Smoked Paprika.

You can also “grill” the chicken under the broiler. Put the chicken in the oven with the skin side down, then flip it so the skin will crisp and brown as it finishes cooking.

Tomato Jam with Ginger and Lime Zest | *YIELDS 1 PINT*

---

5 pounds Roma tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped (about 6 cups prepped)

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice

1½ cups sugar

1 teaspoon kosher salt

A few grinds of black pepper 2 tablespoons grated or finely chopped fresh ginger root Zest of ½ lime, finely grated

Follow the directions for Tomato Jam with Smoked Paprika, replacing the lemon juice with lime juice. Add the salt, pepper, ginger, and lime zest after reducing for 15 minutes. Fill, and process jars normally.

TOMATO PASTE AND TOMATO BROTH

Home canning is space-efficient. A case in point is homemade tomato paste: 5 pounds of fresh tomatoes cook down to ½ pint of dense, intensely flavored paste.

That same 5 pounds of tomatoes will also release copious liquid while you're peeling and seeding them. Rather than let it go down the drain, work over a bowl to capture this tomato essence, and can it separately. It will be less thick than tomato juice but still have body and a great flavor—a sort of tomato . You could add it to stocks, stews, and reduction sauces. Or use it in Bloody Marys seasoned with Sriracha sauce and garnished with a homemade pickled string bean.

This Tomato Paste can be used in all the same ways as the store-bought. But also try this: Grill baguette slices, and rub them with a peeled clove of garlic while still hot. Smear on a thin layer of Tomato Paste, then top with a shaving of pecorino cheese and a shred of prosciutto—or nothing more than coarse salt, black pepper, and extra-virgin olive oil.

This recipe can be scaled up, although the time necessary to reduce the tomato pulp will also increase. Use Roma tomatoes or one of the heirloom sauce/paste varieties, such as the ribbed Costoluto Genovese.

TOMATO PASTE | *YIELDS ½ PINT*

---

5 pounds Roma tomatoes

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1 Blanch, peel, and seed the tomatoes, working on a plate or over a bowl to catch the liquids, seeds, and skins. Roughly chop the seeded tomatoes, and simmer over moderate heat for 1 hour.

2 Pound the soft tomato pulp through a fine-screen chinois, or pass it through the fine blade of a food mill, to create a seed-free purée. Reduce the purée over moderate heat until it has thickened to a stiff paste. This could take an hour, even with the small quantities called for here. As the paste starts to thicken, stir it constantly with a rubber spatula, turning it over regularly to prevent scorching.

3 Pack the finished paste into small jars (either two 4-ounce or one ½-pint), leaving ¼ inch headspace. Run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jars to eliminate any air pockets, then wipe the rims carefully and seal. Process in a boiling-water bath for 45 minutes. After opening a jar, completely cover any unused portion of paste with extra-virgin olive oil, and plan to use it within a few weeks.

TOMATO BROTH | *YIELDS WILL VARY, BUT 5 POUNDS OF TOMATOES PREPPED FOR TOMATO PASTE MIGHT YIELD SOMETHING LIKE 3 CUPS LIQUID*

Tomato liquids from making Tomato Paste
Bottled lemon juice or citric acid

1 Reserve all the juices, seeds, and skins left over from making tomato paste. Squeeze out the skins to extract all their juice, and discard skins. Pour through a fine-mesh sieve to remove the seeds. Allow to drip for 15 minutes, then discard the seeds. Measure the quantity of broth.

2 To each prepared pint jar, add 1 tablespoon bottled lemon juice or ¼ teaspoon citric acid.

3 Bring the liquids to a boil, and ladle into prepared pint jars. Seal, and process pints for 35 minutes.

CANADIAN KETCHUP | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

Not long after moving to Los Angeles, I hit a rough patch and began to feel what fellow Southerner Truman Capote described in *Breakfast at Tiffany's* as "the mean reds." A friend of mine referred me to Dr. Nicole Poliquin. After five years on Dr. P's couch, I felt much better.

One day, after a session in which I'd talked about canning, Dr. P asked me if I knew ketchup—the Canadian version. She explained that in her native Québec ketchup is a chunky chutney of tomatoes and late-summer fruit. She brought me a jar of her homemade ketchup so I'd know what it was supposed to taste like.

For this recipe, you can make an authentic chunky style, or a smooth purée that Mr. Heinz might recognize.

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5 pounds Roma tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and chopped 1½ pounds firm peaches, peeled, pitted, and chopped 1½ pounds firm pears, peeled, cored, and chopped 1½ pounds tart apples, peeled, cored, and chopped 2 cups chopped celery

2 cups chopped red onions

1½ cups sugar 2 cups white-wine vinegar 2 tablespoons kosher salt

4 cloves

1 cardamom pod, lightly crushed 1 inch cinnamon stick 3 allspice berries 5 black peppercorns

8 coriander seeds

1 Combine all the ingredients in a large pot, and cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is reduced to a thick sauce, about 2 hours.

2 For a chunky Canadian-style ketchup, discard the cinnamon stick, and ladle

the hot mixture into eight prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 15 minutes. For a smooth American-style ketchup, pound the mixture through a chinois or run it through the fine blade of a food mill. Return the purée to the pot, and bring back to a boil. Ladle into prepared jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process as usual.

BARBECUE SAUCE | *YIELDS ABOUT 2 PINTS*

I hesitate to include a barbecue sauce recipe, because, where I’m from, people hold to their beliefs about barbecue sauce with religious conviction. People might find reason to criticize this version simply because it’s not theirs.

The basis of most barbecue sauces is tomatoes, cider vinegar, and brown sugar. This recipe uses fruit instead of sugar as the sweetener. Smoke is another key component: dried chilies and cumin are toasted; Scottish Breakfast tea, pimentón, and mescal all introduce their own fire-licked qualities.

The list of ingredients is long, and all the aromatics together produce a deep, complex flavor, but don’t worry if you’re missing one of the elements.

---

4 pounds Roma tomatoes, peeled, cored, seeded, and coarsely chopped 2 pounds peaches, skinned, pitted, and chopped

1 cup chopped onion

4 small cloves garlic, chopped 1¼ cups apple-cider vinegar

3 tablespoons molasses

½ cup mescal or tequila 1 ounce sun-dried tomatoes (½ cup), reconstituted in ½ cup water ¼ ounce dried porcini mushrooms 2 dried red chilies, such as New Mexico or Anaheim, seeded and toasted in a dry skillet 2 dried cayenne peppers, chopped 3 tablespoons oyster sauce

2 teaspoons kosher salt

½ teaspoon black peppercorns, ground ½ teaspoon allspice berries, crushed

1 teaspoon mustard powder

¼ teaspoon cumin seeds, toasted in a dried skillet and ground 1 teaspoon smoked black tea, such as Lapsang Souchong or Scottish Breakfast ½ teaspoon Spanish pimentón, smoked paprika, or more to taste Pinch of celery seeds

1 Combine all the ingredients in a large pot. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Taste, and adjust the seasonings; then simmer for another 15 minutes, until the tomatoes and fruit are very soft.

2 Allow the hot mixture to cool slightly, then run it through the fine blade of a food mill or pound it through a chinois. (An immersion blender would also work here.) 3 Return the purée to the pot, and cook at a gentle boil for 45 minutes or more, until the sauce is thickened to your liking. Ladle into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

TOMATO CONFIT | *YIELDS ABOUT 1 QUART*

A French *confit* is a preserve. The usual method is to cook something in fat and submerge it in the fat for keeping. Once upon a time, confit was meant for long-term storage. In *The Cooking of Southwest France,* Paula Wolfert explains that, in the traditional countryside, duck and goose confits would be stored for up to a year. Aging beneath the protective fat cap—essentially an air-impermeable barrier that retards spoilage—developed flavor. Terrines, pâtés, and rillettes were likewise originally preparations to extend the shelf life of perishable meats, and M.F.K. Fisher wrote about aging pâtés in the cellar for months. The USDA would be alarmed, but try telling that to a gourmand.

Tomato Confit follows the basic method, and I learned it from my friend Lora Zarubin. Choose smallish, acidic tomatoes—I like the variety Early Girl—and cook them slowly in a fragrant bath of olive oil, garlic, and herbs. Transferred to an airtight jar and stored in the refrigerator, they will keep for 2 weeks. Cooking concentrates the tomato flavor, and the confit could be tossed with pasta, spread on toast, or served alongside squash gratin. The seasoned oil is delicious on its own for dipping or drizzling.

This recipe is not intended for canning.

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3 pounds Early Girl or other small tomatoes 2 cups extra-virgin olive oil, or as needed 4 cloves garlic, crushed

4 or 5 sprigs fresh thyme

½ teaspoon kosher salt Freshly ground black pepper

4 or 5 branches fresh rosemary

1 Wash the tomatoes, and remove their stems. Place them in a baking dish that's just large enough to hold them all, and add olive oil to fill the dish to a depth of ½ inch. Tuck the garlic cloves and thyme sprigs around the tomatoes. Sprinkle with salt and several grinds of black pepper, and lay the rosemary branches on top. (The rosemary doesn't need to be submerged in the oil.)

2 Bake in a 325-degree oven for 60 to 75 minutes, turning the tomatoes over once, until the skins are wrinkled and splitting. Allow the tomatoes to cool for a few minutes, then gently transfer them to wide-mouth pint jars that have been sterilized in the oven during the last 15 minutes of cooking. Cover the tomatoes completely with the cooking oil, and seal. Store the cooled jars in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

PRESSURE CANNING BASICS

Low-acid foods, including vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, and mushrooms, can be safely put up only using a pressure canner. As the name suggests, a pressure canner creates a pressurized atmosphere that generates temperatures higher than the boiling point of water. A temperature over 240 degrees is required to kill the bacteria that can spoil low-acid foods, including *Clostridium botulinum*, which causes botulism, a serious and potentially fatal food-borne illness.

A pressure canner is a piece of specialized equipment designed with a locking lid, reinforced walls, a pressure gauge, and/or a weighted-pressure valve with a petcock. The gauge shows the actual internal pressure in pounds per square inch and the corresponding temperature. The petcock is a regulator, a weighted disc that sits atop a steel nozzle and is calibrated to let steam escape in a controlled fashion when the internal pressure reaches a set level. When the petcock lets off steam, it rattles nervously, which can lead to the impression that the whole

canner is about to go ka-blam. You get used to it after a while. In the unlikely event that something goes wrong, pressure canners are fitted with a rubber safety valve that will blow out—and no doubt cause an unholy mess—before the canner blows up.

The best pressure canners, made by All American, have a precision metal-on-metal seal that doesn't require a rubber gasket. They are very heavy and handsome in an industrial way. The mid-sized 21.5-quart model I use, which holds nineteen pint jars or seven quart jars at a time, costs $239.95 from www.canningpantry.com.

Note that, although a pressure canner can be used for pressure cooking, not every household pressure cooker can be used for canning. Maintaining and regulating the precise pressure/temperature level for safe canning requires either a numeric pressure gauge or a weighted-pressure valve. As a reminder: A water-bath canner is just a big pot fitted with a jar rack. It's not a substitute for a pressure canner.

It is crucial for safe operation and the safe processing of low-acid foods that you study the manufacturer's instructions that come with your canner.

Here are a few pressure-canning basics meant to amplify but not replace the manufacturer's instructions.

WATER: Always add two to three inches of water to the pressure canner *before*

you load the jars.

LOCKING THE LID: The lid must be kept level while you lock it down. Tighten the lock handles two at a time, simultaneously turning a lock handle along with its opposite on the other side of the lid. Work your way around the lid two by two.

EXHAUSTING: After you lock the lid, turn on the heat but *do not* place the petcock on the valve stem yet. Allow the canner to come a full rolling boil, at which point a steady stream of steam will issue from the valve stem. This is called “exhausting” the canner, and the manufacturer’s instructions will indicate how long to exhaust the canner for a given recipe.

After exhausting, settle the petcock on the valve stem. Once it rattles, you begin to count the processing time specified in the recipe. Moderate the heat so that the petcock rattles several times a minute. It shouldn’t chatter constantly.

ALTITUDE ADJUSTMENTS: The canner’s pressure must be increased with altitude to maintain safe temperatures. At sea level, a canner operated at 10.5 pounds per square inch reaches an internal temperature of more than 240 degrees. At five thousand feet, a pressure of 12.5 pounds is required for the same temperature. Consult the manufacturer’s instructions.

A free smartphone app called My Altitude uses GPS readings to determine your altitude. (As a nifty touch, it also calculates the boiling point of water at your elevation to the hundredth of a degree.) **DEPRESSURIZING THE CANNER:** After the full processing time, turn off the heat and leave the canner undisturbed until the pressure gauge returns to zero. Remove the petcock to release any residual pressure. Only then is it safe to unlock the lid. Don’t let the canner cool completely, however, or else the resulting vacuum seal may prevent you from removing the lid.

CANNED SALMON | *YIELDS WILL VARY, BUT FIGURE THAT A ½-PINT JAR WILL HOLD ABOUT 7 OUNCES RAW, TRIMMED FISH, AND A PINT JAR WILL HOLD ABOUT 14 OUNCES*

The magnificent California king salmon, known to fishermen as the Chinook and biologists as *Oncorhynchus tshawytscha,* once filled the West Coast's rivers and streams, from Big Sur to Alaska. They were a staple of Native American tribes and an abundant luxury for Lewis and Clark's men. But de-cades of overfishing, pollution, dam-building, watershed deforestation, and climate change have decimated the wild stocks. California's commercial salmon fishery was canceled in 2010, because so few fish returned to spawn. Although 2011 saw some improvement and a limited commercial take was allowed, it is possible that, without careful management and habitat repair, California's salmon runs could collapse as completely and irrevocably as the historic runs of Atlantic salmon, *Salmo salar,* in Connecticut and Massachusetts. The Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch, which issues recommendations on sustainable seafood, advises consumers to look instead for Alaska salmon, a Seafood Watch "best choice" from an abundant, well-managed fishery.

In addition to salmon, other kinds of fatty fish, including bluefish, mackerel, steelhead trout, trout, and halibut, may be canned using this recipe. Tuna is canned in water or oil, using a somewhat different procedure. USDA instructions for canning tuna can be found at http://www.canningpantry.com/home-

canningguides.html.

It is crucial to note that fish is a low-acid food and cannot be canned safely in a boiling-water bath. To prevent the risk of botulism, a serious and potentially lethal food-borne illness, fish must be canned in a pressure canner following USDA guidelines. Please read Pressure Canning Basics with care and study the manufacturer's instructions that come with your pressure canner. Processing times for fish and all other low-acid foods must be adjusted for altitude, following manufacturer's recommendations.

Salmon, bluefish, mackerel, steelhead trout, trout, or halibut Kosher salt

1 You can start with a whole fish or buy fillets. For a whole fish, remove the scales and fins, then fillet. Detailed filleting instructions can be found at www.salmonuniversity.com. The skin may be left on the fillets or not, according to your preference. (If you catch your own fish, it should be bled and eviscerated immediately. Store on ice until ready to use.) 2 Cut the fillets into pieces that will fit into your jars. I like to cut strips and stand them on edge. You could also cut cubes and pack them snugly. Don't mash the fish, but fit as much into each jar as possible, leaving 1 inch headspace.

3 Add ¼ teaspoon kosher salt per ½-pint or ½ teaspoon per pint jar. (The salt

does not play a preservative role and may be omitted.) Carefully clean the jar rims with a damp paper towel. To remove any fish oil, wipe the rims with a paper towel or cotton ball that has been dipped in vinegar. Seal the jars. Load the jars into the pressure canner according to manufacturer's instructions.

4 Following manufacturer's instructions, process the jars in a dial-gauge pressure canner at 11 pounds of pressure, or in a weighted-gauge pressure canner at 10 pounds of pressure. Processing time is 100 minutes for both pint jars and ½-pint jars.

5 Depressurize the canner according to manufacturer's instructions. Remove the jars, and allow to cool overnight. The next morning, remove the rings and check each jar individually to ensure that the lid has sealed by pressing the "button" on the lid. If there is any movement, the seal failed. The product is edible at this point and may be stored in the refrigerator for use within the next few days, but unsealed jars are not safe for long-term shelf storage.

6 Wipe the outside of the jars with a damp rag that has been dipped in a mild vinegar solution (⅓ cup of distilled white vinegar to 1 quart of cool water). Pay extra attention to the threads. *Store the jars in a cool, dark place without their rings. If a seal fails during storage, or if there is any sign of bubbling, foaming, or fizzing, immediately throw away the jar and its contents. Do not taste the product to determine if it has spoiled!*

[Note] You could also add a small amount of seasoning to each jar before sealing: ½ teaspoon of chopped fresh dill, fennel, or thyme; a big pinch of dill or fennel seeds; a few twists of freshly ground black pepper.

Fall

How shall I tell of autumn and its changes And its changing constellations as the days Grow shorter than they were, and the summer’s heat Grows less than it had been?

—*Virgil’s “First Georgic”*

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INTRODUCTION

IF YOU WATCH THE GARDEN instead of the calendar, it's difficult to say when late summer tilts into early fall. At the market, the last of the peaches and plums overlap with the new pears and early apples. Outside, it's still warm, although dusk may creep up on you. Seeing the first yellow leaves, I always wonder whether they are the effect of late summer drought or a foreshadowing of autumnal decline—Shakespeare's "Bare ruined choirs, where late the sweet birds sang." Suddenly, one day between September and November, you realize that something is irretrievable: the peaches are gone, and the solemn pumpkins sit in the field, attached now to dry vines. Each season has its seasons.

As a preserver, I feel a subtle pressure as fall arrives to *get things done* and, equally, an inclination to combine the various fruits and nuts that pile up at the farmers' market. The work feels like a squirreling instinct, mysteriously in step with the activity of the real squirrels in the yard at Greenvalley. They bark at each other and quarrel over possession of the acorn trees out back. They cache their gleanings according to some obscure but deliberate plan—buried not under

this bunch of grass but *that* one.

The fall section of *Saving the Season* celebrates the varied late harvest: apples, pears, grapes, chilies and other peppers, quince, pomegranates, nuts, cabbage, and that most distinctly American of all berries, the cranberry.

Fall is the annual peak for making jelly, and I'll explore the technique in detail. Strongly flavored fall pickles are some of my favorites of the year, especially fermented sauerkraut and kimchi, two autumnal traditions from opposite sides of the globe. One may not think of nuts as part of the preserving repertoire, but they go into the complex sweet preserves called conserves and can be drowned in maple syrup as a dessert topping. Ground almonds are the basis of a delicious beverage, orgeat. All these recipes lie in the pages ahead.

The seasonal readings are also varied, ranging from a look at the very first still-life painting in the European canon to the rediscovery of the brilliant vegetable "portraits" of a long-forgotten English photographer. We'll travel to Massachusetts to pick cranberries and apples, and then head back to Johnson Hollow to make sorghum molasses—an old Appalachian tradition—with my dad's neighbor Ada Mae Houston.

It's still a busy season in the kitchen, but the shorter days and cooler nights are reminders that the agricultural year is winding down.

GREEN TOMATO CHUTNEY | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

The red-ripe tomato is a touchstone on many levels: a harbinger of the summer season, an exemplar of heirloom quality, a triumph for the backyard gardener.

So why bother with green tomatoes? One answer is that they, too, are harbingers of a new season—fall. Tomato vines will put on more fruit than the waning sun will ripen. The first freeze abruptly ends the crop in many parts of the country, but even in frost-free Southern California, cooler nights and overcast days mark the end of red tomatoes. In their immaturity, green tomatoes are zingy and firm. They're good for chutney, pickles, and relishes.

This recipe was inspired by Green Tomato Mince in Rufus Estes's *Good Things to Eat,* first published in 1911. Estes was born a slave in Murray County, Tennessee, and worked as a Pullman attendant, waiting on two presidents, European royalty, and celebrities including the actress Helena Modjeski and the pianist (and future Polish prime minister) Paderewski. Estes also served as chef in a railway president's private car—that era's equivalent to the private jet—and cooked for U.S. Steel's company dining room in Chicago.

Estes's cookbook is an exceptional document. It comes down to us as a snapshot, taken through the kitchen door, of elite taste at the turn of the twentieth century. But because his cooking was geared to the needs of workday lunches and traveling fare rather than the comically elaborate menus of the Gilded Age dinner party, Estes's recipes are manageable for twenty-first-century cooks. His Sorrel Soup, Broiled Mackerel with Black Butter, Tongue Sandwiches, Veal Loaf, Steamed Berry Pudding, Glazed Onions, and many other vegetable dishes are in step with our contemporary ideal that food should be prepared quickly from fresh ingredients and eaten without too much fuss. One hundred years after publication, Estes's book is still useful. It's full of good things to eat, just as the title promises.

Try using Green Tomato Chutney in place of mayonnaise and mustard on a meat loaf sandwich—my idea of a good traveling lunch.

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4 pounds green tomatoes 2½ tablespoons kosher salt 1 pound green apples ½ pound shallots or red onions 3 cloves garlic 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger root 1½ cups red-wine vinegar 1½ cups brown sugar 2 to 4 dried

or fresh chili peppers, thinly sliced 5 cloves 10 black peppercorns, crushed Fat pinch of ground mace or nutmeg 1 tablespoon brown mustard seeds 1 cup raisins or dried currants

1 Peel the tomatoes with a vegetable peeler, and chop into ¾-inch pieces. Toss with 1 tablespoon of the salt, and drain in a colander for an hour. Rinse with fresh water.

2 Peel and core the apples, and chop into ½-inch cubes. Thinly slice the shallots or onions. Peel and mince the garlic.

3 Combine all the ingredients except the dried fruit in a large pot, and bring to a boil. Cover, and simmer for 45 minutes. Add the dried fruit, and simmer for another 30 minutes, uncovered. Stir occasionally. At the end of the cooking time, the liquid in the kettle should be thickened and somewhat glossy. If your chutney seems too watery, turn up the heat and reduce for another 5 to 10 minutes, stirring to prevent scorching.

4 Ladle the hot chutney into four prepared pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 15 minutes. Allow to cure for a month before using.

CANNED GREEN TOMATOES | *ABOUT 1 POUND GREEN TOMATOES WILL YIELD 1 QUART*

East Tennessee is fried-green-tomato country, and one of my dad’s neighbors in Johnson Hollow cans fresh green tomatoes to use later. The slices come out of the jar very soft, so you have to handle them gently, but they cook up crisp. To prepare, coat each slice in cornmeal seasoned with salt, pepper, and ground cayenne. Slide the slices into hot fat. (I like lard, but any vegetable oil would be fine.) Fry them for 5 minutes per side, or until golden brown, and drain on paper towels. Sprinkle them with salt and pepper while they’re still sizzling hot. Serve

fried green tomatoes with Peach or Nectarine Chutney, Spicy Pepper Relish, or Roasted Jalapeños en Escabeche.

I recommend wide-mouth quart jars for this recipe. You'll be able to fit about two mid-sized tomatoes into a jar.

Bottled lemon juice, with its controlled acidity, is essential for safely canning green tomatoes and cannot be omitted or replaced in this recipe with fresh lemon juice.

Hard green tomatoes 2 tablespoons bottled lemon juice *per quart*
1 teaspoon kosher salt

1. Wash the tomatoes, and remove the stems. Cut into ½-inch slices, and stack the slices in prepared quart jars. Add 2 tablespoons of bottled lemon juice and 1 teaspoon of kosher salt per quart jar.

2. Cover the tomatoes with boiling water, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 45 minutes.

MRS. DORSEY BROWN'S GREEN TOMATO PICKLE | *YIELDS 3½ PINTS*

I was having dinner one night with my friend Sarah Stifler and an uncle of hers from back east when she asked if I knew about green tomato pickles. Her family used to buy them at their church's annual benefit fair, she said, and the memory sent her uncle into raptures. "It's the *only* thing to eat with roast beef," he said. He remembered that they used to be made by an elderly parishioner named Mrs. Brown, but he hadn't tasted the pickle in years, and he had no idea how it was made.

A few days later, the following e-mail arrived from Sarah:

There was, I remember, a cookbook published by St. Thomas's parish outside Baltimore in the late 1970s, and all the ladies contributed to it. I think my granny contributed her tomato aspic recipe.

I know there was a green tomato pickle recipe or two in it, and one might guess that whoever sold their pickle at the St. Thomas's fair is also likely to have contributed that recipe to the book. I e-mailed my family because I thought we had a copy of the cookbook floating around, but to no avail.

So I called St. Thomas's, and there is one woman working there, Barbara Parks, who still remembers my grandparents and the cookbook. She literally unlocked the church vault and pulled out the last copy of that coveted cookbook. Barbara went to the trouble of scanning all the recipes that included green tomatoes because she was not sure which one I was interested in.

Here is Mrs. Brown's recipe!

Sarah's e-mail included a scanned page of the cookbook marked "Mrs. Dorsey Brown's Green Tomato Pickle," which is really more of a relish. Apart from scaling down the quantities—Mrs. Brown calls for a peck of tomatoes—and adding a few descriptive instructions, I present the recipe here as it was recovered from St. Thomas's church vault.

The results are divine.

---

4 pounds green tomatoes 1 green bell pepper 1 red bell pepper 1 pound

white onions 1 or 2 dried hot chilies, split (remove the seeds to moderate heat to your taste) ½ cup kosher salt 2¼ cups apple-cider vinegar ⅓ cup water 2 cups organic sugar ¼ cup molasses 1 teaspoon freshly cracked black pepper 2 teaspoons celery seeds 2 tablespoons mustard seeds

1 Halve the green tomatoes, trim the stem and blossom ends, and cut into ½-inch slices. Halve and core the peppers, and cut crosswise into ½-inch slices. Thinly slice the onions. Combine all the vegetables as well as the chilies in a large nonreactive mixing bowl, and toss with the salt. Set aside for 6 hours.

2 Pour off the salty liquid, and cover the vegetables with fresh water for 15 minutes. Drain again.

3 Put the vegetables in a large pot with the remaining ingredients. Taste, and add more chilies if necessary—it should have a pleasant burn. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 1 hour, stirring no more than necessary, to avoid breaking down the vegetables.

4 Using a slotted spoon, evenly divide the cooked vegetables among seven prepared ½-pint jars, and cover with the hot liquid, leaving ½ inch headspace. Run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge to remove air pockets, and top up with more liquid, if necessary. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. Cure for at least 2 weeks before using, to allow the flavors to blend and mellow.

CHOW-CHOW | *YIELDS 8 PINTS*

There is no standard for chow-chow, because it reflects local variations, family traditions, and the vagaries of the garden plot. It is essentially an end-of-season catchall relish to use up whatever's still growing when the frost sets in. Cabbage is usually the base ingredient, although cauliflower sometimes shares the bill. Green tomatoes often play a role, although they don't have to, and some people add cucumbers or celery. Onion and pepper almost always make an appearance, and the overall flavor profile is established by mustard and celery seeds. I use mustard powder and a little flour to help thicken the vinegar syrup, because that's how it's done in my two most Southern references: *Southern Cooking* by Mrs. S. R. Dull (1928) and *Charleston Receipts* by the Junior League of Charleston (1950).

According to Linda Ziedrich, chow-chow and its baby-talk name probably derive from the Hindi word for pickle, *achar.* Like many Southern pickles, chow-chow is sweet-sour, and I add apples to get away with adding less sugar. Some people may want a sweeter chow-chow. Once, at a fancy nouvelle Southern restaurant, I had a dessert of local cheeses paired with quince jam, orange marmalade, and very sweet chow-chow. The more usual way to serve it —piquant and spicy—is alongside pinto beans and corn bread.

You can vary the mix of vegetables as long as you stick to a total of 20 cups. Traditionally, vegetables for chow-chow were ground in a sausage grinder. (See the photograph.) A food processor could work, as long as you're careful not to liquefy the ingredients with too much processing.

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1 head cabbage, 2½ pounds (6 cups ground) 1 head cauliflower, 2 pounds (6 cups ground) 2 pounds green tomatoes (3 cups ground) 1 pound Kirby cucumbers (1½ cups ground) 1 pound onions (1½ cups ground) 1 pound red or green peppers, roasted, seeded, and peeled (1 cup ground) 1 pound apples (1 cup ground) 2 jalapeño or Serrano chilies, seeded, or to taste ⅓ cup kosher salt 4 cups apple-cider vinegar 3 cups water ¾ cup brown sugar 2 teaspoons celery seeds 2 teaspoons mustard seeds 3 tablespoons mustard powder 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1 Grind all the vegetables and fruit, and toss them with the salt. Pour into a colander, and set aside to drain for 4 hours.

2 Working with one handful at a time, squeeze the liquids from the vegetable mixture. You should have 16 cups of vegetables. In a large pot, combine the vinegar, water, sugar, celery seeds, and mustard seeds. Mix a few tablespoons of the vinegar syrup with the mustard powder and flour to make a paste, then stir the paste into the pot. Bring the liquids to a boil, and add the vegetables. Bring everything back to a boil, and cook for 5 minutes longer.

3 Using a slotted spoon, pack the vegetables into eight prepared pint jars, leaving a generous 1 inch headspace. Ladle the liquids into the jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jars to release any air pockets, then seal. Process the jars in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. To reduce venting, leave the jars in the water for 5 minutes before removing. Allow to cure for 2 weeks before opening.

MRS. PLAGEMANN'S SAVORY GRAPES | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

Grapes are challenging to preserve, unless you count wine as a preserve. They arrive in the market by the ton, and eating them is a childlike pleasure, but table grapes don't have enough pectin to gel reliably, and canning grapes whole tends to toughen their skins. Pickled grapes are a good solution.

The best recipe I've seen for pickled grapes comes from Catherine Plagemann's 1967 cookbook, *Fine Preserving*. This minor masterpiece, sadly out of print, was saved from utter obscurity by M.F.K. Fisher, who mentioned it to John Harris, the publisher of Aris Books in Berkeley, during a chat about "lost" classics in the early 1980s. Fisher loaned him her copy, and he wound up reprinting *Fine Preserving* in 1986 annotated with Fisher's marginalia, which could be quite crabby. "I don't know why anyone ever bothers with quinces," she jotted alongside the recipe for Quince Marmalade.

Fisher had good things to say about Mrs. Plagemann's Pickled Seedless Grapes, however, calling it one of her two favorite recipes from the book. She suggests red Flame grapes and notes that these preserves are best after one month. Served cold and drained of their juices, Fisher writes, "they are delicious with any sandwiches, or cold meats, or fowl hot or cold, fish hot or cold, veal smoked or not, lamb … almost anything except maybe vanilla ice-cream."

My adaptation hews pretty closely to Mrs. Plagemann's original. Who could argue with M.F.K. Fisher's taste?

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3 pounds seedless red Flame grapes 2 cinnamon sticks, broken in half 4 small sprigs fresh or dried thyme 2 cups white-wine vinegar 3 cups sugar 2 tablespoons finely diced shallots

1 Choose grapes that are freshly picked, firm, and crisp. Remove them from the stem, and wash well. Pack them snugly into four prepared pint jars. It's fine to compress the grapes to squeeze in a few more, but don't crush them. Tuck half a cinnamon stick and a small sprig of thyme into each jar.

2 Combine the vinegar, sugar, and shallots in a saucepan, and bring to a boil.

Ladle the boiling syrup over the grapes to cover, seal the jars, and store in the refrigerator. This will give you the best texture.

For long-term shelf storage, leave a generous ½ inch headspace when you ladle the boiling syrup over the grapes. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

PAN-ROASTED QUAIL WITH SAVORY GRAPES

Split quail lengthwise, and marinate them overnight in the refrigerator with salt, freshly cracked black pepper, thyme sprigs, a bay leaf or two, and enough extra-virgin olive oil to coat everything well. When ready to cook, allow the birds to come up to room temperature for an hour. Sear them in hot lard or olive oil in a heavy skillet for about 4 minutes per side. (They will be a little pink on the inside.) Set aside on a warm platter. Drain the excess fat from the pan, and deglaze with a splash of vermouth. Add a handful of grapes, and heat them through. Pour the hot grapes and reduced pan juices over the quail, sprinkle with fresh thyme leaves, and serve piping hot.

THE FOUR SEASONS BY NICOLAS POUSSIN [1594–1665]

The Four Seasons is the title of a musical suite by Antonio Vivaldi, a series of self-portraits by Giuseppe Arcimboldo, a mosaic by Marc Chagall, a ballet by Jerome Robbins, a pop group led by Frankie Valli, a hotel chain, and an expensive restaurant in New York designed by Philip Johnson.

My favorite *Four Seasons* is from Nicolas Poussin, who is regarded as France's leading seventeenth-century painter. When I moved to France, I barely knew his name, but my apartment was near the Louvre, and Poussin was one of the painters who kept drawing me back.

Poussin lived most of his life in Rome and was inspired by the ancients. His style banished the moody, nighttime Caravaggiesque style that preceded him and replaced it with the golden light of the Arcadian landscape. The *Four Seasons,* though, are late works, different from those of his prime. They are strange and symbol-laden, troubled, filled with intimations of death—the work of a great artist at his end. His visual language references classical mythology and Biblical stories alike, and though the cycle can be read as a meditation on the seasons of human life and the path to the Christian paradise, they also hum with a pagan, pantheistic energy.

The strangest of the four is *Autumn* (*The Spies with the Grapes of the Promised Land*), which shows two men carrying a huge cluster of softball-sized grapes on a pole. Poussin was illustrating the Old Testament story of the grapes of Eshcol (Numbers 13:23), but knowing that does little to resolve the sight, at once funny and unnerving, of two Israelites dwarfed by giant grapes. Art historians point out that the grapes represent nature's great bounty, the promise of salvation, and all that, but what I always wonder is, how in heaven would you eat them?

GRAPE JELLY | *YIELDS ABOUT 1½ PINTS*

First a warning: most grapes won't make jelly without the addition of commercial pectin. The only grapes you should try in this recipe are thick-skinned, seedy Concords, *Vitis labrusca*, or wild grapes including muscadines and scuppernongs (see the photograph) that sprawl through the Southern woods. Even then, grape jelly is a bit touch-and-go. If you're picking your grapes, choose bunches that are slightly underripe and still have a few green berries. At the market, go for the very first crop of the season. The riper the grapes become, the less pectin they'll have. Don't try making jelly with seedless table grapes. It won't work.

Before you begin, read Jelly Basics.

The best grape jelly I've made was from the blueberry-sized fruit of a wild California grape, *V. californica*, that grows through the front-porch railings at Greenvalley. (See the photograph.) The berries are all skin and seed, but they have a wonderful tart flavor and lots of pectin. They're ideal for jelly.

For any grape jelly, a sliced green apple cooked with the grapes will add pectin. The pectin stock always has to be refrigerated overnight to allow natural tartrate crystals to form—look for tiny flecks floating on the surface. Strain them out to avoid crunchy jelly.

The "foxy" taste of Concords can be balanced by flavoring the jelly with lavender and rosemary—just swish fresh rosemary branches or dried lavender flowers through the hot jelly at the last moment. Finally, yields will vary depending on how juicy your grapes are and how much pectin they contain. Don't be surprised if you wind up with more or less than you expected. If you have a large amount of grapes, you could double the recipe. However, in step 4, do not try to reduce more than 4 cups of pectin stock at a time.

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3 pounds Concord grapes or wild grapes 1 green apple 3 cups sugar 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 Remove the grapes from their stems, rinse, and drain. (Include any underripe grapes you find.) Put the grapes in a pot, and crush with a potato masher or your hands. Slice the apple, skin and core included, and add it to the pot.

Bring to a boil, and simmer, lid ajar, for 20 minutes.

2 Strain the contents of the pot through a damp jelly bag or double layer of cheesecloth. The pectin stock will be slightly opaque at this stage. Hang the bag or cheesecloth sack over a bowl, and allow to drip until cool, about an hour. As the bag cools, you can gently massage it a few times to encourage the liquids to run. But be gentle with your squeezing, though, and stop if you see cloudy particles seeping through.

3 Transfer the pectin stock to a quart jar, and refrigerate overnight. The next day, strain it through a damp jelly bag to remove the tartrate crystals. Measure the stock. You should have 4 cups. (If you have more or less, adjust the amount of sugar accordingly in the next step.) 4 Combine the pectin stock, sugar, and lemon juice in a preserving pan, and reduce over high heat to the gel point, about 10 minutes at a full boil. Check the set, using the cold-saucer test. Put 1 teaspoon of hot jelly on a chilled plate, and place it in the freezer for 1 minute. At the gel set, a skin will form that wrinkles when you push your finger through it. If there's no skin, reduce 1 minute longer and check again. Ladle the hot jelly into three prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Wild Rose
Jelly

“THE FOX AND THE GRAPES,” *FABLES* (BOOK THREE, XI)

BY JEAN DE LA FONTAINE [1621–95]

The seventeenth-century French poet Jean de La Fontaine is best remembered for his *Fables*, short poems involving talking animals. Children can enjoy their charming word-play and pithy moral lessons, but the tales’ simplicity is often deceptive. La Fontaine was a worldly man—politically shrewd and sly in love—and he cultivated patrons from the upper ranks of the *ancien régime.* The grandees who kept him up included Nicolas Fouquet, who served as Louis XIV’s finance minister until the king jailed him for having spent vast piles of misappropriated funds to build himself the stupendous Château Vaux-le-Vicomte. La Fontaine understood human wiles, and he made his talking animals all too human.

The original source of “The Fox and the Grapes” was Aesop, and the story concerns a hungry fox that sees a tempting bunch of grapes that he can’t reach. The fox grumbles that he didn’t want them anyway, because they were probably green—hence our proverbial use of the phrase “sour grapes.” A hint of sexual innuendo runs through La Fontaine’s original French, which takes the tale rather abruptly out of the realm of nursery rhymes.

Various translators have tested themselves against La Fontaine’s light and elegant language. Marianne Moore’s version is a bit loose but displays a deft touch—she was, after all, a notable poet.

> A fox of Gascon, though some say of Norman descent, When starved till faint gazed up at a trellis to which grapes were tied—
> Matured till they glowed with a purplish tint As though there were gems inside.
> Now grapes were what our adventurer on strained haunches chanced to crave But because he could not reach the vine He said, “These grapes are sour; I’ll leave them for some knave.”
>
> Better, I think, than an embittered whine.

BRANDIED RAISINS | *YIELDS 1 PINT*

Raisins are already preserved, but their flavor can be enhanced by rehydrating and storing in alcohol. This recipe is a variation on the familiar rum-raisin. You could add any kind of spice that you like, or replace the brandy with another 80-proof alcohol. Serve the raisins and their liquid as a dessert topping—perhaps with walnut cake and sweetened whipped cream. Other dried fruit, including apricots, could be handled in the same way.

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1 cup Riesling wine or water 8 ounces raisins (about 1¾ cups) ¾ cup French brandy 2 tablespoons organic sugar

1 Bring the wine or water to a simmer in a small saucepan. Add the raisins, cover, and leave on the counter overnight.

2 Using a slotted spoon, pack the raisins in a scalded regular-mouth pint jar. Cover with the brandy, add the sugar, and seal. Leave for at least a month before opening, shaking occasionally. Taste, and add more sugar if you like. The jar does not have to be refrigerated.

[Note] To can, use ½ cup water and ¼ cup brandy in step 2, and leave ½ inch headspace when filling the jars. Process the sealed jars in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

PEAR JAM | *YIELDS ABOUT 3 PINTS*

When I was little and we lived on Leland Drive in Spartanburg, South Carolina, my mother planted a Bartlett pear tree in the front yard. It grew like a weed, and within a few years was producing pears by the bushel. My friend Jeff, a neighborhood terror who caused no end of trouble, once wreaked havoc with them.

My mom and I came back from a weekend in Tennessee and found that the large multi-paned garage windows had been smashed out. It turned out that Jeff had stood underneath the pear tree, gathered windfall fruit, and exercised his pitching arm until there was no more glass to break.

Pears make a sweet jam, even with only the modicum of sugar and honey in the recipe below. Use your instincts to adjust the given quantities of sugar, honey, and lemon juice to suit your taste.

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5 pounds ripe pears ¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice 2 cups sugar 2 tablespoons honey ½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise

1 Peel and core the pears, and cut them into ½-inch dice. As you work, place the diced pears in a bowl with 2 cups of water acidulated with 1 tablespoon of the lemon juice, to prevent browning.

2 Drain the pears, and toss them in a bowl with the remaining 3 tablespoons of lemon juice. Stir in the sugar, honey, and vanilla bean. Set aside to macerate for 2 hours or overnight.

3 Turn the fruit-sugar mixture into a preserving pan, bring to a boil, and reduce over high heat to the gel point, about 20 minutes. Discard the vanilla bean. Ladle the hot jam into six prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Smooth Pear Jam with Cardamom

Follow the recipe for Pear Jam, replacing the split

vanilla bean with five or six crushed cardamom pods. After reducing the fruit-sugar mixture for 10 minutes, pass it through the coarse blade of a food mill. Return the purée to the preserving pan, and continue reducing to the gel point. Process as directed.

[Note] Adding 2 tablespoons per eau-de-vie, also known as Poire Williams, will boost flavor in either of the preceding pear jam recipes.

TRUFFLED FALL FRUIT | *YIELDS ABOUT 1½ PINTS*

Nineteenth-century French gourmand Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin exemplified his era's gustatory appetites, and on the topic of truffles, he proclaimed a judgment that has been handed down as the wisdom of a patriarch. "The truffle is the diamond of the kitchen," he wrote in *The Physiology of Taste,* published in 1825 and never since out of print.

Brillat-Savarin had in mind the Périgord black truffle, *Tuber melanosporum,* a subterranean fungus that has been esteemed in Europe since ancient times. Its scent is oddly stirring. Brillat-Savarin wrote, "*La truffe dispose aux plaisirs génésiques,*" which might be translated as "The truffle inclines one" or even "prepares one" for "reproductive pleasures." Although the writer's Rabelaisian self regretted that truffles were not more available, the snob in him approved. "One of the great values of truffles is their dearness; perhaps they would be less highly esteemed if they were cheaper," he wrote, paraphrasing a sentiment from Juvenal's *Satires.*

Brillat-Savarin's two themes—the erotics and the economics of the truffle—have proved eternal. Colette gave her reader the following advice on truffles: "If you love her, pay her ransom regally," and then she described poaching this expensive mistress in a bath of dry white wine seasoned with salt pork, "half fat, half lean." Even in our less rhapsodic age, culinary ethnographer and cookbook guru Paula Wolfert came unglued when she wrote about eating a whole baked truffle: "I felt at one with nature. … There was ripeness, naughtiness, something beyond description." Tasting a truffle, she continued, was like eating "the most expensive lump of dirt in the world," which in context was given to be a marvelously appetizing thing.

I finally understood what Wolfert meant when I smelled a freshly dug truffle—in East Tennessee, of all places, where a mycologist named Tom Michaels has successfully cultivated the Périgord truffle in the hillbilly homeland. Tom invited me to join him and a trained truffle dog, also named Tom, to dig black diamonds on his truffle farm. It didn't take Tom the dog long to sniff one out. The other Tom dug it from the ground. I lifted it to my nose.

You know how a freshly shucked oyster tastes of the whole ocean? The truffle's aroma was like that. It smelled elegantly of the whole earth—of minerals and the soily decay that nourishes spring's grassy growth. There was a bit of mushroom essence, perhaps greasy like dried meats, but overall the scent was surprisingly vegetal, fruity, and almost floral. And threading through it all was a dark, intimate fragrance, that mysterious stirring quality that make truffles magic. My reaction as I held the truffle to my nose was more physical than sensory, almost like standing close to a person I wanted very badly to kiss.

The truffle's aroma, which is really a symphonic chord of many scents, has been analyzed in the laboratory, and its forty-some constituent compounds have been chemically described. Among them is a steroid that's identical to a pheromone produced by boars during their premating behavior. According to specialist Ian Hall in *Taming the Truffle,* this is why sows, female pigs, make the world's best truffle-hunters: they root out their quarry with hot desire.

A few slices of fresh truffle will infuse a jar of jam with its lingering scent. Try eating truffled fall fruit with cheese, either before or after an intimate supper.

1½ pounds pears 1½ pounds apples, including some tart varieties 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice 1½ cups sugar 3 ounces dried Black Mission figs, chopped, rehydrated in ¼ cup brandy or hot water 1 fresh black truffle

1 Peel and core the pears and apples, and cut them into ½-inch dice. As you work, place the fruit in acidulated water—1 tablespoon of the lemon juice in 2 cups of water—to prevent browning.

2 Drain the fruit, and toss it with the remaining 1 tablespoon lemon juice. Stir in the sugar and figs. Set aside to macerate for 2 hours or overnight.

3 Pour the fruit-sugar mixture into a preserving pan, and heat it to a boil. Meanwhile, cut the truffle into 6 slices as thick as a quarter, and set aside; chop the rest into matchsticks, and reserve. When the fruit-sugar mixture comes to a boil, reduce over medium heat to the gel point, 10 to 12 minutes. Stir in the chopped truffle. Ladle enough hot jam into each of three sterilized ½-pint jars to cover the bottom, then lay in a slice of truffle. Add enough jam to fill the jars two-thirds full. Add another slice of truffle to the jars. Top up the jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. For best flavor, store in the refrigerator. For longer shelf storage, process the sealed jars in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

PIQUANT PEARS WITH BAY LEAF AND BLACK PEPPER | *YIELDS 5 PINTS*

Flipping through a cookbook at a bookstore one day, I saw a recipe for figs baked with bay leaves and peppercorns. The idea inspired this recipe for sliced pears jarred with bay and pepper. It’s piquant from the addition of white-wine vinegar—a pickled pear.

1½ cups water ¾ cup white-wine vinegar 1 cup sugar ½ cup honey Five 3-inch strips lemon zest 5 small bay leaves 6 pounds small, just-ripe pears 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice 1 teaspoon black peppercorns, lightly crushed

1 Combine the water, vinegar, sugar, honey, lemon zest, and bay leaves in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, then turn off the heat and set aside.

2 Peel and core the pears, and cut them into quarters. As you work, toss the sliced fruit into a bowl with the lemon juice to prevent browning.

3 Bring the syrup back to a boil. Working in several batches, poach the pears for about 5 minutes, until they are slightly soft. Gently spoon them into five prepared pint jars. Repeat until all the pears are jarred.

4 Divide the crushed pepper among the jars, and tuck a bay leaf and a strip of lemon zest from the syrup into each. Top up jars with syrup, leaving ½ inch headspace. Run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jar to release air bubbles. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 15 minutes.

ASIAN PEARS IN GINGER-LEMONGRASS WATER | *YIELDS 6 PINTS*

Pyrus pyrifolia is usually called the Asian pear and sometimes the apple pear. The former is more correct, because, in spite of its apple-y shape, this is indeed a full-blooded pear, a member of the same genus as the more honeyed European pear, *Pyrus communis.* The Asian pear originated in China, where it has been cultivated for millennia, and immigrant railroad workers brought it to California in the nineteenth century.

Whereas European pears are picked firm, maturing on the consumer's watch, the Asian pear ripens on the tree and never loses its snap. It cracks between the teeth, like an apple. Asian pear adds a fresh taste and texture when sliced into a salad—faint praise for any fruit.

I never bothered much with Asian pears until my friend Nina Corbett, a third-generation Yankee preserver who sensibly moved to the California sunshine years ago, gave me some that she had preserved South Asian style. Lemongrass, ginger, and Kaffir lime leaf were the flavorings, but somehow the pears tasted distinctly of lychees. The canning liquid is so light and refreshing that I'd rather call it a "water" than a "syrup." Lime zest can replace Kaffir lime leaf.

Asian pears lack sufficient acidity to can safely using the boiling-water method. *Canned Asian pears must be acidified with bottled lemon juice or citric acid. Freshly squeezed lemon juice cannot be substituted in this recipe.*

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5 pounds Asian pears 5 cups water 1¾ cups sugar Zest of ½ lime, removed in 6 strips, or 3 Kaffir lime leaves 1 stalk lemongrass, lightly crushed, split, and cut into 3-inch sections 1½-inch thumb of fresh ginger root, peeled and sliced into rounds 8 tablespoons bottled lemon juice

1 Peel and quarter the pears, and scoop out the core with the edge of a spoon. To prevent browning, immediately submerge the fruit in a quart of water mixed with 2 tablespoons of the lemon juice.

2 Combine the 5 cups water, sugar, lime zest or Kaffir lime leaves, lemongrass, and ginger in a wide saucepan. Stir until the sugar is dissolved, and bring to a

boil.

3 Drain the pears and, working in two or three batches, simmer them for 5 minutes in the syrup, until they are translucent. Pack the hot fruit into prepared pint jars as snugly as possible, shaking the jars as you work to settle the slices. Do not top up with liquid until you have cooked and packed all the fruit.

4 Add 1 tablespoon of bottled lemon juice *to each pint jar.* Ladle the hot syrup over the top, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace. Divide the aromatics among the jars. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 20 minutes. Turn off the heat and wait 5 minutes before removing, to reduce venting.

WALNUTS IN MAPLE SYRUP AND BRANDY | *YIELDS 1 PINT*

Earlier in the book, I mentioned Mr. and Mrs. Follit, the parents of my mother's friend Rob Follit, who taught me to eat mint jelly with lamb. Mr. Follit was also the first person I ever knew who willingly ate black walnuts, which are much stronger than English walnuts. At ten years old, I couldn't imagine how he did it. To me, they tasted like dirt.

Mr. Follit planted two black walnut saplings behind their family home in Armonk, New York, and doted over them as if they were grandchildren. His sons teased him about whether he'd survive to harvest a crop, since black walnuts are slow-growing trees, but Mr. Follit's love for black walnuts made him impervious to their taunts.

One fall, Rob gathered up sacks of walnuts from beneath a mature tree somewhere else and, under the cover of night, scattered them around the saplings. When Mr. Follit came down for breakfast the next day, Rob urged him to go outside and check his trees. The joyous shock of the "miracle" nearly did him in. Rob had to come clean, and I believe that Mr. Follit was genuinely crushed to know that his little trees had not delivered.

I still think that black walnuts taste like dirt, but in a good way. My father has black walnut trees on his farm, and they grow wild throughout Johnson Hollow. *Juglans nigra* likes moisture, and you can always tell from a distance if there's a creek winding through a pasture because of the long canopy of black walnut trees shading it.

Reaching a hundred feet or more when mature, the trees bear heavily in the fall. The nut's hard shell is covered by a thick green-black husk about the size of a tennis ball. A direct hit by one from a hundred feet would hurt. Some people husk walnuts by spreading them on the driveway and running over them. Even then, the work has just begun. Black walnut shells are incredibly tough, and extracting the meat is tedious. I once paid sixteen dollars a pound for hand-shelled black walnuts and considered it a bargain.

This recipe could also be made with English walnuts or pecans. If you happen to have nocino, you could use it in place of brandy. Preserved nuts are extravagantly good with either vanilla or chocolate desserts.

The small quantities given below could be scaled up to suit your walnut supply. This recipe is not intended for canning, and the nuts should be kept in the refrigerator.

1½ cups shelled walnuts (7 ounces) 1 cup maple syrup ¼ cup brandy or nocino 2 cloves

1 Lightly toast the walnuts on a cookie sheet in a 425-degree oven for 5 minutes. Set aside.

2 Bring the maple syrup to a boil in a small saucepan. Stir down the foam, and add the nuts. Stir to coat with the syrup, and cook for 2 minutes longer. Stir in the alcohol and remove from the heat.

3 Ladle the hot mixture into two sterilized ½-pint jars. Add one clove to each jar, and seal. Store in the refrigerator for at least a week before opening, and use within 6 months.

[Note] If you use nocino, omit the cloves. To preserve pecans, use bourbon or rum as the alcohol, and replace the cloves with a few gratings of nutmeg.

ORGEAT | *YIELDS ABOUT 1 QUART*

Orgeat, said in ze Franch way like “or-zhat,” is sweetened almond milk. It dates back as far as the sixth century A.D., when Byzantine physician Anthimus prescribed a light barley decoction for feverish patients. In time, the drink was fortified with sugar and licorice, and in that manner it was still being drunk in seventeenth-century England, when a similar but distinct beverage, this one made from ground almonds and orange-flower water, arrived from France. The second drink was called *orgemonde*, from *orge mondé* or hulled barley—suggesting that it, too, was a derivative of Anthimus’s barley decoction. English mouths chewed over the French words until all that remained was “orgeat,” and at some point the barley drink and the almond drink merged.

Modern orgeat syrup—flavored with almond extract, rose water, and orange-flower water—is very sweet. Bartenders use it to make a mai tai.

My recipe is based on one from Lettice Bryan’s *The Kentucky Housewife* of 1839. Mrs. Bryan reconciled the two historic variations of orgeat by using both barley water and ground almonds. Even though I’ve skipped the barley part in the name of efficiency, the recipe is still something of an afternoon project, on a par with, say, baking a coconut cake from scratch. But it is delicious, like liquid marzipan.

Orgeat makes a great cocktail served on the rocks with Calvados or other brandy—a lighter alternative to holiday eggnog. Orgeat is also related to the Hispanic world’s *horchata*, and I make a soft drink by diluting orgeat by half with cold water. You could also use orgeat to sweeten lemonade or flavor hot chocolate.

Apricot kernels or “bitter almonds” add to orgeat’s exceptional flavor. Be aware that the bitter taste comes from a molecule that also releases trace amounts of cyanide. Please read Apricot Kernel “Bitter Almonds” to understand and evaluate the potential risks.

Time-saving suggestions and proposed substitutions follow the recipe.

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2 pounds apricot pits, to yield ¼ cup apricot kernels ½ pound raw almonds 2¼ cups hot water 6 fresh or dried rose geranium leaves 1 cup bottled

water 2¼ cups sugar 10 drops (1/8 teaspoon) orange-flower water
Optional: 1 tablespoon brandy

1 Crack the apricot pits with a nutcracker, and remove the kernels. Blanch them in a pan of boiling water for 30 seconds, and remove with a slotted spoon. Blanch the almonds in the same water for 30 seconds. Drain. Peel the kernels and almonds by rubbing them aggressively between your palms. The white meats will jump out of their skins.

2 Roughly chop the kernels and almonds. Seal a handful of chopped nuts and kernels in a heavy plastic freezer bag, lay the bag on a cutting board, and pound it with a rolling pin or the bottom of a skillet until the nuts are smashed into meal. Continue working in small batches until all the nuts are pounded.

3 Place the nut meal in a saucepan, and cover with the 2¼ cups hot but not boiling water—about 180 degrees, the temperature at which a teakettle will "whisper." Steep for 15 minutes, then strain through a damp jelly bag or double layer of damp cheesecloth. Squeeze the dregs dry, and reserve them.

4 Return the strained liquid to the saucepan, and heat to scalding. Do not let the liquid reach a boil. Add the dregs and the rose geranium leaves, and again steep for 15 minutes. Strain the almond milk through a jelly bag, and catch it in a large bowl. Wring the dregs in several batches to extract every last drop of milk. You should have 2 cups of liquid.

5 To the bowl of almond milk, add the bottled water, sugar, orange-flower water, and brandy, if using. Stir to dissolve the sugar, and pour the liquid into scalded bottles. Store in the refrigerator for up to a month. It will separate with time, so shake well before using.

[Note] In place of bitter almonds, add ½ teaspoon of almond extract to the almond milk when you add the orange-flower water. Also, you could use rose water in place of rose geranium leaves; add 6 to 8 drops along with the orange-flower water. Adjust to taste.

If you use a food processor to pulverize the nuts, be careful not to reduce them to an oily paste. Pulse the nuts in small batches, adding a tablespoon of water to each batch.

[ROAD TRIP]

THE APPLE TRAIL

GREENVALLEY TO WOODSTOCK, NEW YORK

“I will astonish Paris with an apple!”

—PAUL CÉZANNE [1839–1906]

In Los Angeles, oranges and pomegranates will grow any place they get water, which is another way of saying that this is not apple country. A few hours’ drive to the north, the central coast has cooler microclimates favorable to apple cultivation, and Bill and Barbara Spencer grow dozens of heirloom varieties in Paso Robles. Most of the recipes in this book were developed with apples from their Windrose Farm, among them Thomas Jefferson’s favorite Esopus Spitzenburg. There are also a few commercial apple orchards—established in the late nineteenth century—in the mile-high canyons of the San Bernardino Mountains. I’ve picked apples up there, in a community

called Oak Glen, but September and October are harsh months locally. When I visited, the rattlesnake-brown landscape did little to bring back the childhood experience of picking apples in North Carolina, where the view was a color-block fantasy of cobalt sky, emerald grass, and inkjet-red apples.

To taste apples where the nighttime chill makes you appreciate the waning sun all the more, I flew to Massachusetts and followed the so-called Johnny Appleseed Trail, a driving tour through the state's orchards. Near Phillipstown a sign for the Red Apple Farm pointed me up a country lane hemmed by stone walls, where a second sign marked a red barn. The air inside was fragrant with apples, and I bought a bag of Macoun, said like *ma-cow-un*, a New England variety that tops its McIntosh parent for cidery flavor. As dusk fell and low clouds dragged through the orchard, Robert Frost's famous poem "After Apple-Picking" came to mind: "Essence of winter sleep is on the night, / The scent of apples: I am drowsing off." I checked myself into the nearby King Phillip Motel and dozed by the fireplace.

The next day I drove on to Woodstock, New York, to visit my college friend Alex Pincus and his fiancée, Gabrielle Cran. The weather had cleared, and as I followed a dirt road through the flamboyant woods to their cabin, the light was so clear that I felt

delirious. That night we talked by the fire about an abandoned orchard in nearby Mink Hollow, and the following morning we bought a bushel basket at a yard sale and went picking.

The old trees, thirty feet tall, were heavy with lumpy, spotty, flavorful apples. We picked the literal low-hanging fruit, and Alex used a pole to knock down more. I climbed into the upper limbs, tempted by those I couldn't reach.

That night, as the extracted pectin stock settled in quart jars in preparation for jelly making, we drove down the hill to a cookout that attracted half of the Mink Hollow neighbors. Someone brought a bear roast to share. Kids scampered throughout the house. Folks joined a sing-along of bluegrass standards and gospel hymns as the night wound down.

The next morning at the cabin, the apples we had left on the screened porch were cracking cold and juicy. These were the apples I had traveled to find.

Whatever unspecified fruit the biblical scribes had in mind when they described the tree of knowledge, it probably wasn't an apple, which was not grown in their desert climate. Some scholars surmise that the pomegranate was, instead, the fruit of man's temptation. The familiar image of what John Milton called "that crude apple that diverted Eve" may have entered Christian iconography because Europe's religious painters and writers lived in a northerly climate where pomegranates were scarce but apples flourished—otherwise a falling pomegranate might have revealed gravity to Sir Isaac Newton.

It's also possible that Eve's apple and the whole forbidden-fruit

motif migrated to Genesis from Greek mythology, which recounts that Heracles pilfered golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides, making him literature's greatest scrumper, or orchard thief. Consider, too, that swift Atalanta lost her footrace—and thus her virgin independence—to cunning Hippomenes, who tossed down three golden apples knowing that she would not be able to resist stopping to pick them up. The most famous golden apple of all was the one inscribed "for the fairest," which provoked the Trojan War when Paris handed it to Aphrodite at the moment of his epochal judgment.

In a tenderer vein, the Greeks also considered the apple an intimate love token.

I am an apple tossed by one who loves you.
Say yes, Xanthippé, we both decay.

Before we get too carried away with the classical apple, though, it's important to bear in mind that anytime the word *maelon* comes up in ancient Greek, we don't really know what the author was talking about. A *maelon* may have been a quince or an orange, or even something else altogether because, as Henry David Thoreau wrote, the word meant "an apple, also the fruit of other trees, also a sheep and

any cattle, and finally riches in general." Still, this archaic idea that an apple might represent "riches" greater than a snack abounds in myth and poetry, and the riches represented may be of the immortal kind. Adam Leith Gollner's book *The Fruit Hunters* contains this: In Asgard, the Norse otherworld, apples keep gods young and immortal. Ancient Greece's Elysian Fields, reported Robert Graves, are apple orchards where only the souls of heroes are granted access. Avalon, meaning "Apple-land" or "Isle of Apples," is where King Arthur went to live forever and eat apples.

Thoreau, who often found himself in an ecstatic mood, described the woodland apples he found on his rambles as "fairy food, too beautiful to eat," and Emily Dickinson wrote:

"Heaven"—is what I cannot reach!

The Apple on the Tree …

Even in the godless twentieth century, Pablo Neruda put forward the apple as an emblem of the infant's state, an echo of prelapsarian bliss:

When we bite into your round innocence, we too regress for a moment to the state of the newborn: there's still some apple in us all.

Why have we burdened the fruit of *Malus pumila* with so much symbolic weight? The simple answer is that we know a good thing when we taste it.

And yet there seems to be something more at stake. Perhaps the apple is considered the emblematic food of Eden and the hereafter—the food of eternal time before and after this imperfect human realm—because, as food writer Waverly Root asserts, it has come to symbolize *all* fruits. And since the perfection of fruit doesn't require the blandishments of culture—fire or the cooking pot—the apple that falls into our hands appears to us as nature's blessing. European folk tradition held that the apple tree bent its branches low, so that the pregnant Virgin could reach it. The bowing, bountiful apple, then, is an echoing reminder of the primordial utopia that existed across spans of natural time before human evil took root in the world. What we remember in eating the apple is that *its* perfection was the same one moment before and one moment after the Fall. Flickering between those two instances was man's overreaching grasp, and the ever-

perfect apple is the measure of our lapse.

The irony of all this is that the apple is not a spontaneous natural prodigy like the blackberry, but rather the offspring of man's care, an artifact of culture rather than the gift of untended nature. The apple's ancestral homeland was pinpointed in 1929 by Russian botanist Nikolai Vavilov around the Kazakhstan town of Alma-Ata (meaning "father of the apple" in the local language). When Western scientists first visited sixty years later, they were astonished to find, according to Michael Pollan in the *Botany of Desire*, "entire forests of apples, three-hundred-year-old trees fifty feet tall and as big around as oaks." The variety of fruit that fell from these giant trees was no less astonishing in shape, size, and color. Pollan visited a research orchard in upstate New York planted from seeds gathered in the Alma-Ata forests to taste the fruit in its untutored state. Some were small as olives, others the size of baseballs, but none inspired a second bite. "Imagine sinking your teeth into a tart potato, or a mushy Brazil nut sheathed in leather," he writes. One wild apple seemed promising at first bite, but the flavor turned so bitter in his mouth that Pollan nearly retched.

Unlike beans or tomatoes, *Malus* seeds usually do not grow true to the parent—genetically the apple falls far from the tree. The vagaries of seed-based sexual reproduction make the potential offspring of any

two trees extraordinarily diverse, and if a palatable wild apple ever did occur through sheer chance, the desirable trait would likely vanish in the next generation. That's why selective cultivation—the quest for delicious fruit—had to await the invention of grafting. Archaeological evidence indicates that apples were eaten long before then, but the Greeks and Romans were the first Europeans to master the skill of slicing a growing leaf bud from a donor tree and applying it to the living tissue of a recipient tree. (Cato the Elder gave written instructions in the second century B.C.) Since the grafted bud would grow true to the parent—grafting is a method of vegetative cloning—a chance trait such as deliciousness could be propagated in perpetuity. Indeed, one of the apple varieties described by Pliny during the Roman Empire eventually made its way to Britain and later to our grocery stores, where the small, flatted fruit with an aromatic peel is known as the lady apple.

Early English colonialists brought apple seeds with them to America—bud wood wouldn't have survived the journey—thus unleashing another explosion of genetic diversity as "pippins," or seedling apples, hybridized with native crab apples. The varieties of New World fruit multiplied geometrically, aided by the efforts of pioneers including John Chambers, aka Johnny Appleseed, a real eighteenth-century wanderer who established apple orchards along what was then the western frontier. Everywhere people went along roads and waterways, apple trees sprouted from discarded cores, and birds spread apples as far as the climate allowed.

Many of those apples were "sour enough to set a squirrel's teeth on edge," wrote Thoreau, but Pollan points out that Americans were less picky about the eating quality of their apples then. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most of the crop went into cider and applejack, which is why Pollan calls Johnny Appleseed the "American Dionysus." Still a few freakishly good apples—the sweet and juicy fruit produced by those one-in-ten-thousand trees that beat the genetic lottery—were coveted, with ownership established less through methodical selection than finders-keepers luck. Such apples became orchard favorites and then commercial standards. A Quaker farmer named Jesse Hiatt in Peru, Iowa, repeatedly mowed down a volunteer seedling in his orchard until its persistent resprouting caused

him to relent and let the darn thing grow. Eventually the tree rewarded him with superb red fruit, and Hiatt mailed tree clones to nurseryman C. M. Stark, who christened it Delicious.

Despite the odds against getting good apples from seeds, the frantic diversity of apple genetics is such that American soil gave rise to literally thousands of named varieties. The merest handful of those gained any national or even regional prominence, but we nonetheless reckon the apple our national fruit—as surely as Plutarch, the Greek philosopher, and the pomologist Edward Bunyard considered it theirs.

See Appendix I for descriptions of a few of the most notable apple varieties grown today.

JELLY BASICS

Jelly is a familiar sweet preserve made by reducing fruit juice with sugar. A more accurate term than “juice” would be “pectin stock,” because making jelly begins with boiling fruit in a moderate amount of water, then straining the cooked fruit through a jelly bag (a muslin sack) or cheesecloth to extract the liquids. Natural pectin leaches from the fruit during cooking, and it is of course the pectin that causes jelly to set when the stock is reduced with sugar. For a reminder of how pectin works, see Cherry Preserves Made with Powdered Pectin.

The ideal jelly is a trembling crystal—transparent, brightly flavored, and just firm enough to hold an edge when cut. Jelly that isn’t cooked long enough will be syrup; overcooking makes the jelly tough and imparts a caramelized flavor.

I never cared for dull store-bought jelly, but now I look forward to this homemade autumn delicacy. Making jelly without added commercial pectin is one of those slightly show-offy kitchen skills—akin to making a soufflé or roasting a duck—that takes some effort to master but eventually delivers a genuine sense of accomplishment.

That said, the learning process can be nerve-racking. Initially, it is hard to judge when the hot jelly is reduced enough, and sometimes the jelly just doesn’t want to set. Some trial and error may be inevitable. The first time I made Scrumper’s Reward—crab apple jelly flavored with thyme and white wine—I got excited about the taste and I rushed the hot jelly-syrup into the jars. It didn’t set. When my friend Nero stopped by the house and asked what it was, I called it “a failure.” He tried it and said, “But it’s like honey.” As soon as Nero left, I wrote out labels for “Crab Apple Honey” and for the next year used the syrup to sweeten iced tea, flavor whipped cream, and deglaze the skillet after frying pork chops. The lesson is an important one: if you make a mistake when preserving, call it something else and move on.

Here area a few general observations on making jelly.

HIGH-PECTIN FRUIT BEST SUITED FOR JELLY: currants

hard apples crab apples quince
cranberries citrus

FRUIT THAT MAY HAVE ENOUGH PECTIN FOR JELLY: raspberries soft apples Concord grapes wild grapes

FRUIT THAT MAY NOT HAVE ENOUGH PECTIN FOR JELLY: strawberries apricots

blackberries blueberries peaches
seedless grapes

FRUIT: Success hinges on the fruit, which needs enough pectin to set and acidity to balance the sugar's sweetness. (Pectin gels best in a high-acid environment, between pH 2.8 and 3.5.) Fruit that is tart and very firm, somewhere between underripe and just-ripe, is best, because pectin levels decline with ripeness. Soft fruit will be less reliable. Among the many apple varieties, thick-skinned, russet heirloom types will yield better results than juicy eating apples—see Appendix I

for guidance in choosing the best varieties. Thin-skinned table grapes, including the wonderfully aromatic muscat grapes, won't have enough pectin to jell, although Concords and wild grapes might. Red currant jelly is the easiest to make, apart from cranberry. Quince, with its gorgeous color and rose-apple flavor, is my favorite.

Also bear in mind that jelly can be wasteful. After extracting the pectin stock, you will be left with a heap of soft pulp. Throughout this book, I've paired some of the jelly recipes with a second technique for the pulp by-product: apple jelly with applesauce, quince jelly with *membrillo*, apricot/peach jelly (which will likely thicken but not set) with apricot/peach chew. Try to think of the paired recipes as stages in a single process, and if pressed for time, refrigerate the cooked pulp for up to 3 days before continuing. The alternative is to throw away a lot of good fruit that is only half utilized.

COOKING THE FRUIT: Place the fruit in a pot and add water almost to cover. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer, partially covered, until the fruit is very soft but not yet collapsing. It's fine to turn the fruit over gently once, midway

through cooking, but don’t stir otherwise. If the fruit floats, weight it down with a colander—its bowl shape will submerge the fruit but not cause the liquid to overflow—or a lid one size smaller than the pot.

You can start with almost any quantity of fruit. As a rough guide, 5 pounds of apples or crab apples covered with 7 to 8 cups of fresh water will yield 6 to 7½ cups of pectin stock.

EXTRACTING THE PECTIN STOCK: Remove the pot from the heat, and ladle its contents through a jelly bag that has been moistened and wrung out. Alternatively, pour the pectin stock into a colander that has been lined with a moistened double layer of cheesecloth. Close the jelly bag by its string—or tie together the four corners of the cheesecloth with kitchen twine—and suspend it over a bowl to drip until cool. It is normal for the pectin stock to be slightly opaque at this point—the haze will magically clear when you boil it with the sugar.

SQUEEZING: The admonition not to squeeze the jelly bag in order to avoid cloudy jelly is nearly universal. I have found, though, that there is no harm in *gently* massaging the bag while it is

still warm to get another ½ cup or more of pectin stock. If you decide to squeeze, watch the extracted liquid closely. If it starts to look milky or thick with tiny fruit particles, stop squeezing.

SETTLING: As insurance against cloudy jelly, refrigerate the pectin stock in a jar overnight, to allow any suspended solids to settle out. The next day, handle the jar with care to avoid stirring it up. When you measure out the pectin stock, leave the murky lees behind. Note that, even after settling, the liquid will remain opaque.

If you are making grape jelly, you should always allow the pectin stock to settle overnight, since crunchy tartrate crystals will naturally form and will have to be strained out by pouring the pectin stock through a damp jelly bag or fine sieve.

SUGAR: Jelly is a high-sugar preserve, and there are no two ways around it. For the liquid pectin stock to congeal as jelly requires a dissolved sugar content of 60 to 65 percent. For fruits that are very high in pectin and acid, such as red currants and crab apples, you add one part pectin stock (by volume) to one part sugar. Reducing that syrup concentrates the sugars, including the natural fruit sugars, until a gel set is possible. For

apples, which are less tart and have less pectin, use four parts pectin stock to three parts sugar.

A friend of mine says you know you're reading an English jelly recipe when the instructions begin, "Warm sugar in the oven." I also recommend this added step. Sugar warmed on a tray for 15 minutes in a 225-degree oven will dissolve almost instantly when it hits the hot pectin stock and doesn't slow down the boil as much as cold sugar would (see the photograph opposite).

For jellies, I use white granulated sugar unless I want the darker flavor and color of organic sugar, as in Jameson Jelly.

QUANTITIES: However much pectin stock you have, reduce it in 4-cup batches. It will cook more quickly, have a fresher taste, and be easier to judge. (A failed batch is also less disheartening when it's small.) Four cups of pectin stock with the appropriate amount of sugar will yield 1½ to 2 pints of finished jelly. The general rule of thumb is that the yield will equal the amount of added sugar.

GEL SET: Bring the pectin stock to a boil in a preserving pan, then add the warmed sugar.

Reduce over high heat to the gel set. If you're using a candy thermometer, the temperature for a gel set is 8 degrees above the boiling point of water at your altitude—so 220 degrees Fahrenheit at sea level. (A free smartphone app called My Altitude will give you an instant elevation reading and also calculate the boiling point of water where you are.) Using subjective observation, watch for when the hot jelly develops the consistency of glycerin or warm honey—it will swirl heavily in the pan and appear dense. Mats of large bubbles—frog eyes—will form and may pile into foamy clumps. Turn off the heat and check for a gel set now. The hot jelly should cling thickly to a cold spoon, and a drop of it will bead on a cold saucer. A teaspoonful placed on a cold saucer and chilled in the freezer for 60 seconds will form a skin that wrinkles when you push your finger through it.

If you don't observe any of these indications, return the preserving pan to a boil and reduce for another minute. Check the gel set again. With repeated experience, you'll be able to judge the progress simply by observing the hot jelly in the pan.

FILLING THE JARS: As the hot jelly cools, it will begin to set up when the temperature falls to 180 degrees. Work quickly to get the jelly into the jars before it cools, or else bubbles trapped in the solidifying mass will become permanent flaws. Pour the jelly in a smooth, consistent stream to avoid splashing.

IF IT DOESN’T SET: Jelly that doesn’t set once cooled can be unsealed and cooked a second time until it reaches the gel point, although there will be some loss of quality. My advice is to use it as syrup instead.

APPLE JELLY | *FIVE POUNDS APPLES WILL YIELD ABOUT 3 PINTS JELLY*

When I was little, I felt what I'd now describe as joy in walking the rows of Papa's garden and feeding myself from whatever grew there. It was as close as I'll ever come to knowing the grace of prelapserian abundance that Milton describes in Book V of *Paradise Lost*, when Eve says to Adam, as she goes to gather dinner for their guest, the angel Raphael:

But I will haste and from each bough and brake,
Each Plant and juiciest Gourde will pluck such choice To entertain our Angel guest, as hee Beholding shall confess that here on Earth God hath dispenst his bounties as in Heav'n.

To me, throwing away edible food, the season's "bounties," is just wrong. Most people would agree.

One fall, as I strained the pectin stock from ten pounds of heirloom apples for apple jelly, I

started calculating the cost per jar. The numbers upset me, and I absentmindedly ate a few pieces of the cooked fruit to calm my nerves. Then it hit me: applesauce was the way to amortize the cost over two recipes. I ran the cooked fruit through a food mill, seeds and all, and got a homely but tasty applesauce that became my thrifty breakfast throughout the winter.

When making apple jelly and applesauce, select fruit that is firm, tart, and thick-skinned. A mixture of small heirloom varieties would be ideal, especially the "ugly" ones that have russet peels. Bland, watery, and oversized supermarket varieties such as Red or Golden Delicious will be less successful. Misshapen apples or those with superficial skin blemishes, which are often sold cheaply as "seconds," are good to use, but avoid overripe, bruised, or mashed fruit.

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5 pounds firm, tart, thick-skinned apples (see above headnote, and Appendix I) Water Sugar (see procedure for amount) Freshly squeezed lemon juice (see procedure for amount)

1 Quarter the apples, and remove the stem and

calyx (the dried blossom), but leave the peel, core, and seeds. Put the pared fruit in a large pot with enough water to barely submerge them. Simmer, partially covered, for 30 minutes, until the fruit is soft. You can turn the fruit once after 15 minutes to ensure even cooking, but otherwise do not stir. Strain the cooking liquid through a damp jelly bag or a double layer of damp cheesecloth. Allow to drip for 30 minutes, then squeeze gently. You can refrigerate the strained pectin stock overnight to settle, but that's not essential. The pectin stock will keep in the refrigerator for up to a week.

2 Measure the pectin stock, and note the amount. For every 4 cups stock, measure out 3 cups sugar, and warm it for 15 minutes on a baking sheet in a 225-degree oven. For every 4 cups stock, measure 2 tablespoons lemon juice. Combine the pectin stock and lemon juice in a preserving pan, and boil for 5 minutes. Add the sugar and stir to dissolve.

3 Reduce over high heat to the gel point, about 8 minutes. (See Jelly Basics for a description of the gel set.) Skim if necessary, and ladle into

prepared pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Apple Jelly is like a blank canvas. Here are a few of the many possible variations for filling it in.

Jameson Jelly | *YIELDS 1½ PINTS*

When I was making apple jelly with my friends Alex and Gabrielle in Woodstock, New York, the only sugar we had on hand was organic sugar. Its molasses residue darkened the pectin stock when I added it to the preserving pan, and I initially thought the jelly would be

ruined. But tasting a drop of the hot jelly-liquid inspired me to add a glug of Jameson Irish whiskey, which we had been drinking the night before. The results were delicious—bold and rather manly.

4 cups apple pectin stock 3 cups organic sugar 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice ¼ cup Jameson Irish whiskey

Follow the procedure for Apple Jelly. Reduce to the gel point, then add the whiskey to the preserving pan and reduce 1 or 2 minutes longer. Check the gel set, and process the sealed jars normally.

Apple Jelly with Chardonnay and Cloves | *YIELDS 1½ PINTS*

My friend Scott Sternberg, the designer behind the fashion company Band of Outsiders, keeps me looking respectable in his clothes, and I supply him with all the preserves he wants. His very favorite is Apple Jelly with Chardonnay

and Cloves. Scott says that if he ever has a daughter he’s going to name her Apple Chardonnay.

4 cups apple pectin stock 3 cups sugar 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice 5 cloves ¼ cup good California Chardonnay

Follow the procedure for Apple Jelly. Add the cloves to the preserving pan with the sugar. Continue reducing to the gel point. Add the wine, cook 1 to 2 minutes longer, and confirm the gel set. Discard the cloves. Seal the jars, and process normally.

Apple Jelly with Mint | *YIELDS 1½ PINTS*

This is an alternative to the green-dyed mint jelly from the supermarket.

4 cups apple pectin stock 3 cups sugar 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice 6 sprigs fresh mint, or more to taste

Follow the procedure for Apple Jelly. At the gel point, bruise four sprigs of the mint to release its fragrance, and stir through the hot jelly for 1 minute. Discard the spent mint. Chill a spoonful of jelly, and taste it. For a stronger mint flavor, infuse with another sprig, or more. Place a fresh mint leaf in each jar before sealing. Process the jars normally.

Apple Jelly with Red Wine and Bay | *YIELDS 1½ PINTS*

Red wine makes for a gorgeous color, and the bay flavor goes well with roast meats, sausages, and cheese. This is an unusual and very useful jelly.

4 cups apple pectin stock 3 cups sugar 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice 2 small California bay leaves, or 4 Mediterranean bay leaves ¼ cup dry red wine, such as Côtes du Rhône

Follow the procedure for Apple Jelly. Add bay

leaves to the preserving pan along with the sugar. After reducing the jelly-syrup for 5 minutes, add the wine. Return the pot to a boil, and continue reducing to the gel point, another 5 minutes or so. Seal the jars, and process normally.

Hot Pepper Jelly | *YIELDS 1½ PINTS*

Many people like to eat hot pepper jelly with cream cheese on crackers. I like it even better with any kind of sausage or wurst.

4 cups apple pectin stock 3 cups sugar 2

tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
2 to 3 teaspoons dried chili flakes

Follow the procedure for Apple Jelly. Add the chili flakes to the preserving pan with the sugar. Reduce to the gel point. Seal the jars, and process normally.

THRIFTY APPLESAUCE | *FIVE POUNDS APPLES WILL YIELD ABOUT 3½ PINTS APPLESAUCE*

Cooked fruit left from making Apple Jelly
Water or apple cider Freshly squeezed lemon juice Honey

1 Pass the cooked fruit through the medium blade of a food mill. If you are scrupulous about looks, you may want to scoop out the cores and seeds with a spoon before milling. Measure the purée and note the amount.

2 Put the purée in a preserving pan, and thin it with water or apple cider, using about 1 cup liquid per 4 cups purée, and adding more if you'd prefer a thinner consistency. Add 2 tablespoons of freshly squeezed lemon juice for every 4 cups purée. Add honey or sugar to

taste, beginning with about 2 to 4 tablespoons honey per 4 cups purée.

3 Bring the mixture to a boil over moderate heat, stirring constantly to prevent scorching. Bring to a boil. Chill a spoonful of the applesauce to taste it. Add more honey or liquid if you like. If the consistency is too runny, cook for a few minutes longer.

4 Ladle the hot applesauce into prepared pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Run a bamboo skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jar to release any air pockets. Squeeze 1 teaspoon of lemon juice into each jar—don’t stir it in—to prevent browning during storage.

5 Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[Note] If you want to skip the jelly and just make applesauce, core and slice 5 pounds of raw apples. Stew them until soft in about a quarter of their volume of water or apple cider. Purée the cooked fruit, and cook with honey and lemon juice as above, adding a little more liquid in step

2. Fill the jars and process normally.

You can also grind the pulp from other jellies, such as crab apple, quince, or grape, and add those purées to your applesauce for additional flavor.

APPLE POEMS

My long two-pointed
ladder’s sticking through
a tree Toward heaven
still, And there’s a barrel
that I didn’t fill Beside it,
and there may be two or
three Apples I didn’t pick
upon some bough.
But I am done with
apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep
is on the night, The scent
of apples: I am drowsing
off.
I cannot rub the
strangeness from my
sight I got from looking
through a pane of glass I
skimmed this morning
from the drinking trough
And held against the

world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well Upon my way to sleep before it fell, And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear, Stem end and blossom end, And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache, It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.

And I keep hearing from the cellar bin The rumbling sound Of load on load of apples coming in.

For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am
overtired Of the great
harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand
thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift
down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth, No
matter if not bruised or
spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-
apple heap As of no
worth.
One can see what will
trouble This sleep of
mine, whatever sleep it
is.
Were he not gone, The
woodchuck could say
whether it’s like his Long
sleep, as I describe its
coming on, Or just some
human sleep.

—ROBERT FROST [1874–1963], “AFTER APPLE-PICKING”

when my father had been
dead a week I woke
with his voice in my ear I
sat up in bed and held my
breath and stared at the
pale closed door

white apples and the taste
of stone if he called
again

I would put on my coat
and galoshes
—DONALD HALL
[1928–], “WHITE
APPLES”

APPLE JAM WITH HONEY | *YIELDS ABOUT 2 PINTS*

The secret to this low-sugar jam is in the mix. You should blend as many apple varieties as you can find: some tart, some aromatic, some sweet. Some to remain firm after cooking, some to collapse into sauce. Some for structure (acid) and some for ornament (sugar.) This jam made with all Golden Delicious would be cloying. Made with all Granny Smith, it would be austere. But with an heirloom mix of hard Jonathans and tart Bellflowers, together with a few sweet Galas and the lovely Pink Pearls left on the counter from last week's market trip, and also the shriveled Gravensteins forgotten in the bottom of the fridge —now you've got the makings of a fine jam.

Notice how little sugar this recipe uses. Adjust the sweetness if you like with a little more honey at the end of cooking, or perk up the flavor with Calvados, the wonderful apple brandy from Normandy. If you don't have Calvados in the

cupboard, another brandy or eau-de-vie could stand in.

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4 pounds apples, some sweet and some tart (see the guide Appendix I) 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice ½ cup water 2 cups sugar 1 to 2 tablespoons sage honey or other pale, mild honey 1 to 2 tablespoons Calvados Lemon zest, finely grated

1 Peel, core, and slice the apples into ½-inch chunks, and promptly place in a bowl with the lemon juice and water. As you add more fruit to the bowl, stir it into the acidulated water to prevent browning.

2 Add the sugar, stir to combine, and leave to macerate for an hour or more.

3 Turn the fruit-sugar mix into a preserving pan, and rapidly reduce until the apples are soft and only a little concentrated liquid remains, 10 to 12 minutes. Add the honey, Calvados, and a few scrapings of lemon zest. Chill a spoonful of the jam to taste, and add more of any flavoring, or all if you like.

4 Ladle the hot jam into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[Note] Because of its low sugar content, this jam should be refrigerated after opening and finished within a week. Otherwise, it may go moldy.

APPLE BUTTER | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

Sweetened with apple cider—no added sugar!—and very lightly spiced, this apple butter is mahogany-brown and intensely flavored. I use a mixed bag of apples, a third of which are acidic varieties such as Granny Smith, to get the proper sweet-tart balance. Unlike the other fruit butters in this book, this one does not have the apples puréed at any point in the cooking. The texture is better if you begin with sliced, unpeeled apples, and then allow the long cooking and frequent stirring to break them down naturally. Also unlike many apple butter recipes, this one has the spices added in tiny quantities toward the end of cooking. As I say elsewhere, you can always add more spice if you like, but you can’t take any out.

During cooking, the ingredients will reduce to about one-third of their initial volume. Stick a bamboo skewer straight down into the pot at the start of cooking to gauge the depth of the

ingredients. Mark the level with a pencil, and keep the skewer handy as a guide.

Given the hours-long cooking time, a slow cooker, its cover lifted by two chopsticks laid across the pot, would be convenient for this recipe.

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5 pounds mixed apple varieties, including ⅓ tart ½ gallon unfiltered apple cider 2 allspice berries 20 fresh gratings of cinnamon 10 fresh gratings of nutmeg

1 Quarter and core the apples, then cut them into 5/8-inch slices. (Leave the peels on.) Put the slices in a deep ovenproof pot, and cover them with the apple cider. Bring the pot to a boil, reduce the heat, and simmer, uncovered, for about 4 hours, stirring every 15 minutes.

2 At the end of that time, most of the liquid will have evaporated, and the apples will look like chunky applesauce. Grind the allspice in a mortar and add it to the pot. Use a Microplane grater to rasp off the suggested amounts of cinnamon and nutmeg. Transfer the pot to a 300-degree oven to finish reducing. Stir every

10 minutes. The butter is done when it’s stiff, mahogany brown, and reduced to about one-third of its initial volume, after about 90 minutes in the oven. In the cold-saucer test, a teaspoon chilled in the freezer for 1 minute shouldn’t leak liquid at the edges. Taste and adjust the flavor with more spice if you like.

3 Pack the hot apple butter into four prepared wide-mouth ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge to release any air pockets. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[Note] Sealed jars will keep for a year, but because there is no added sugar, apple butter will mold fairly quickly once opened. Refrigerate open jars, and plan to use them within 10 days.

ON MRS. LEYEL'S *THE GENTLE ART OF COOKERY*

Different cookbooks—and, I suppose, different cookbook authors—work differently. Elizabeth David observes as much in her fond but coolheaded introduction to the 1983 reprint of Mrs. C. F. Leyel's *The Gentle Art of Cookery.* Since its initial publication in London in 1925, Mrs. Leyel's cookbook had become, in David's assessment, a "small classic." For all that, David acknowledges that Mrs. Leyel's recipes are unreliable. No matter.

> *One of the fallacies about the passing of judgment on cookery books is the application to the recipes of what is believed to be the acid test implied in the question do they work? … What one requires to know about recipes is not so much do they work as what do they produce if they do work? A cookery book which gives foolproof recipes for seed cake and pears bottled in crème de*

menthe and straw potato nests is a good cookery book only to those in whose lives seed cake, pears bottled in crème de menthe and straw potato nests play an important part. A book which tells you as Mrs Leyel's did that you can make a purée from fresh green peas and eat it cold and that a cold roast duck will go very nicely with the purée is not necessarily a bad cookery book because it does not tell you for how long you must roast the duck nor how many pounds of peas you will need for the purée.

David notes that *The Gentle Art of Cookery* was one of the first cookbooks she owned, and she writes that she prefers a cookbook that "provides stimulus" to those that dutifully recite "technical details." Me, too.

By lucky chance, the first cookbook I ever bought was Jean-Noël Escudier's classic 1953 volume *La véritable cuisine provençale et niçoise*, republished when I was a teenager as *The Wonderful Food of Provence*. (I think I bought it mainly for the Matisse still life on its cover.) The recipes were very succinct, and *The Wonderful Food of Provence* was responsible for the worst disasters of my kitchen life, all borne with

equanimity by my mother and less so by my stepfather. His comment after an ugly attempt to make pan-fried leeks: “Well, you sure can make a mess.” But it was from Escudier, nicknamed Monsieur Provence by his countrymen, that I learned that you could eat leeks at all—or that tuna was sold as fresh steaks as well as in cans. The book to this day remains on the short shelf of cookbooks I go to first when I’m looking for ideas or when I just need some armchair travel. The introduction is by Paula Wolfert, who recalls reading the first English introduction of *The Wonderful Food of Provence* in 1968: *The book spoke to me of the Provençal way of life, of which its cuisine is both a symbol and a reflection. … Who can visit this land, taste this cuisine, and not say: “I want some of this in my own life, too”?*

In a real sense this cookbook is a statement about the good life.

Every enduring cookbook I’ve read since has equally spoken to me as “a statement about the good life.” The great modern cookbook writers such as Elizabeth David, Paula Wolfert, Marcella Hazan, Edna Lewis, Alice Waters, Niloufer Ichaporia, Diana Kennedy, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, and David Tanis inscribe with their

writings an entire way of being in the world. Their books are about food, but they are built upon bedrock opinions on love, death, and politics, even if those particular subjects never explicitly break through. A great cookbook writer has a worldview that encompasses ethics as well as aesthetics, a social vision as well as a culinary one, a sense of cosmology as much as of geography.

When I started preserving, the recipes I found were dutifully technical and strikingly disassociated from the excitement I felt looking at fruit and vegetables in the market. There was no worldview—no argument about the good life. And for the most part, the recipes were merely "technical details." Do this and then do that, and now store it in a cool, dark place.

Cooking is work that encompasses joy, and good recipes should guide the former in order to deliver the latter.

APPLES IN CALVADOS JELLY | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

As I describe elsewhere, Mrs. C. F. Leyel left behind a shelf of idiosyncratic cookbooks that inspired Eizabeth David, who in turn inspired Alice Waters, who later inspired me and countless others, creating a pattern of influence similar to that of an old master painter whose work influenced successive generations, the youngest of which may never have seen the original masterpieces firsthand. Most of Mrs. Leyel's cookbooks are today out of print, and when I came across her name while researching this book, I had to explore the distant reaches of the Internet to locate a copy of *The Complete Jam Cupboard* from 1925.

Mrs. Leyel's recipe for apple jam made me want to run to the market for apples the instant I read it. She described it as "one of the nicest of all conserves … excellent in a trifle of sponge cakes and custard," and her archaic technique was

so simple. You slice apples into an earthenware jar with sugar, and place the jar in a pan of simmering water for thirty minutes. (A modern equivalent would be the double boiler.) “Remove the scum,” the recipe continued, “and pour into pots.” That was it. The way I imagined the recipe working was that juice purged from the apples would combine with the sugar and, as it cooled, set up as a transparent jelly to bind the opaque apple slices.

When I attempted the recipe, what I got instead was apples in light syrup. Surely Mrs. Leyel wouldn’t have believed what I made was “jam.” The fault must have resided in the recipe; it was incomplete. Perhaps Mrs. Leyel relied on faulty memory—could she really have meant to cook it for only 30 minutes?—or she was stingy in describing steps that, to her, seemed too obvious to mention. Even Mrs. Leyel’s admirers have to admit that she drafted some very sketchy recipes.

But the appealing preserve I imagined while reading Mrs. Leyel’s recipe inspired me through several more failures until I worked out a method for achieving it. I like to think it’s close to what Mrs. Leyel intended.

The procedure is admittedly fussy and requires a number of steps over 2 days, but Apples in

Calvados Jelly is perhaps the best thing one could eat with bloomy-rind goat cheese. A simpler approach is given in the Note.

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3 pounds small Granny Smith apples (see Appendix I) 5 cups water, plus more for acidulated water 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice, plus more for acidulated water 4½ cups sugar Zest of 1 lemon, removed in a single wide strip 3 tablespoons Calvados

1 Peel, quarter, core, and thinly slice (¼ inch thick) enough apples to yield 1½ pounds sliced fruit; reserve the peels and cores, and the remaining whole apples. As you work, put the slices in acidulated water (2 cups of water with 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice) to prevent browning.

2 Quarter the remaining whole apples without peeling them, and put them in a small saucepan with the other peels and cores, as well as the pithy hulls left after zesting and juicing your lemon. Add the 5 cups water, bring to a boil, and simmer gently for 30

minutes. Strain the cooked fruit and its liquid through a jelly bag, and allow to drip for 15 minutes. Discard the spent solids. Boil the pectin stock in a clean pot until it is reduced to 2 cups. Cover, and refrigerate overnight.

3 Meanwhile, drain the apple slices, and layer them in a double boiler with 2½ cups of the sugar, 3 tablespoons lemon juice, and the lemon zest. Cover closely, and bring the lower half of the double boiler to a full boil. As the apples heat, they will release considerable liquid. After 10 minutes, gently flip the apple slices for even cooking. After 20 minutes, turn off the heat, and then leave the apples covered in the refrigerator for 24 hours, turning them over in the liquid a couple of times.

4 The next day, transfer the apple slices and their liquid to a small saucepan and discard the lemon zest. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 5 minutes, until the fruit is translucent. Do not overcook. Strain the contents of the pot through a colander set over a bowl, to catch the liquid. Place a heavy pot on top of the apples to press out excess liquid, and allow to drip for 5 minutes. Set the apple slices aside.

5 Combine the 2 cups of pectin stock and the apple slices' cooking liquid in a preserving pan, and bring to a boil. Stir in the remaining 2 cups sugar, and reduce at a full boil.

6 As the hot jelly reduces, divide the apple slices evenly among four prepared ½-pint jars. Pack them loosely, so that there is space between the slices, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace.

7 Now back to the preserving pan: Reduce the hot jelly to a firm gel set. Add the Calvados, and boil hard for a minute. Confirm the gel set.

8 Pour the hot jelly over the apple slices, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Using a bamboo skewer or other thin implement, carefully nudge aside the apple slices to release air pockets and large bubbles. Wipe the jar rims, seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[Note] The simpler approach is to make apples in syrup. Prepare 1½ pounds of apple slices as above, cook them in the double boiler, and leave overnight. The next day, bring the apple slices

and their liquid to a boil, add the Calvados, and jar the fruit in its own syrup, leaving ½ inch headspace. Process for 10 minutes.

SCRUMPER'S REWARD | *YIELDS ABOUT 2½ PINTS*

A scrumper is a specialized thief—one who pilfers orchards—and this jelly would be his reward if he were lucky enough to find crab apple trees. Their tart, pectin-rich fruit is ideal for jelly. Here it is infused with thyme, a natural ally to the apple clan, and white wine replaces lemon juice as the acid.

The pulp left after extracting the pectin stock can be added to Thrifty Applesauce, or else you could "recycle" some of it in a compote. Core the stewed crabs with a spoon, warm them in butter, and sweeten with a few tablespoons of the finished jelly. Serve the compote with roasted sweet potatoes and sautéed mustard greens.

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5 pounds crab apples 8 cups water Sugar (see below for amount) ½ cup full-bodied white wine, such as a Santa Barbara Chardonnay Four 3-inch sprigs fresh thyme, plus

optional thyme leaves

1 Quarter the crab apples, and remove the stem and calyx (the blossom remnant) but not the peel or core. Put the pared fruit in a large pot with the water, which should barely cover them, and bring to a boil. Simmer, partially covered, for 30 minutes, until the fruit is soft. Strain through a damp jelly bag or a double thickness of damp cheesecloth. Squeeze gently. You may want to allow the pectin stock to settle overnight, but it’s not essential to do so.

2 Measure the pectin stock. Warm an equal volume of sugar on a baking sheet in a 225-degree oven for 15 minutes. Boil the pectin stock in a preserving pan for 5 minutes; then add the sugar and stir to dissolve. (Unless you have a large preserving pan, you should reduce the pectin stock in two batches. You’ll have better results if you work with 4 cups or less at a time.) 3 Reduce over high heat for 5 minutes. Add the wine. Continue reducing to the gel point, then turn off the heat. Bruise the thyme, swish it through the hot jelly for a minute, then discard. Skim if necessary.

4 Ladle the jelly into five prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. If you like, submerge a few fresh thyme leaves into each jar before sealing. Process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

SAVORY CRAB APPLE JELLY | *YIELDS 1½ PINTS*

Myrtle was one of those surprise discoveries that sometimes appear at the farmers' market. I'd wondered what it could be ever since I first read Milton's early poem "Lycidas" as an undergraduate in Professor Pamela Macfie's class at Sewanee: The University of the South. The poem's first lines are:

> *Yet once more, O ye Laurels, and once more Ye Myrtles brown, with Ivy never sere, I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude, And with forc't fingers rude Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.*

The berries wouldn't have been "harsh and crude" if given time to mature on the bush —"Lycidas" is about a friend who died prematurely. In fact, this Mediterranean shrub is classed with the "sweet herbs" in Jill Norman's *Herbs and Spices: The Cook's Reference,* and its leaves and berries have a resinous scent with

notes of orange blossom and spice. In addition to its place in classical mythology, myrtle is also one of the four sacred species (along with citron, palm, and willow) required for the Jewish celebration of Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles.

This jelly is “savory” because it includes vinegar, and you could also make it with juniper berries, bay leaves, cardamom, or even rosemary.

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4 cups crab apple pectin stock (see procedure in the preceding recipe) 4 cups sugar 3 tablespoons sherry vinegar 1 tablespoon myrtle berries and leaves, or a smaller quantity of juniper berries, cloves, or cardamom pods

1 Bring the pectin stock to a boil in a preserving pan, and reduce for 5 minutes. Add the sugar, vinegar, and spices, and reduce to the gel point, about 8 minutes.

2 Ladle the hot jelly into three prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. You can discard the spices, or divide them among the jars as you like, being aware that they will continue to infuse over time. Seal the jars, and

process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

WHOLE PRESERVED CRAB APPLES | *YIELDS 1 QUART*

Sweetened with quince jelly and flavored with Calvados, these Whole Preserved Crab Apples are pretty enough to be an edible garnish. Take the trouble to prick the skin of each fruit, and cook them very slowly to decrease splitting. Despite your best precautions, some will crack open anyway. Don’t fret. They’re fine to use, and no one else will care. Different crab apple varieties can be nearly sweet, or quite tart. Add more jelly if you have very crabby fruit. You can multiply this recipe to match your quantities.

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1 pound crab apples

4 cups water

¼ cup apple-cider vinegar ½ cup apple, crab apple, or quince jelly, or a generous ¼ cup sugar (more to taste if the crab apples are very tart)

2 tablespoons Calvados or other brandy

A few sprigs fresh thyme

1 Wash and stem the crab apples, and prick each one in four places with a skewer or trussing needle. Place them in a small pot, and cover with the water. Slowly heat to a bare simmer, and maintain the same low heat for 25 minutes, until the crab apples are cooked through.

2 Using a slotted spoon, transfer the crab apples to a bowl to cool. Turn up the heat, and reduce the cooking water to 2 cups.

3 When the crab apples are cool enough to handle, trim the blossom end from each one in the following way: Stick the tip of a very sharp knife into the base of the fruit, alongside the blossom remnant. Holding the knife steady, rotate

the apple a full turn against the blade’s edge, and a small cone of flesh around the calyx will lift out. Pack the trimmed apples into a prepared quart jar, leaving a generous ¾ inch headspace.

4 When the cooking liquid is reduced to 2 cups, add the vinegar, jelly, and Calvados, and stir until the jelly is completely melted. Bring to a boil, and ladle the hot syrup over the crab apples to cover, leaving ¾ inch headspace. Tuck a few thyme sprigs inside the jar, seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 20 minutes.

FRICASSEE WITH PRESERVED WHOLE CRAB APPLES

You can use preserved crab apples in savory cooking as you would use apples or quince. They get along well with pork, chicken, and rabbit in autumnal stews, especially those built on browned meat and sautéed onions cooked in stock or wine—a fricassee. This stew could be thickened with ground almonds, an old Moorish technique taken from Pepita Aris's *Recipes from a Spanish Village* and described in step 3 below.

Cooking in a traditional clay cazuela lets you take the fricassee straight from stovetop to table.

1 Cut a whole chicken into parts, season with salt and pepper, and set aside. Scorch a red bell pepper under the broiler until blackened, then wrap in aluminum foil until cool. Remove the seeds, stem, and skin, and cut into ¼-inch-wide strips. Set aside.

2 Heat a few tablespoons of olive oil in a large skillet, and sauté 2 crushed garlic cloves until golden and crispy. Remove, and reserve for the almond sauce. In the same skillet, sauté a sliced onion until soft. Season well, and set aside. Fry the chicken parts in the skillet until well browned, and set them aside with the garlic and onion. Deglaze the pan with a small glass of sherry, and remove from the heat. Add a pinch of saffron to the sherry, then return the onion and garlic to the pan along with the red pepper and a small handful of golden raisins. Lay the chicken pieces on top, and nestle in 8 to 10 Whole Preserved Crab Apples. Pour in enough chicken stock to come one-third of the way up the chicken pieces. Bring everything back to a boil, then cover and simmer until the chicken is done, 15 to 20 minutes. Taste, and adjust the seasoning if needed. The dish could be served now, as is.

3 If you want to make the almond sauce, pound ¼ cup blanched almonds to meal in a mortar, then mix them with a small handful of sautéed fine bread crumbs, the minced fried garlic from above, a tablespoon of finely minced parsley, a few gratings of fresh nutmeg, and a tiny pinch of ground cloves. (Or pulverize the almonds and other ingredients in a blender.) When the chicken is done cooking, transfer the pieces to a warm platter and stir the almond–bread crumb mix into the pan juices. Finish the sauce with a squeeze of lemon juice, return the chicken to the pan, and serve.

MICHELANGELO MERISI DA CARAVAGGIO [1571–1610] *BASKET OF FRUIT,* c. 1595–98

He created only one still life—a basket of fruit against the backdrop of a bare plaster wall—but the painter known as Caravaggio is a central figure in the genre's development.

A few sixteenth-century Italian fruit paintings predate Caravaggio's singular masterpiece, *Basket of Fruit* (c. 1595–98), but its real precedents come from his own work. The young painter included astoundingly realistic fruit and flowers among the more prominent human forms in his early compositions. In a sense, Caravaggio was showing off, or at least exercising his abilities—lavishing virtuoso skill on the minor details in *Boy with a Basket of Fruit,* c. 1593–94, and *The Lute Player,* c. 1595–96. "It was as much work for him to make a good picture of flowers as one of figures," observed his aristocratic patron Marchese Vincenzo Giustiniani, who is quoted in art historian Laura Lauretti's catalogue essay for the 2001 exhibition *The Genius of Rome.*

Then, without warning and without sequel, Caravaggio lifted the basket from the boy's arms and isolated it in what I would call a psychological space. At first glimpse, one is struck simply by its supreme realism and monumental presence. Then the details emerge: an overripe fig splits, the grapevine withers, and mildew blights the leaves of an otherwise perfect quince. Before Caravaggio, painted fruit was more or less fruit. Caravaggio made it into art—a transcendent meditation on the nature of time's passing and the corrosive effect of experience on beauty.

FALL FRUIT COCKTAIL | *YIELDS 5 PINTS*

This recipe has the simplicity of all ad hoc cooking: it's a way to deal with whatever you have lying around so that it doesn't go to waste. It's a "cocktail" only in the sense that it mixes various elements—like the tinned fruit cocktail I used to love as a kid.

The technique is almost like making bouillabaisse. You boil everything in one pot, so the trick is to decide when to add each ingredient so that they are all done at the same moment. Hard fruit like apples—or quince, if you have them—need more cooking. Softer plums and pears only need to be heated through.

The exact fruit mixture can vary, but the one constant should be green apples, which provide tartness and texture. The hot fruit will be fragile as you transfer it into the jars, but sugar in the canning syrup will shore up its faint constitution.

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2 pounds crisp apples—at least ½ tart, or quince if available ¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice 2½ cups water 2 pounds firm pears

2 pounds firm dark-skinned plums

½ pound seedless grapes

1 cup sugar

Optional: 2 tablespoons Calvados or cognac Optional: five 1-inch pieces of cinnamon stick

1 Peel and core the apples, and cut them into eighths. As you work, place the slices in a bowl with 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice and ¼ cup water. Peel and core the pears, cut them into eighths, and place the slices in a second bowl with the remaining 2 tablespoons lemon juice and ¼ cup water. Peel the plums with a vegetable peeler, remove the pit, and cut into quarters. Add the plum slices to the pears, and from time to time stir them around. Pick the grapes from their stems, and rinse well. If you are using quince, peel,

core, and thinly slice them.

2 Bring the remaining 2 cups water and the sugar to a boil in a wide pot. Add the apples with their liquid, and cook for 1 or 2 minutes after the pot returns to a boil. (If using quince, begin with them, and boil 2 minutes, until half soft, then add the apples.) When the apple slices are translucent, add the pears, plums, and grapes to the pot with their liquid. Bring back to a boil, and turn off the heat. Using a slotted spoon, pack the hot fruit into five prepared regular-mouth pint jars, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace. Agitate the jars to settle the fruit.

3 Bring the syrup back to a boil, and add the alcohol, if using. Ladle the syrup into the jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. If you like, tuck a short cinnamon stick into each jar. Seal, and process the jars in a boiling-water bath for 20 minutes.

THE ANTIQUE FRUITS

Every time we eat a fruit, we're tasting forgotten histories.
—ADAM LEITH GOLLNER, *THE FRUIT HUNTERS* [1976]

Fall is the season of antique fruits—forgotten heirloom varieties and endangered horticultural relics. Less than a century ago, quince and damsons were rightly esteemed for jelly and fruit "cheese." Today you can hardly find either, unless you grow your own or stalk them at farmers' markets and ethnic shops, because commercial growers abandoned them for newer orchard crops that kept pace with our taste for the sweet and the familiar. The antique fruits fell behind the times.

The medlar, an apple relative like the quince, was cultivated in ancient Persia, and Thomas Dawson's 1596 English cookbook *The Good Housewife's Jewel* included a recipe for medlar tart. Eminent Victorians sucked them from their skins for dessert, and early-twentieth-century wine critic George Saintsbury described the medlar as the "one fruit which seems to me to go best with all wine, from hock to sherry and from claret to port."

The medlar is hardly even a memory in America. The single commercial orchard is a mere sixty-some trees in the foothills of California's southern Sierra Nevada, and the crop sells to a minuscule audience of hard-core fruit hunters and immigrant Persians, who clamor for what they know as *azgil,* with its baked-apple flavor of home.

The medlar is admittedly a very odd fruit. The size of a walnut and turd-brown in color, it gapes disconcertingly at the blossom end, a shape that inspired its archaic name, "open-arse." The medlar also refuses to ripen on the bush and has to be aged, or "bletted," during which it ferments into a rich mush. For Chaucer, medlars were like old men: "Til we be roten, kan we nat be rype." They sent D. H. Lawrence into raptures. In his oversexed poem "Medlars and Sorb-Apples," the old rake takes kinky pleasure in these "Wineskins of brown morbidity, / autumnal excrementa. …"

The following section includes recipes for my favorite antique fruits, not all of which are as scarce as the medlar. The ancient pomegranate has been revived as an antioxidant-rich "superfood." Pomegranate syrup, better known as grenadine,

goes into cocktails and Onion Confiture.

Pyracantha is another apple relative that may literally be in your backyard, because its violently red autumn berries are favored by birds and landscape designers. The berries are not poisonous, as I learned growing up, and they produce a garnet-bright jelly.

Venice was saved by poverty, one hears, because in the long decline after its Renaissance glory, the city couldn't afford to replace the old palaces with new buildings. Neglect may have endangered the antique fruits, but, paradoxically, it also saved their best qualities from "improvement" by modern fruit breeders. They remain as relics, to be cherished and sought out, exactly as they are.

> I love you, rotten, Delicious rottenness.
>
> I love to suck you out from your skins So brown and soft and coming suave, So morbid, as the Italians say.
>
> —D. H. LAWRENCE [1885–1930], "MEDLARS AND SORB-APPLES"

MEDLAR BUTTER | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

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2 pounds bletted medlars
3¼ cups water 2 cups sugar 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 tablespoon aged Spanish brandy

1 Pull the medlars open with your fingers. Place them in a pot, and add 3 cups of the water. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer for 30 minutes.

2 Strain the cooked fruit through a colander, catching the liquid in a bowl. When the fruit is cool enough to touch, rub it through the colander, bit by bit. You should have 4 cups purée.

3 Put the purée in a preserving pan with the sugar, the remaining ¼ cup water, and the lemon juice. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly, and reduce over medium heat for about 15 minutes, or until a spoonful of the mixture chilled in the freezer doesn't leak at the edges. Stir in the brandy. Ladle the hot preserve into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

PYRACANTHA JELLY | *YIELDS ½ PINT*

Gather the berries after they've turned bright red, in early fall. Adding a green apple helps ensure a gel set. Serve the slightly astringent jelly with roasted meat and poultry.

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2 pounds red pyracantha berries

1 small green apple

4 cups water, or more if needed 1 cup sugar

1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 Strip the berries from the stems, and rinse well. Chop the apple, including the skin and core. Combine the fruit in a pot with the water. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer, covered, for 1 hour, or until the berries are very soft.

2 Strain the fruit through a damp jelly bag, and allow to drip for 30 minutes. Squeeze gently. You should have about 1 cup pectin stock. If you have less, add water to make a cup. If more, reduce the stock before adding the sugar. Warm the sugar in a 225-degree oven for 15 minutes.

3 Combine the pectin stock, sugar, and lemon juice in a small preserving pan. Bring to a boil, and reduce to the gel point, 5 to 8 minutes. Ladle into a prepared ½-pint jar, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

THE GARDEN OF ENDANGERED FRUIT BY ANNA TASCA LANZA

This idiosyncratic cookbook catalogues the fruits and nuts that have shaped the culture, the cuisine, and even the speech of Sicily. Author Anna Tasca Lanza, the doyenne of her native island's cuisine, writes charmingly in English, a language whose reins she holds but loosely, with that enviable Italian grace called *sprezzatura,* offhand ease.

The short essays in *The Garden of Endangered Fruit* cover a lot of ground—from ancient history to German literature to family anecdotes to local folk knowledge. Lanza notes, for example, that jujubes are strongly laxative. That unripe Seville oranges should be dried and worn around the neck to protect from plague. And that nocino, a liqueur made from immature walnuts, was invented at a congress of witches.

Lanza is a landowning grandee with the enthusiasms of a lusty peasant, and after reading *The Garden of Endangered Fruit,* I was ready to offer myself as her gardener.

DAMSON CHEESE AND DAMSON BUTTER | *YIELDS ABOUT 3 POUNDS CHEESE*

A damson is a small, late-season bullace plum, *Prunus insititia*, a wild fruit of Eurasian origin that was anciently cultivated in Damascus, hence the name. The fruit is dry and tart compared with the dripping sweetness of Japanese plums, *Prunus salicina*. European plums also include distinguished jam fruits such as greengages and mirabelles, but even in that fine company the damson is notable for its blue-purple skin and unique flavor.

The damson has been popular throughout the ages, at least until the most recent century marked the onset of horticultural amnesia. Almost two millennia ago, Pliny the Elder counted the damson among the dozen plum varieties growing in what is now Italy. Chaucer in 1369 described a garden with “ploumes and bulaces,” making a distinction that causes me to wonder if bullaces weren’t already set apart from other “ploumes” for some special quality—their suitability for drying or preserving, perhaps.

Bullaces arrived in American during the colonial period, sometimes hybridizing with native American plums such as the beach plum, *Prunus maritima*. It was not until much later, after Commodore Perry sailed into Edo’s harbor in 1853, that Japanese plums made it here.

Damsons are everything twenty-first-century fruit is not: small, sour, and demanding. With sugar and patience, however, they yield an amazingly flavorful preserve.

“Fruit cheese” is the English name for fruit paste—no cow is involved. To confuse the matter, damson cheese is best served with … cheese.

To make Damson Butter, a smooth spread (see the photograph), follow the same technique but reduce for half as long in step 3. Fill the jars, and process as for Damson Conserve.

---

5 pounds damsons

Optional: kernels from the cracked pits ½ cup water 4-inch piece of fresh ginger root, lightly crushed with the back of a skillet 4 cups sugar

3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

Optional: 2 tablespoons plum eau-de-vie or gin

1 Pit the damsons. (I pull them open with my fingers.) If using the kernels, set pits aside; otherwise discard them. Put the fruit in a pot with the water and the ginger, and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, if using kernels, crack a handful of the pits with a nutcracker, and extract the kernels.

2 Discard the ginger, and run the stewed damsons through the finest screen of your food mill, or, for a perfectly smooth cheese, use a tamis (a drum sieve), rubbing the pulp through its fine mesh.

3 Combine the purée, sugar, lemon juice, and kernels in a preserving pan, and reduce over lively heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture is stiff and mounds in a spoon. This could take 30 minutes or longer. Remove the pits,

stir in the alcohol, if using, and ladle the hot paste into three prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[Note] A more traditional method is to pack the hot cheese into molds—any small dish, including a brioche tin, would do. Allow the cheese to set up in the molds for several days, then turn it out on a rack to dry. It will keep a long time, without refrigeration. June Taylor makes large, ceremonial damson cheeses that she ages, covered with a cloth, in her studio. She showed me examples that were over five years old. Darkened with age and covered by a sugary crust, the cheeses looked like eighteenth-century cast iron, but remained pliable. Their taste was remarkable. The best analogy I can think of is old wine, which develops dark and subtle flavors but still preserves the essence of fresh fruit.

For a different flavor, omit the ginger and add 3 or 4 bay leaves in step 3.

Discard after cooking.

DAMSON CONSERVE | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

As I was working on this book, news came via the gossip columns that supermodel Kate Moss was launching a jam company. According to English tabloid *The Sun*, she had damsons on the brain and was planning to sell a line of damson preserves made with fruit grown at her country house. The English have a history with damsons. In 1539, King Henry VIII sent word to Lady Lisle, the wife of a courtier who was at the time in France, to procure for him a quantity of "codiniac [quince paste] of the clearest making and of the conserve of damsons."

Here's my version of Damson Conserve, a conserve being a fruit preserve that contains dried fruit, nuts, and, often, alcohol.

2½ pounds damsons, pitted and quartered 1½ cups sugar ¼ pound dried dates ¼ pound dried currants, cranberries, or sour cherries 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice, plus the zest from ½ lemon ¼ cup freshly squeezed orange juice, plus the zest from ½ orange Optional: 12 kernels from the cracked pits

3 green cardamom pods, crushed to extract the seeds

2 inches cinnamon stick

½ cup coarsely chopped walnuts 2 tablespoons quetsch, slivovitz, or other plum brandy

1. Combine the prepped damsons with sugar, dried fruit, citrus juices, half of both citrus zests, the pit kernels, if using, and the spices. Stir to combine, and macerate for 1 hour.

2. Turn the fruit-sugar mixture into a preserving pan, bring to a boil, and reduce rapidly, stirring regularly. Once the hot jam is nearly reduced—perhaps 8 to 10 minutes, depending on the size of your pot—add the walnuts and the remaining citrus zest. Boil for 3 minutes longer, then add the alcohol and check the gel set—I like conserves a bit oozy. Discard the cinnamon. Ladle the hot conserves into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace.

Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[ROAD TRIP]

BEACH PLUMS

PLYMOUTH TO EAST SANDWICH, MASSACHUSETTS

While I was in Plymouth, Massachusetts, for the cranberry harvest, I started to think about beach plums—the Cape was so near. Back in August, I had picked a few on eastern Long Island and I wondered if they would still be in season. And if so, where might I find them around Cape Cod?

I decided the town's older residents might be best informed on the question, so I asked the innkeeper's wife, Mrs. Dixon: "Do you know where I could find beach plums?"

"What?" she barked.

"Do you know where I could find beach plums?" I asked again.

"Oh. I thought you said beach bums," said Mrs. Dixon. "No. I've never been interested in them."

Later, on the beach, I saw an ancient man out for his evening jog.

"Do you know where I could find beach plums?" I asked him.

"No," he answered with a warm if slightly daft smile. "I wouldn't know one to see it."

A bit later, at the liquor store, I asked a weather-bitten woman behind the counter: "Do you know anything about beach plums?"

"No, but she might," replied the woman, pointing to another weathered woman, who was sweeping up.

"Are you a beach plumma?" said the sweeper in the local "r"-less accent.

"I'm just looking for some to make—"

"Beach plum jelly," she said.

The sweeper pointed me toward East Sandwich Beach.

I drove the twenty miles, parked, and dashed to the water's edge. Nothing but dune grass and wind. When I was coming back to the car, however, what I saw at the edge of the parking lot was a plum thicket taller than my head, and loaded down with cherry-sized blue-black fruit.

I picked a few pounds as the salt spray blurred my glasses. Over the next few days, I ate as many as I could before the dead-ripe fruits succumbed to winey ferment. If I'd had access to a stove, I'd have made beach plum butter, using the same proportions and technique as for Damson Cheese.

But I had no kitchen, and I was afraid to ask Mrs. Dixon if I could borrow hers.

BEACH PLUM NOSTALGIA

Prunus maritima grows wild along Eastern beaches from North Carolina to Nova Scotia—there are Plum Islands in Massachusetts and New York—and its long harvest overlaps with August vacation time. After posting beach plum pictures on my blog, *Saving the Season*, I heard from a number of readers with strong sentimental attachments to this native North American fruit.

One beach "plumma" posted a link to a Cornell University Web site that gave a brief natural history of the beach plum and even offered advice for its cultivation. Another reader's post sent me to the Internet to order Elizabeth Post Mirel's *Plum Crazy.* Mirel's slim volume notes that the first European to record the beach plum was Giovanni da Verrazano, who in his 1524 explorations of the New York coastline misidentified the fruit as a damson.

Other readers posted their own beach plum memories.

I worked on a coastal island in Massachusetts a few years ago where there were lots of them. Making beach plum jam is actually what got me into canning. I would cover them with water and boil until soft, then spend forever picking out the pits. They made such a great jam. They have a high pectin content, so it jells really nicely.

The important thing [for beach plum jelly] is to make sure that you have enough red ones because the really ripe ones will just turn to mush right away. Beach plum jelly has been a part of my family's summer for about 60 years, since my grandparents started going to the Cape.

New York bartender Toby Cecchini has developed an American version of sloe gin by substituting beach plums, and a small Brooklyn-based company, Greenhawk Ginsmiths, markets Beach Plum Gin Liqueur, which is made by steeping the plums in gin for seven months and sweetening the decoction with turbinado sugar. The technique would adapt readily for home use.

GRENADINE | *YIELDS 1 PINT*

> “Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and pomegranates bud forth: there will I give thee my loves.”
>
> —SONG OF SOLOMON 7:12

The ancient pomegranate has come back into vogue in recent years as a “superfruit” thanks to its high antioxidant content. Unfortunately, the juice doesn’t have enough pectin for making jelly without supplemental commercial pectin. Instead, I use a friend’s backyard fruit for grenadine, the brilliantly colored bartender staple. It’s nothing more than a sweet-tart syrup of reduced pomegranate juice and sugar. Grenadine is an ingredient in my Onion Confiture and can also be used to deglaze pans, enrich sauces, or deepen vinaigrettes—think of it as an alternative to balsamic vinegar.

This recipe can be scaled up to suit your quantities, although the cooking times will be longer. Commercially bottled pomegranate juice that has been reconstituted from concentrate is not a good substitute.

6 to 8 heavy pomegranates

1½ cups sugar

1 Pomegranate juice stains everything. To reduce splattering, peel the fruit under water. Cut each pomegranate into quarters. Take a quarter, and submerge it in a basin of water. Gently pry the arils (seeds) out of the flexible pith. Discard the peels, and pick out as much of the bitter white pith as possible. Drain the arils. You should have 4 cups.

2 Extract the juice by squeezing the arils through a moistened jelly bag, 1 cup at a time. Discard the seeds. In all, you should have 2 cups juice.

3 Bring the juice to a boil in a preserving pan, and skim the foam. Reduce by one-half over medium heat, about 10 minutes, and slowly stir in the sugar until it dissolves. Bring the liquid back to a boil, and pour into a scalded bottle or jar. Store in the refrigerator for up to 6 months. For longer keeping, ladle the hot syrup into a prepared pint jar, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

PLINY'S QUINCE IN HONEY | *YIELDS ABOUT 4 PINTS*

The first written reference to sweet preserves in the West occurs in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* from the first century A.D. Pliny made only a passing mention of quince preserved in honey, but it must have been a common practice: the Romans called quince *melimelum*, or "honey apple." With time, that word became the Portuguese *marmelada*—the source of our "marmalade"—and the Spanish *membrillo.* (See more on the relationship between *marmelada* and our modern marmalade.) Some three hundred years after Pliny, Palladius got around to writing down two techniques for preserving quince in honey—the earliest surviving recipe for sweet preserves. Another fifteen hundred years after that, more or less, Misette Godard adapted the ancient recipe for the modern kitchen in her 1977 cookbook *Le Temps des confitures.*

Here's what Godard has to say about quince: *[Quince] comes to us from Persia and the Caucasus, but it has been cultivated in Europe since very ancient times. The three earliest known recipes for preserves are for quince. This can be explained no doubt by the fact that quince can't be eaten raw and that the fresh fruit keeps poorly. Today it continues to be one of the fruits for which we find the greatest number of recipes. … Whatever may be one's opinion of fruit preserved in honey, we should give due credit to these first preserves.*

> *[Quince in honey] has a very strong taste. The pepper gives it a certain piquancy more appreciated by adults than by children.*

The recipe below is my adaptation of Madame Godard's interpretation of Palladius's notation of the Roman innovation that Pliny first recorded. It's Pliny's Quince in Honey.

---

5 pounds quince 3 pounds honey

3 cups water

Freshly cracked black pepper

1 Peel the quince and cut them into eighths. Trim out the woody core and the hard “stone cells” surrounding it, then slice the pieces lengthwise as thinly as possible. Weigh the prepared fruit. You should have about 3 pounds. (Reserve the peels and cores for making jelly.) 2 Combine the honey and water in a saucepan, and bring to a boil over high heat. Add the sliced quince, and lower the flame to maintain a steady simmer. Periodically turn the fruit over in the syrup, being careful not to break the slices. Skim any foam. After about 30 minutes, the quince will turn pink. Add six or eight grinds of black pepper.

3 Continue simmering for another 20 minutes or more, until the quince slices are uniformly red and translucent. Loosely pack into four prepared pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jar to release any air pockets. Seal, and process the jars in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[Note] Quince expert Barbara Ghazarian, author of the cookbook *Simply Quince*, sells a handy quince coring tool on her Web site, www.queenofquince.com.

NOSTRADAMUS'S QUINCE JELLY | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

The sixteenth-century French scholar Nostradamus is best remembered for his apocalyptic prophecies, which were popular in his time as well as ours—you might call it medieval sci-fi. But he was also an apothecary and a confectioner, and his cookbook, a bestseller that went through three printings in his lifetime, provides a fascinating glimpse into the history of preserving. (A translation is available at www.allusional.info.) A few of his recipes are oddities from our perspective—"sea-holly root preserve" and "lettuce preserves in sugar"—but he also gives seven ways to preserve quince, writing about the fruit with loving familiarity: "Those who peel and pare [the quince] do not know why they do it; indeed, the peel increases the aroma."

Nostradamus goes a bit moony over quince jelly, which he describes as "supreme in appearance, quality, flavor, and excellence, which is suitable for presenting to a king, and which keeps for a long time." The basic technique, to extract pectin stock and reduce it with sugar, is familiar. What's striking is that he uses three parts pectin stock to one part sugar. That's not much by today's standards, but sugar was as expensive as spice in Nostradamus's day, and he nagged his readers not to scrimp on it. Because quince reddens with cooking, for reasons explained in the introduction to the next recipe, Nostradamus's jelly would have turned ruby during the long reduction required by such scant sugar.

In that distant era, preserves were stored in wooden boxes, perhaps like the one in the still life. Similar *cajetas* are still used for keeping *membrillo* in parts of Latin America.

This modernized recipe for quince jelly below uses more sugar than Nostradamus's and cooks faster, so expect a rose-pink color instead of ruby-red. Rose geranium, if you can find it, intensifies the quince's natural scent. Save the leftover pulp to make *membrillo*.

---

5 pounds quince 10 cups water 4 cups sugar

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

Optional: 6 rose geranium leaves

1 Quarter the quince, removing the stem and calyx (flower remnant) but leaving the peels and cores. Slice each quarter into four smaller chunks. Place in a large pot, and add the water to barely cover.

2 Bring to a boil, then lower heat and simmer for 1½ hours, partially covered, until the quince are very soft and slightly pink.

3 Strain the quince through a damp jelly bag or a colander lined with damp cheesecloth and catch the pectin stock in a bowl. Allow to drip for 30 minutes. (Set aside the pulp for making *membrillo.*) You should have about 4

cups pectin stock. You can refrigerate the stock overnight or up to 3 days, if desired.

4 Spread the sugar on a baking sheet, and warm it in an oven set to 225 degrees for 15 minutes. Combine the pectin stock, sugar, and lemon juice in a preserving pan. Reduce over high heat to the gel point, 20 minutes or more, then turn off the heat. Lightly crush 4 of the rose geranium leaves, if using, and stir them through the hot jelly for 1 minute. Discard the leaves, skim the jelly, and ladle into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. If you'd like a more intense rose flavor, place a fresh geranium leaf in the bottom of each jar before pouring in the jelly. Seal, and process jars in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

LUIS MELÉNDEZ [1716–80]
***STILL LIFE WITH BOX OF JELLIED FRUIT, BREAD, SILVER SALVER, GLASS, AND WINE COOLER*, 1770**

On January 6, 1771, the Princess of Asturias summoned painter Luis Meléndez to the Royal Palace in Madrid, ordering him to bring with him any still lifes he might have in his studio. The day was the Epiphany—the culmination of the Twelve Days of Christmas—and she may have wanted a holiday present for her husband, the king's son.

Meléndez must have been pleased. Like every painter of the era, he had been trying to curry favor with the royal family, since their patronage would have earned him prestige as well as a much-needed income. But, despite repeated petitions, he hadn't yet managed to secure the official post of court painter. A commission from the princess would have helped his cause.

She gave him a big one: to paint a series of still lifes (*bodegones* in Spanish) for her husband's private natural-history museum. As Meléndez later wrote in a letter, the overarching theme was "comestibles," and he decided that the cycle should be organized by season. Collectively, the works would be a visual encyclopedia of the foods of Spain, a comprehensive overview of the country's culinary riches created in the Enlightenment-era spirit of Diderot's *Encyclopédie*.

From a historical perspective, the food-centric cycle also had Spanish precedents stretching back to the thirteenth century. Castilian King Alfonso X, who from 1252 to 1284 ruled over what is now central Spain, was known as *el Sabio* ("the Wise" or "the Learned") for his commitment to culture and the arts. He oversaw the publication of many important books, among them a history of Spain from prehistoric times through his reign. A memorable passage known as "Del loor de España" ("In Praise of Spain") catalogues the country's wealth, including its food: *Spain is bountiful in grains, pleasing with fruit, abundant in fish, tasty with milk and all the things that are made with it, full of venison and hunting, covered with livestock … safe and full of castles, happy with good wine, rich in metals, sweet with honey and sugar, full of olive oil, happy with saffron.*

The passage may be nationalist propaganda—the king boasting of all he owns—but it's interesting nonetheless that wise Alfonso saw fit to heap praise on Spain's edible treasures alongside the emblems of its military might (castles) and material wealth (metals).

Meléndez's painting cycle could be considered a visual "praise," although it was never completed. Meléndez was let go after delivering forty-four canvases, a fraction of the overall program he had conceived, and, like so many other artists celebrated by posterity, he died in poverty.

Apart from Meléndez's brilliance at capturing the form, color, and texture of

food, what sets his work apart is that he clearly painted from life, modeling his *bodegones* on real fruit and vegetables harvested in season. He showed food as it might appear in anybody's kitchen. Some paintings are practically recipes: cucumbers with a cruet of oil, a vinegar jug, and a saltcellar. They can be seen not just as works of art, but also as documentary evidence of everyday kitchen life in the eighteenth century.

The paintings that stood out to me when I saw an exhibit of Meléndez's work were those that showed boxes of sweetmeats, perhaps *membrillo* or Seville orange marmalade, and fruit jelly in a circular wooden box (see the photograph).

I thought to myself: I know exactly what Meléndez is doing. He's saving the season.

TEN-HOUR MEMBRILLO | *YIELDS 5 POUNDS*

In the recipe for quince jelly, I quoted Nostradamus's advice not to peel quince. Kitchen scientist Harold McGee proves that the old sage's mystical insight holds up to scientific scrutiny.

> *Quinces, fruit of the central Asian tree Cydonia oblonga, give us a taste of what apples and pears might have been like in the primitive form. They are gritty with stone cells, astringent, and hard even when ripe. But they have a distinctive, flowery aroma (thanks to lactone and violet-like ionones, all derived from carotenoid molecules) that's especially concentrated in the fuzzy yellow skin.*

McGee also explains that the quince's enchanting color change from white to pink to red as it cooks occurs when heat converts the raw fruit's colorless phenolic compounds into anthocynanin pigments akin to those found in red cabbage and blueberries. (Occasionally I get a batch of quince that, though otherwise normal, refuses to redden [see photograph]. I haven't been able to find definitive answers why—perhaps some varieties are "golden"—and I can't predict in advance if a given batch will color or not. You'll know after the first hour of cooking time).

The longer you cook quince, the darker they become. *Membrillo,* quince paste, can take hours to turn brick-red. An alternative to stirring the preserving pan endlessly is to reduce the puréed fruit slowly in a low oven. It will be ready eventually, although "eventually" could take as much as 10 hours or longer.

I make *membrillo* as a by-product of quince jelly because I hate to discard the cooked fruit after straining off the pectin stock. After my kitchen buddy Willy Blackmore and I spent a day making jelly and *membrillo,* we were struck by the lopsided yields. On one side: a few prissy jars of quince jelly. On the other: a heavy pile of brick-red *membrillo* wrapped in parchment and tied with string. "It seems to me that jelly is the by-product of *membrillo,*" said Willy.

Cooked quince is perfumey, so I like to bring out the savory side of *membrillo* with bay leaves, thyme, lemon juice, ground cardamom, and black pepper instead of the more usual Christmassy blend of cinnamon and cloves. Another idea came from a newsletter written by Fabrizia Lanza, daughter of Anna Tasca Lanza: *We have three beautiful quince trees in the garden that produce enormous yellow fruit with soft, furry skin. We also have some wild quince trees in the fields that are smaller but produce very sweet smelling fruit. Giovanni, the gardener, collects the wild and domesticated quinces, which we combine to create fragrant quince paste,* cotognata, *with cinnamon, honey, dried raisins and lemon or orange juice.*

The next fall, I met an Afghani chef who told me that in northern Afghanistan quince paste is made with saffron and walnuts. I made a memorable batch that also included candied bitter orange peel.

Incidentally, the Spanish word *membrillo* describes both the paste and raw quince. *Membrillo* is a standard addition to cheese boards, going particularly well with Spanish Manchego, and in recent years it has become something of a merit badge for restaurant chefs seeking to advertise their Slow Food bona fides.

To learn more about the history and cultural significance of the quince, see Barbara Ghazarian's *Simply Quince* and Ria Loohuizen's *The Realm of Fig and*

Quince.

If you'd like to make *membrillo* but not jelly, start with whole baked quince. See the note.

About 5 pounds quince pulp left over from Nostradamus's Quince Jelly Sugar (see procedure for amount) ¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice 1 small California bay leaf, or 2 Turkish bay leaves Seeds from 3 cardamom pods, finely ground ¼ teaspoon dried thyme leaves, crushed ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1 Grind the soft pulp through the medium disc of a food mill, and measure the purée.

2 Combine the purée with an equal volume of sugar in a preserving pan or flameproof baking dish that can also be used on the stovetop. Stir in the lemon juice and aromatics. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium heat, stir well, and place, uncovered, in a 250-degree oven. Cook until next Sunday. Joke! But do plan for many hours of cooking time. Stir every 30 minutes or so until the purée is dark red and thick enough that you can draw a line on the bottom of the dish with a spoon. Cooking a 5-pound batch will take 8 to 10 hours. If you need to interrupt the cooking, turn off the oven and leave the *membrillo* inside. Stir well before you resume cooking. The paste may be noticeably drier than you left it.

3 Line a 13-by-9-inch pan with parchment paper, and pour in the hot paste to form a layer about 1 inch thick. Allow it to cool overnight, uncovered, and then tip the slab of *membrillo* onto a board. Allow to dry, uncovered, for 24 to

48 hours in a warm spot, such as in the oven with the pilot light on, or on a sunny counter. Flip the slab several times to ensure even drying, then cut it into ½-pound slices and wrap in parchment paper. You could also spread the hot paste more thinly onto a baking sheet lined with parchment. Cut the cooled sheet into festive shapes with cookie cutters. Sealed in an airtight container, the *membrillo* will keep in the refrigerator for up to a year.

[Note] As an alternative to using pulp left over from quince jelly, you could roast 5 pounds of whole raw quince in a covered baking dish in a 300-degree oven. When they are very soft, after an hour or more, allow them to cool, then peel and core the fruit and grind the flesh through the medium blade of a food mill. Combine with an equal volume of sugar, and continue as above.

For a quicker outcome, you could also do this entire recipe on the stovetop. Combine the quince purée, sugar, lemon juice, and aromatics in a preserving pan, as directed. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture is well colored and thick enough so you can draw a line in the bottom of the pan with your spoon. A 5-pound batch would take an hour to 90 minutes.

“OLOR FRUTAL” / “FRUITFUL SCENT” BY JUANA DE IBARBOUROU [1892–1979]

Like Frida Kahlo and Anaïs Nin, Uruguayan poet Juana de Ibarbourou was sexually liberated before most women had a vocabulary to talk about such things. Her poems are about nature and love—about fecundity and desire—and she has a naturalist’s eye for the outdoors as well as a perfumer’s sense of the intimate, erotic realm of scent.

As a student, I committed Ibarbourou’s poem “Como la primavera”/“Like Springtime” to memory. In it, the speaker lays her head in her lover’s lap, and as her dark hair spills in a wave across his knees, he inhales the fragrance, asking: “Do you sleep on moss-covered stones? Is your pillow made of clover? Do you tie up your locks with willow branches and rinse them with thick wild blackberry juice?” Coming back to his senses, he asks a more prosaic question: “What perfume do you use?” “None!” she replies. “None! What you smell is firm flesh, clear cheeks, and new blood. I love you and I am young. That is why I have the same fragrances as the spring.”

In “Olor Frutal”/“Fruitful Scent,” Ibarbourou describes the pleasure given by the ancient custom of using ripe quince to perfume rooms, wardrobes, and closets. (Leave one in your car overnight and the scent will linger for a week.) There’s more at stake here than housekeeping tips, however. In poetry and myth, the quince has long had amorous associations. For the Greeks, it was sacred to Aphrodite, and it may well have been the golden apple of Paris’ judgment. Since ancient times, the quince has also had a role in marriage custom, as a symbol of fertility.

“Fruitful Scent” opens simply enough, with Ibarbourou’s speaker enveloped in the “orchard atmosphere” that escapes from the folds of intimate clothing that have been stored in a closet with quince. “This Perfume is mine,” she says, employing a capital “P” that begs explanation. Its significance becomes clear in the poem’s final lines, when the speaker tells how the “full and maturing quince” creates a

"living fragrance" that "impregnate[s]" her skin. Surely it is the speaker herself who is ripening with the fruitful scent of her unborn child, Perfume.

Con membrillos maduros Perfumo los armarios.
Tiene toda mi ropa Un aroma frutal que da a mi cuerpo Un constante sabor a primavera.
With ripe quinces I perfume the closets.
All my clothing has A fruitful scent that gives my body The lingering flavor of spring.

Cuando de los estantes Pulidos y profundos
Saco un brazado blanco De ropa íntima, Por el cuarto se esparce Un ambiente de huerto.
When from the depths Of the tidy shelves I take a white armful Of underwear, An orchard atmosphere Spreads through the room.

¡Parece que tuviera en mis armarios Preso al verano!
It seems as if I held summer Captive in my closets!

Ese Perfume es mío. Besarás mil mujeres
Jóvenes y amorosas, más ninguna Te dará esta impresión de amor agreste Que yo te doy.
That Perfume is mine. You will kiss a thousand Young and loving women, but none Will give you this whiff of country love That I give you.

Por eso, en mis armarios Guardo frutas maduras Y entre los pliegues de la ropa íntima
Escondo, con manojos secos de vetiver.
Membrillos redondos y pintones.

That’s why in my closets I store ripe fruits.
And hide among my underwear’s folds,
Along with bunches of dried vetiver, Full and maturing quince.

Mi piel está impregnada De esa fragancia viva. Besarás mil mujeres, mas ninguna Te dará esta impresión de arroyo y selva Que yo te doy.
This living fragrance Impregnates my skin.
You will kiss a thousand women, but none
Will give you this whiff of stream and woods
That I give you.

PERSIMMON BUTTER | *YIELDS ABOUT 2 PINTS*

October's color is orange. It's the color of burnish—yellow as an old man, when he's mellowed by age and warmed by memories of his long-ago conquests.

Driving through the South in October, or at least those parts of the South that still have roadside ditches and overgrown fencerows, you might catch sight of a small tree loaded with hot orange fruit about the size of a walnut. This is a wild persimmon, *Diospyros virginiana*, the fruit that defines autumn in the South (see the photograph).

Papa used to say that persimmons were more plentiful in the past, before the dense wood was overharvested to make the "woods" or drivers in a set of golf clubs. (Persimmons are related to ebony, another tough wood.) Public parks and college campuses gave the trees refuge, however, and my mother has collected persimmons by the gallon in the city park near her mother's house in Alcoa. My suspicion is that the persimmon is staging a comeback, perhaps because golf clubs are now made of metal alloys. My mother has a thicket of small trees on her property in South Carolina, and I know of several others in the area that have reached fruiting age. As with a prime blackberry patch, you never forget the spot where you find a good persimmon tree.

A ripe persimmon is almost too soft to pick up, like a teaspoon of custard wrapped in damp rice paper. Its unique flavor is intensely sweet and richly spiced, akin to pumpkin pie but more refined and exotic. An unripe persimmon is even more memorable: it's more bitter than anything that grows and will pucker your mouth unpleasantly. The proverbial wisdom is to avoid persimmons until after the first frost. The frost itself doesn't really make any difference, but do wait until the persimmons are dead ripe.

This recipe is inspired by my mother's persimmon pudding, a dense cake that's only a "pudding" in the English sense. I make it with Asian persimmons, which are grown commercially. Two kinds are available. The heart-shaped hachiya is astringent when unripe and eaten when meltingly soft, like the American persimmon. The flattened fuyu, which is nonastringent, remains firm when ripe and cooks down almost like a pumpkin. (See the photograph.) Use only fuyu persimmons in this recipe. Hachiya can taste unpleasant when cooked.

Note that persimmons and pumpkins lack the necessary acidity for safe canning. This sweet preserve should be stored in the refrigerator and eaten within a week. It also freezes well.

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5 pounds fuyu persimmons

1 cup water

1½ cups sugar, or less to taste 1 tablespoon molasses

1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise

3 inches cinnamon stick

1 Rinse the persimmons. Cut away the large sepals, and peel with a vegetable peeler. Chop into ½-inch cubes. Put the fruit and water in a preserving pan, and sim-mer for 20 to 25 minutes, until soft. Pass the pulp and its liquid through a food mill. You should have about 5 cups purée.

2 Return the purée to the preserving pan with the sugar, molasses, lemon juice, vanilla bean, and cinnamon. Taste, and adjust the sugar and lemon juice if necessary. Bring to a boil. Stirring constantly, reduce to the consistency of applesauce. It’s ready when a spoonful of preserve placed on a chilled saucer in the freezer for 1 minute no longer leaks liquid at the edge. Discard the spent vanilla bean and cinnamon stick.

3 Ladle the hot preserve into airtight containers and store in the refrigerator, to be used within a week. Or freeze it in a snap-seal container. *This recipe is not intended for canning.*

Pumpkin Butter | *YIELDS ABOUT 2 PINTS*

Pumpkin butter can be made using the same technique as Persimmon Butter.

Carving pumpkins are bright orange, smooth-skinned, and thin-fleshed. Don’t bother cooking them. Thick-walled cooking pumpkins are picturesque or ugly, depending on your point of view. They include the heirloom French varieties such as Musque de Provence and Rouge Vif d’Étampes—sometimes marketed as Cinderella pumpkins. Hubbard squash and Japanese kabocha varieties would work also. My father’s favorite fruit butter is made from the green-striped cushaw, a large winter squash that’s jug-shaped, with a crookneck that makes a convenient handle. “It’s good on everything,” he says. “It’s pure perfect.”

Note that persimmons and pumpkins lack the necessary acidity for safe canning. Pumpkin Butter should be stored in the refrigerator and eaten within a week. It also freezes well.

6 pounds unpeeled pumpkin

2 cups water

About 2 cups organic sugar

Optional: molasses or honey ¼ teaspoon smoked pimentón or Espelette paprika ¼ teaspoon dried red-pepper flakes 1/8 teaspoon salt

1 Halve the pumpkin, and scrape out the seeds. Cut the flesh into inch-wide strips along the natural vertical creases or stripes. Remove the rind from each strip with a vegetable peeler. Cube the flesh, and put it in a pot with the water. Bring to a boil, moderate the heat, cover, and cook for 20 minutes, until very soft.

2 Run the cooked pulp and its liquid through a food mill, or use a potato masher for a chunkier consistency. Measure the purée, and put it in a preserving pan with a scant 1 cup of sugar for every 3 cups of pumpkin. (If you wish, add a few tablespoons of molasses for flavor, or replace ½ cup sugar with ¼ cup honey.) Reduce over high heat, stirring constantly, until a spoonful of preserve placed on a chilled saucer in the freezer for 1 minute no longer leaks liquid at the edge.

3 Stir in the smoked paprika, red-pepper flakes, and salt. Taste, and adjust the seasonings. Ladle the hot preserve into airtight containers and store in the refrigerator, to be used within a week. Or freeze it in a snap-seal container. *This recipe is not intended for canning.*

THE ALICE B. TOKLAS COOKBOOK BY ALICE B. TOKLAS [1877–1967]

It would be old-fashioned but correct to say that Alice B. Toklas was helpmate to her more famous partner, Gertrude Stein. Her principal independent legacy was a cookbook, but, then, Stein had already written *The Autobiography of Alice B Toklas.*

The *Alice B. Toklas Cookbook* is really her memoir, recipes optional, making it the forerunner of what has since become a crowded literary genre of food-as-autobiography. Toklas never penned a single line as memorable as "a rose is a rose is a rose," but she did break ground by publishing a recipe for hashish brownies. Her writing is also far more readable than Stein's modernist prose.

The following passage remembers one of the many road trips the two ladies made in their motorcar, Aunt Pauline.

We stayed on at Saint Rémy; summer was over, autumn was even more beautiful. If the mistral *showed it not only made the sky bluer but all the landscape more vivid. One day we walked to a small Gothic chapel. In a bare field there was a single very large leafless and symmetrical Japanese persimmon tree heavily laden with its deep-orange fruit, silhouetted against the brilliant sky. It remains one of the loveliest of memories.*

[ROAD TRIP]

THE CRANBERRY HARVEST

GREENVALLEY TO PLYMOUTH, MASSACHUSETTS

From a distance, the field workers at Flax Pond Cranberry Co. in Carver, Massachusetts, look like greenskeepers pushing mowers. They're not trimming, though. They're at work under gray October skies to harvest berries for someone's Thanksgiving dinner, the only meal when we universally embrace the archaic custom of saucing roasted meat with fruit.

Our cranberry, *Vaccinium macrocarpon*, is a native North American fruit related to the blueberry and huckleberry, although botanists are unresolved among themselves as to how closely. Some believe that *V. macrocarpon* and its immediate kin in Northern Europe and Asia should be considered a distinctive subgenus within the *Vaccinium* clan. Others would annul the traditional consanguinity altogether and rechristen the cranberry subgenus *Oxycoccos.*

Either way, the cranberry doesn’t bear much family resemblance to blueberries. The plant is a low, creeping evergreen native to peat-bottomed bogs, and it was once widespread across Northern latitudes from New England to the upper Midwest. The tart, dry cranberry seems to me a decidedly Yankee fruit, but its southern range extends as far south as North Carolina, although at ever-increasing altitudes.

Cranberries have been cultivated since the early nineteenth century and intensively farmed at the base of Cape Cod for over a hundred years. (Wisconsin and New Jersey are the other top producers.) In 1930, three growers banded together to form a cooperative they called Ocean Spray, which achieved one of the great food-marketing triumphs of the twentieth century by turning the ingredient for Thanksgiving cranberry sauce, a once-a-year condiment, into the base of a supposedly vitalizing once-a-day drink, Cranberry Juice Cocktail. Cran-Apple followed in 1963. The latest innovation out of Ocean Spray was 1993's Craisin, a dried cranberry sweetened with fruit juice. The California Raisin Advisory Board, apparently rattled by the red apparition, threatened a lawsuit, but had little recourse, since "raisin" wasn't copyrighted. Craisin is. The co-op's member-owners decided years ago to expand their membership by including grapefruit growers, but the brand's scarlet heart remains close to the township of Carver—which, in the "r"-deficient local accent, sounds like Spain's sparkling wine, Cava.

The marketing folks at Ocean Spray are also at least partially responsible for a widely held misconception that cranberries grow in flooded fields, like rice paddies, since photographs of hale cranberry farmers in waist-high waders contribute to the fruit's public image. In nature, cranberry bogs endure periodic dousing but not permanent

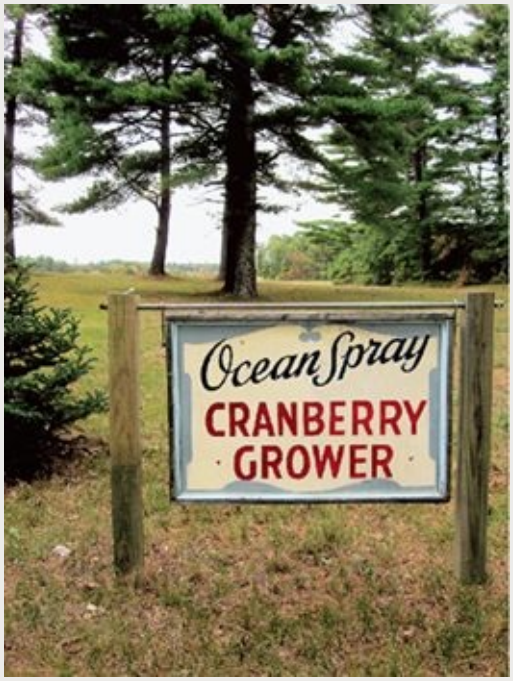
immersion. Even in cultivation, they are flooded only twice a year, and then more for man’s benefit than the cranberry’s.

The first time is in winter, when water pumped into the bogs freezes solid, protecting the plants from bitter winds, and providing the farmer a platform on which to drive his fertilizer spreader. The second flooding, at the September harvest, is more picturesque. A mechanical beater runs over the dry bog to dislodge the berries, and as the field floods, the hollow fruit floats. This type of water harvesting was invented in the 1960s. Before then, the berries were plucked by hand or gathered with a tool called a scoop, a large wooden comb attached to a catch box. Today’s mechanical dry-harvester is part beater and part scoop, and from a distance, the contraption looks like an antique rotary mower.

At Flax Pond, cranberries are still dry-harvested, because the present owners, Dot and Jack Angley, didn’t have the capital when they bought the place in 1967 to invest in pumps for water harvesting. They must have seemed a bit behind the times then. Today they are positively anachronistic: only 5 percent of all cranberries are dry-harvested.

Wet-harvest berries are always sold for juice or concentrate, whereas dry-harvest fruit ships fresh, and it brings a premium. A

productive cranberry bog might yield as much as two hundred or more boxes per acre—the hundred-pound box being the official unit of measure in the cranberry world—and although the Makepeace company, near Plymouth, has several thousand acres of bogs under cultivation, much of the commercial harvest still comes from small producers.



“This bog supports my mom and stepfather and one full-time employee,” says Dot Angley’s daughter, Kathy Lindros, during an open house at Flax Pond. “Then there’s a crew of eight to ten for harvest, and family comes out to help. We work for free. But we get all the cranberries we can eat.”

The crop can be undone, ironically, by too much water, if it comes as ill-timed rain. Cranberries are pollinated by bees, and they are dry fliers. Commercial hives are brought in to ensure a good set; their honey is dark and strong.

“It takes twenty days of sun in June and July to make the harvest,” says Kathy’s brother, Dave. If the twenty days are too widely scattered, the berries will be pollinated over too long a span, and the resulting crop will vary in size. In an earlier era, when cranberry pies were more popular, the smallest cranberries were graded “pie berries.” Today small berries are considered too puny to

sell whole and go to the juicer.

The sweetest cranberries, says Dave, are those growing on south-facing embankments at bog's edge, where the raking pitch of the bank provides maximal sun exposure. Here the berries are ultra-ripe, like the grapes that cling to the steep slopes of the Rhone Valley's sun-baked Côte Rôtie, and they have an almost appley balance of sweet and tart qualities. A conventional harvester machine can't reach them, so ditch berries have to be gathered using a cranberry scoop. Rising cranberry prices once made it worthwhile for Dave to harvest the ditches using the last antique cranberry scoop at Flax Pond. Since a price crash in the nineties brought on by overproduction, Dave now keeps the ditch berries for himself. "They have the most sugar," says Dave. "I eat 'em raw."

Thanks to the cranberry's low water content and high acidity, the fruit stores well. One old method for "canning" cranberries, described in *Housekeeping in the Blue Grass* from 1881, is to pack them in jars and cover them with water. Apparently, they would keep for months. Dave packs his cranberries in small wooden boxes that are slatted for ventilation, and stores the boxes in his chilly mudroom. "Most years, I'll have cranberries until March," he says.

Cranberry jam and cranberry jelly are among the easiest of all sweet preserves. Dave's favorite recipe is with clementines, peel and all. Kathy likes a pear-cranberry chutney that is, she says, sweet enough without a speck of additional sugar, but she insists that any homemade cranberry sauce is better than store-bought.

"It's just cranberries, water, and not too much sugar," says Kathy. "Once you make your own, you'll never buy it again."

TWO CRANBERRY PRESERVES

The slight variations between these two recipes result in two very different preserves. The first, a chunky jam of cranberries, pecans, cinnamon, and orange zest, is maybe the more traditional. The second, a translucent jelly that includes star anise and quince, can be molded for a dramatic presentation.

CHUNKY CRANBERRY JAM WITH NUTS AND GINGER | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

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1 pound cranberries

1 cup water

1 hard apple, such as an Arkansas Black or Granny Smith, peeled, cored, and cut into ½-inch chunks 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh ginger root or crystallized ginger

2 inches cinnamon stick

Zest of 1 orange, removed and cut into the finest possible threads

2 cups sugar

¼ cup chopped pecans, walnuts, or pistachios Optional: 1 tablespoon Citron Vodka, brandy, or bourbon, or 2 tablespoons port

1 Rinse the cranberries, and put them in a saucepan with the water, apple chunks, ginger, cinnamon stick, and orange zest. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 5 minutes, until the berries pop.

2 Add the sugar, stir to dissolve, and return the mixture to a gentle boil, stirring constantly. Add the nuts, and cook 2 to 3 minutes more, stirring all the while to prevent scorching. Cranberries have little moisture and are rich in pectin, so they will reach the gel point quickly. At the gel point, add the alcohol, if using, and cook for 30 seconds longer.

3 Remove the cinnamon stick, and ladle the hot jam into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

MOLDED CRANBERRY JELLY | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

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1 pound cranberries

1½ cups water 1 tablespoon freshly grated ginger root

2 inches cinnamon stick

¼ pod star anise 2½ cups sugar Optional: 4 ounces Nostradamus's Quince Jelly

1 Rinse the cranberries, and place them in a saucepan with the water, ginger, cinnamon, and star anise. Bring to a boil, and simmer 10 minutes, until the cranberries have totally collapsed.

2 Discard the cinnamon stick and star anise, and pass the cooked berries and their liquid through the fine blade of a food mill. Return the purée to the saucepan. Add the sugar and jelly, if using, and stir to dissolve.

3 Bring the mixture to a boil, and reduce over lively heat until it reaches the gel point, about 8 minutes. (You will be able to achieve a very firm set: in the cold-saucer test, the jelly should cool into a solid mass in 60 seconds.) If you plan to use the jelly within 2 weeks, pour it into an antique jelly mold, brioche pan, or other small dish. Cover the mold tightly with parchment or plastic wrap, and refrigerate. To serve, place the mold in a pan of hot water for a minute to loosen the jelly, and invert it onto a serving dish.

For longer shelf-storage, ladle the hot jelly into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[Note] This recipe will work without the quince jelly.

THE PLYMOUTH COCKTAIL | *YIELDS 1 COCKTAIL*

Here is another way to use your leftover cranberry jelly, for when you are tired of turkey sandwiches.

2 ounces Citron Vodka
1 ounce freshly squeezed orange juice

1 tablespoon cranberry jelly

1½-inch strip orange zest, for garnish

Shake the vodka, orange juice, and cranberry jelly with ice in a cocktail shaker for 30 seconds, or until the jelly dissolves. Strain into a coupe, and garnish with a twist of orange zest.

TALKING TURKEY:
THE LITERARY ORIGINS OF THE THANKSGIVING MEAL

The story of Thanksgiving is a fiction, or at least it is as I learned it in elementary school one November day back in the seventies, when we cut out construction-paper turkeys, brass-buckle shoes, and feathered headdresses. That tale of Pilgrims being saved from starvation in 1621 by kindly Indians bearing gifts has little basis in the historical record, according to food historian Andrew F. Smith, whose revisionist research appeared in the Fall 2003 issue of the journal *Gastronomica.* The reality is that Thanksgiving was invented by a sentimental novelist in 1846 and enshrined as a national holiday by President Abraham Lincoln as a means to soothe national division after the Civil War.

The history of thanksgiving—lowercase "t" began soon after the grave Puritans arrived on the *Mayflower* and established Plimoth Plantation in 1620. They issued all sorts of thanksgiving proclamations in observance of "a military victory, a good harvest, or a providential rainfall," says Smith, but these were solemn days of prayer, not sumptuous meals.

A letter dated December 1621 is often cited as evidence of the first Thanksgiving—capital "T"—because it describes a feast of wild fowl eaten with Native American King Massasoit. The letter's purpose makes it suspect, however, because it was sent to England to attract more settlers. Less a cornerstone document of America's multicultural past, suggests Smith, it might be viewed by a jaundiced eye as a hyped-up real-estate advertisement meant to convince wary Englishmen that the New World natives were friendly. (They weren't for long: King Massasoit's son Metacom, known to the English as Philip, later led the so-called King Philip's War against Plymouth Colony.) Throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, says Smith, "thanksgiving remained an optional local celebration held at different times in response to specific circumstances." Only on a few occasions did it assume a national character, as when George Washington marked a day to celebrate the new Constitution, and President James Madison commemorated the end of the War of 1812.

Then along came Sarah Josepha Hale, born in 1788. The energetic writer is

best remembered for her verse “Mary Had a Little Lamb,” but she rose to prominence in 1827 with the publication of a novel, *Northwood; a Tale of New England,* which devoted a chapter to Thanksgiving. In it, Hale worked up the now familiar spread: roast turkey with stuffing, pumpkin pie, and “plates of pickles, preserves … and all the necessaries for increasing the seasoning of the viands to the demand of each palate.”

Starting in 1846, Hale devoted herself to a tireless lobbying campaign to establish Thanksgiving as an annual holiday. “Hale believed that Thanksgiving could pull the United States together as regional differences, economic self-interest, and slavery tore the nation apart,” writes Smith. That her efforts were temporarily interrupted by the Civil War only underscored Hale’s great theme of the need for a shared feast to foster national reconciliation. She leveraged her connections until she managed to write President Lincoln directly, and somehow she persuaded him to join her cause. In 1863, a few months after the battle of Gettysburg, Lincoln declared the last Thursday in November the third national holiday, after Independence Day and Washington’s Birthday.

Political leaders throughout history have seized upon inspiring narratives to promote their agendas—from the Virgin Queen and *le Roi Soleil* to the Kennedy Camelot and Reagan’s “morning in America”—and for Lincoln’s purposes, situating America’s original harvest feast in a multicultural Peaceable Kingdom provided an inflection point for renewal after the Civil War. The real question is why it stuck.

Perhaps because Hale’s Thanksgiving menu may have been a fantasy, but it did, almost by chance, summarize the facts of the American food experience. Guy Davenport writes: *The honey bee came over with the settlers of New England, along with the apple tree and the pear. Two enormous ecologies blended in the New World, where pumpkin, maize, persimmon, melon, and other native vegetables changed the European palate.*

The centerpieces of Hale’s menu, which is everyone’s now, are roast turkey and pumpkin pie. Both are North American species, and they may have been as strange to the Pilgrims as they are familiar to us. Thanksgiving makes us all celebrate how much the nation’s founding depended on the continent’s aboriginal bounty, and how profoundly our mainstream food culture has been enriched by multicultural influences derived from Native American peoples, African slaves, and countless later waves of immigrants.

The American story is one of optimism and adaptability, and American food has always been joyfully opportunistic, pulling ingredients from multiple

“enormous ecologies.” Hale’s version of Thanksgiving and all its manifestations, including construction-paper stagings of a Pilgrim-Indian sitdown, have endured because, like all myth, it is true, even if it isn’t accurate.

CHILI RISTRAS

Preserving collapses time, or perhaps telescopes it. At work in the kitchen, I'm always slipping in and out of the present. Memory is the connection to the past, but anticipation is a catapult into the future. What I'm preserving now, I'll eat later. What will I want to eat in the months ahead? And with whom? What will I need to make that meal? Start planning.

Winter cooking requires dried chili peppers. Almost every meal I cook during the dark months will include some emissary from the cruciferous kingdom: kale, chard, mustard greens, cabbage, collards, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, or cauliflower. Any of them can be blanched in boiling salty water and sautéed with garlic and crushed chili pepper.

Chili is so useful because, though fiery in itself, it becomes merely enlivening when judiciously deployed. It adds what my friend David Tanis calls "the capsicum perk." Chilies also add zip to pickles and even some sweet preserves, including Pumpkin Butter and Dudley's Egyptian Marmalade.

Every year, I get a few pounds of cayenne chilies from Windrose Farm to dry. If you've ever been to Santa Fe or Calabria or Oaxaca, you've seen similar strings of chilies hanging from the rafters (*ristras* in Spanish). Stringing one takes less than 5 minutes.

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2 pounds small, thin chili peppers, such as cayenne

1 Thread a trussing needle with about 6 feet of kitchen twine. Double the twine back on itself, and tie off the ends with a bulky triple knot.

2 Pierce the threaded needle through the thickest part of the chili, just beneath the stem cap. Carefully push the chili down to the knot.

3 Repeat until all the chilies are threaded, cut the thread off at the needle, and knot the end in a loop. You've now got a *ristra.* Hang it out of direct sunlight but where there is plenty of airflow. The chilies will soon start to shrivel; leave them hanging for 10 days or more, until fully dry. At that point, move the *ristra* to within easy reach of your stove, or else destring the chilies and

store them in the cupboard in a paper sack. They’ll last a long time.

ROASTED JALAPEÑOS EN ESCABECHE | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

On my road trip to Oregon to meet Linda Ziedrich, aka Linda the Great, I stopped just north of Crater Lake at the Burger Deli, a roadside shack that served a fantastic burger with a pickled jalapeño slice in place of the conventional cucumber pickle. I decided instantly that I would need to put up jalapeños at home to go with buffalo burgers, one of my standard quick dinners.

I never got around to it until much later, when, at the Santa Monica Farmers Market, I saw a pile of jalapeños that were gorgeous red instead of the more familiar green.

"These are ripe," said the farmer. "They're sweeter. And hotter."

Their burn wasn't the scorching hellfire of a habañero chili, but more like the blunt heat of standing in front of a lakeside bonfire until your bare legs prickle. More unexpected was a layer of pimiento sweetness that immediately put me in mind of roasted red bell peppers. Roasting the jalapeños was a short leap to make. *En escabeche* is the Spanish for "marinated" and derives from an Arabic term, *al-sikbaj*, for a sweet-sour dish that arrived in Spain with the Moorish conquest.

Wear rubber gloves when you peel and seed the jalapeños. I didn't once and regretted it until the next afternoon.

Green jalapeños would also work.

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3 pounds red jalapeño peppers 2 cups white-wine vinegar

1 tablespoon honey

1 teaspoon kosher salt

1 teaspoon dried Mexican oregano

4 cloves garlic, peeled 20 black peppercorns 4 small bay leaves

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 Scorch the whole peppers directly over wood coals or underneath the broiler, turning them until they are blackened and wrinkled all over. Place them in a sealed container to steam for 15 minutes.

2 Once they’re cool, cut away the stems and, wearing rubber gloves, slice each jalapeño open to remove the seeds—the hottest part—and white connective tissue. Peel or rub off the charred skins. Tear the cleaned peppers into strips. Set aside.

3 Combine the vinegar, honey, salt, and oregano in a saucepan, and bring to a boil. Turn off the heat, and let it sit, covered, for 15 minutes.

4 Place a garlic clove, 5 peppercorns, and 1 small bay leaf into each of four prepared ½ pint jars. Loosely pack the peppers into the jars, leaving ¾ inch headspace.

5 Bring the vinegar syrup back to a boil, and ladle the hot liquid through a strainer (to catch the oregano) into the jars, leaving a generous ½ inch headspace. Run a bamboo skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jar to release air pockets. Pour a tablespoon of olive oil into each jar, and top up with more syrup, to leave ½ inch headspace. Do not overfill.

6 Wipe the rims clean with a paper towel moistened with vinegar, seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. Alternatively, for a firmer texture, process in a hot-water bath, between 180 and 185 degrees, for 30 minutes.

PREPARED HORSERADISH | *YIELDS ½ PINT*

Cold-weather food is all about strong flavors. Perhaps it's no surprise, then, that two of the most pungent condiments, horseradish and mustard, originated in Northern climates.

Horseradish belongs to the cabbage family, and was formerly called "*hoarse* radish," as in "coarse" or "strong." The French still call it strong—*radis fort*—even though botanists have decided that *Armoracia rusticana* is not a true radish. Its nasally heat is created by a substance called sinigrin, akin to mustard oil, and the raw root is usually grated as a condiment. Waverly Root notes an exception he observed when living in Paris as an American newspaper correspondent: *In France horseradish is consumed as an hors d'oeuvre and promoter of the appetite; the root is brought whole to the table and the diner cuts off a slice, salts it, eats it without further ado, and continues to repeat the process until the vegetable has vanquished him.*

The classic use for horseradish is, of course, with roast beef. Whip a cup of heavy cream, and fold in 2 tablespoons of grated horseradish, a tablespoon of grated lemon zest, and a tablespoon of chopped green peppercorns. Be stingy with fresh horseradish. As Root notes, the Delphic oracle told the god Apollo that the (true) radish is worth its weight in lead, the beet its weight in silver, and the horseradish its weight in gold. A little goes a long way. Grated horseradish will fade in the refrigerator. Plan to use it within about a month.

Mustard also belongs to the cruciferous family of cabbagey plants, and its seed is a proverbial example of the tiny grain that contains infinite potential.

> *And [Jesus] said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?*
>
> *It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.*
>
> —MARK 4:30–32

Early-eighteenth-century Franciscan Friar Junípero Serra, the founder of California's mission system, scattered mustard seeds as he walked the length of

the state. His legacy is *Brassica nigra,* black mustard, a weed that threatens the state's fragile native plant communities. The seeds are edible (the greens as well), but they are hotter than yellow and brown mustard seeds.

Horseradish and mustard are both so easily made that it's a wonder that business empires have been built upon their manufacture. Neither this recipe nor the following one takes any time, and even though the homemade condiments aren't for canning—heat would kill their potency—they will last in the refrigerator for weeks.

¼ pound fresh horseradish root ½ teaspoon kosher salt ¼ teaspoon mustard powder Pinch of sugar ⅔ cup best-quality sherry vinegar

1 Peel the horseradish, and finely grate it, using a box grater, to yield 1 cup.

2 Whisk the salt, mustard powder, and sugar into the vinegar, and pour over the grated horseradish. Stir everything well to combine. Store the prepared horseradish in a sealed jar in the refrigerator for up to a month.

[Note] Sherry vinegar will stain the snowy grated horseradish a pale porridge color. For pure white, use white-wine vinegar instead.

WHOLE-GRAIN MUSTARD | *YIELDS 1½ CUPS*

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2 tablespoons mustard powder

¼ cup water ½ cup yellow mustard seeds (3 ounces)

2 tablespoons brown mustard seeds

¼ cup white-wine vinegar ¼ cup rounded white wine, such as a California chardonnay 1 teaspoon kosher salt

1 teaspoon unrefined sugar

½ teaspoon Prepared Horseradish
A few small sprigs dried thyme 1 teaspoon brewed Scottish Breakfast or Lapsang Souchong tea, or more to taste

1 Whisk the mustard powder into the water, then stir in the mustard seeds, and set aside for 10 minutes.

2 Stir in the remaining ingredients. Cover, and store in the refrigerator overnight. The prepared mustard will be fiercely hot at first. Adjust the seasonings, stir in tea, if using, and store in a sealed container in the refrigerator. It will be ready to use after another night's rest. It will keep for months.

VANILLA EXTRACT

Alcohol is an ideal vehicle for other flavors, as bakers and bartenders already know. Extracts, such as vanilla extract, and bitters are nothing more than alcohol that has been infused with aromatic botanicals. Harold McGee explains in *On Food and Cooking* that the alcohol molecule on one end resembles fats and oils, and the other is similar to water.

> *Alcohol is therefore a versatile liquid. It mixes easily with water, but also with fatty substances, including cell membranes, which it excels at penetrating, and aroma molecules and carotenoid pigments, which it excels at extracting from cells.*

In concentration, alcohol also kills off microbes, so you don't even have to refrigerate extracts.

THE VANILLA "BEAN" is actually the seedpod of a tropical orchid plant, *Vanilla planifolia,* native to Central America and now cultivated in Tahiti, Madagascar, Mexico, and Hawaii. The flavorful specks of vanilla visible in custards and ice cream are the plant's powdery seeds.

The commercial standard for vanilla extract is set by the USDA and requires that it be at least 35 percent alcohol (70 proof) and contain 13.35 ounces of bean per gallon of alcohol. That equals about six beans per cup. Given a less efficient home-extraction technique, it's sensible to use 1 ounce of vanilla beans (7 or 8 beans) per cup of 80-proof alcohol. Grade B beans, which have less moisture than the prettier Grade A, are preferred for making extract. They're also cheaper, and are sometimes called "extract grade" or "chef grade." Buy them online at Vanilla, Saffron Imports in San Francisco, www.saffron.com.

For the alcohol, use inexpensive vodka for its neutral flavor. High-quality "Bourbon vanilla" takes its name from France, not Kentucky. In 1841, a Creole worker on the Île Bourbon—a French outpost in the Indian Ocean christened after the royal family and renamed Réunion after France's Revolution of 1848—discovered the secret of artificially pollinating the vanilla orchid, an important breakthrough. The French carried vanilla plants to their other island holdings,

including Tahiti and Madagascar, and the Bourbon name trailed along. It’s simply a marketing term, still in use today.

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1 ounce vanilla beans (7 or 8 beans), preferably Grade B extract beans

1 cup vodka

1 Split the beans lengthwise. Scrape the seeds or “caviar” with the edge of a knife, and put the paste in a scalded pint jar. Chop the beans into inch-long segments. Add them to the jar. Pour in the vodka. Seal the jar, and put in a cool, dark place.

2 Shake the bottle every few days. The extract will be ready to use within a month, and will reach full strength at 6 months. At that point, you can strain the extract through a damp coffee filter and bottle it, preferably in a brown or green bottle, to block light. Use the extract as a one-to-one replacement in recipes calling for vanilla extract. It will keep indefinitely. You can use the vanilla beans for a second extraction. Alternatively, you can leave the beans in the extract and top up the jar with fresh vodka as you use the extract.

BITTERS

Bitters are the bartender's spice rack—aromatic liquids flavored with roots, seeds, peels, herbs, spices, and flowers. Potable bitters such as Campari and Fernet-Branca can be sipped as an apéritif or digestif, but aromatic bitters are so potent that they are always diluted, usually measured out in drops and dashes to flavor cocktails. The most famous aromatic bitters are Angostura and Peychaud's.

In the cocktail world, there is a whole subculture intensely focused on bitters. I take a casual—even slapdash—approach to making bitters at home. I'll fill a jar with myrtle berries in the fall, top it up with high-proof alcohol, and forget about it until gin-and-tonic season next spring, when I'll add a few drops of my myrtle bitters for extra flavor. Or I'll take some Seville orange peel, dry it, and pack it in a jar with a few pinches of spices. Eventually, I'll remember to strain the concoction into a dropper bottle and use the orange bitters in a Manhattan. For more precise recipes and a detailed history of bitters and cocktails, consult *Bitters: A Spirited History of a Classic Cure-All with Cocktails, Recipes and Formulas* by Brad Thomas Parsons.

The alcohol I use comes via my friend Joseph Shuldiner, founder of the Institute of Domestic Technology, where I teach. Joseph gets 150-proof pure grain spirits distilled in California from biodynamically grown grapes. It's the equivalent of Italian grappa or French marc, which are also winery by-products distilled from the spent grape skins and stems removed from the fermentation tanks. The store-bought alternative is Everclear, although you could also use high-proof vodka, such as Absolut 100.

PINE CONE SYRUP | *YIELDS ¾ PINT*

For a time, I collaborated with an artist whose work was engaged with community gardens, and she asked me to “archive” their harvest by canning it. The collaboration was full of unexpected challenges, like when she gave me a very realistic heart-shaped mold, complete with blood vessels and arteries, and asked if I could use it for anything. Of course: for blood-orange marmalade.

Another time, she came back from a trip to the Eastern Sierra with a bag of fresh piñon cones, *Pinus monophylla*, one of several Western-state species that produce edible pine nuts. My challenge was to extract the nuts and make use of the sticky, fragrant sap that covered the cones. I decided to try soaking the pitchy cones in simple syrup, and the results were spectacular.

Use very fresh, green pine cones or a handful of fragrant branch tips. Steeping the plant material for longer will yield a stronger syrup. Once winter sets in, drizzle the syrup over snow-cream.

The recipe can be scaled up.

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1 cup organic sugar

1 cup water

4 piñon cones, broken apart

1 Heat the sugar and water in a small saucepan just until it boils. Remove from the heat. Stir the cones into the syrup, and allow to steep for 15 minutes or as long as overnight, stirring occasionally.

2 Strain the syrup through a fine-mesh sieve, and discard the cones. Bottle the syrup, and seal. Store the bottles in a refrigerator. For long-term shelf storage, ladle the hot syrup into three prepared 4-ounce jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[Note] Remove the pine pitch from your hands by rubbing them with olive oil.

ONION CONFITURE | *YIELDS 1 PINT*

I didn’t use to think of onions as seasonal. They keep well, and the commercial food system releases a steady supply of them throughout the year. But everything from the garden has its season—or its seasons.

Scallions are early “spring onions” that we eat, leaves and all. By May, there are tiny “pearl” or cocktail onions to pickle whole. Swelling summer onions are mild enough to shave into salads or braise whole in white wine. Late onions reach their rotund maturity in fall, with some varieties weighing a couple of pounds. Properly cured, late-harvest onions will last through the winter. What we eat is the onion’s bulb, botanically like that of a tulip or any other flower.

In this recipe, sliced fall onions are cooked down with vinegar and enough sugar to balance the taste, along with wine for depth and homemade Grenadine for color. (Cassis could be used in its place.) My friend Alex Hitz, author of *My Beverly Hills Kitchen,* shared the technique, which he learned from three-star French chef Michel Guérard. No other preserve goes so well with steak.

1¾ pounds onions 2 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon kosher salt

¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

4 sprigs fresh or dried thyme

1 cup red wine, such as a Côtes du Rhône ⅓ cup best-quality sherry vinegar ⅓ cup Grenadine or Cassis ¾ cup organic sugar

1 Thinly slice the onions, and cook them slowly in a heavy skillet with the oil, salt, pepper, and thyme. You want them to stew rather than sauté for 25 minutes, until soft, stirring frequently. Do not allow the onions to brown.

2 Add the wine, vinegar, grenadine or Cassis, and sugar, and continue to cook

gently, shaking the pan occasionally, until the liquids are reduced to a syrup, about 45 to 50 minutes.

3 Discard the thyme, and spoon the preserve into two prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 15 minutes.

[Note] You could also use Onion Confiture as the base for a simple onion tart. Use the dough recipe from Apricot Crostata, omitting the sugar. Roll out the dough, and spread it with a layer of confiture. Dot it with a few black olives, and maybe a crumble of goat cheese. Trim the edges of the dough, or fold them over as for a crostata. When the hot tart comes out of the oven, decorate it with freshened anchovy fillets, sprinkle chopped parsley over the top, and a drizzle with extra-virgin olive oil. Serve at room temperature.

LEEKS VINAIGRETTE | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

Leeks are the most civilized allium. More vegetal than their relatives, leeks are often served as a stand-alone vegetable. In France they are “poor man’s asparagus.” I don’t know if I would go that far, but leeks are welcome in the cold months, when less hardy vegetables have vanished from the scene.

This recipe takes its inspiration from the classic bistro dish leeks vinaigrette. It comes out of the jar ready to dress with olive oil and a scatter of chopped chervil or other herbs. Serve with hard-boiled eggs or a warm goat-cheese salad.

About 20 skinny leeks (¾ inch thick)

1 cup champagne vinegar

¾ cup water ¼ cup Sauvignon Blanc ½ teaspoon kosher salt, plus more for blanching 1 tablespoon sugar 4 sprigs fresh thyme

2 small bay leaves

1 clove garlic, peeled and split Freshly ground black pepper

6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 Peel off the leeks’ tough outermost layer. Trim the roots, and cut away the green tops so that the remaining white base is less than 4 inches long. Soak the trimmed leeks in cold water for 10 minutes, agitating them from time to time to remove as much grit as possible. Drain.

2 Combine the vinegar, water, wine, kosher salt, sugar, thyme, and bay leaves in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, and remove from the heat until needed.

3 Blanch the leeks in a pot of salted boiling water—¼ cup salt to 1 gallon of water—in several batches. Cook them for 4 minutes after the water returns to

a boil, drain until cool enough to handle, and pack them into two prepared wide-mouth pint jars, with the leek roots facing up.

4 Divide the thyme and bay leaves between the two jars, add half a garlic clove to each, and top with five or six grinds of black pepper. Bring the vinegar-water syrup back to a boil, and ladle it over the top of the leeks, leaving ¾ inch headspace. Add 2 tablespoons of the olive oil to each jar, wipe the rims carefully, and seal. Process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

5 To serve, pat the leeks dry, and split open. Dress as suggested in the recipe introduction.

CHARLES JONES [1866–1959], ***LEEK PRIZE TAKER***
EDWARD WESTON [1886–1958], ***PEPPER NO. 30*****, 1930**

The first photograph that I can recall looking at consciously—that is, with the intent to understand and remember it—was Edward Weston's iconic bell pepper from 1930. I was a teenager, and it looked sexy, like a body. I was puzzled. This was not just a bell pepper; it was something else altogether. Perhaps it was Art. I had a similarly odd reaction in more recent years when I first saw *The Plant Kingdoms of Charles Jones.* These were not just peas, turnips, strawberries, sunflowers, celery, leeks, onions, and cucumbers. They were portraits, likenesses imbued with the palpable vigor of life.

Jones was born in England two decades before Weston, and he outlived the American by a year. Both used large glass-plate negatives that record the subtleties of light and texture with remarkable clarity. Both framed their still lifes tightly against plain backdrops. Otherwise, the two men could not have been more unlike.

Weston was born in Illinois and became a professional photographer with his own portrait studio in California. He was ambitious as an artist, and his ambitions were rewarded in his own lifetime. In 1937, he became the first photographer to win a Guggenheim grant, and the Museum of Modern Art gave him a career retrospective in 1946. Today the sensual bell pepper is considered one of the masterpieces of the history of photography.

Jones had no place whatsoever in photographic history until 1981, when a trunk of his negatives turned up at a flea market in England and an expert recognized their quality. The publication of *Plant Kingdoms* finally brought Jones's contributions to a public audience—forty years after his death.

According to Robert Flynn Johnson's introduction, Jones was a professional gardener whose only prior public acclaim was a brief mention in a gardening journal in 1905. Not long after, Jones moved to England's rural East Midlands, and lived there, for a time in a house without electricity or running water, as a "Victorian exile," says Johnson. When Jones mastered the camera or developed his signature style—if that's not too contrived a word for works of such studied simplicity—isn't known. Likewise, there's no way of knowing whether Jones had any artistic ambition, or whether his pictures were taken simply to document his prize garden produce. His grandchildren, however, remembered seeing him, late in life, using the glass-plate negatives to improvise small cold frames in the garden to protect seedlings from late frost.

That the "Victorian" Jones was a hobbyist who didn't consider his own work worth safeguarding, whereas Weston set out to be a professional photographer

and became an important artist, marks a pivot between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. At that moment, people who cared about such things were debating whether the camera was merely a tool for mechanically documenting reality, or whether it could be a medium of creative expression. Was the photographer, in other words, a scientist or an artist? Weston's famous images helped settle the argument in favor of art, but in retrospect Jones's are no less persuasive on the score.

What's interesting to me is that both men, as different as they were, decided to photograph vegetables. Jones may have approached his subjects with the plain, steady scrutiny of scientific observation, but he still managed to create images that are beautiful. Whatever his goal, he exalted his subjects through the force of his attention, looking at the humble leek, for instance, with the insatiable curiosity of a lover or an artist who yearns to freeze a fleeting moment and protect the object of his adoration against the ravages of time.

CURRIED CAULIFLOWER PICKLE | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

There should be more cauliflower pickles.

Cauliflower holds up to canning and showcases strong flavors, and the florets come off in tidy bite-sized pieces. Research also suggests that cauliflower is effective in preventing prostate cancer, particularly when cooked with turmeric.

This recipe is loosely inspired by aloo gobi, an Indian vegetable dish of cauliflower cooked with potatoes and spices. Saffron and the turmeric in curry powder stain the pickles yellow, and golden raisins give it a nice sweet-sour dimension. I serve it as an appetizer alongside smoked chicken or turkey, and it's also delicious stirred into a rice pilaf with pistachios and pomegranate seeds.

I like to use the heirloom Italian Romanesco cauliflower (see the photograph), because of its mesmerizing shape, but the more familiar curd-shaped white cauliflower would work equally well.

2-pound head cauliflower 1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more for blanching 2 cups white-wine vinegar 2 cups water

3 tablespoons organic sugar

4 teaspoons hot curry powder (or 2 teaspoons mild curry powder and a couple of crushed dried red chilies)

24 saffron threads

4 cardamom pods, crushed 4 cloves garlic, peeled and split

4 teaspoons black sesame seeds

2 teaspoons kalonji seeds, also known as *Nigella sativa* (available at Indian markets or via the Internet) ½ cup golden raisins

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 Wash and drain the cauliflower head, then cut the florets from the stem with a paring knife, starting at the base. As much as possible, the pieces should be the same size.

2 Working in several batches, blanch the cauliflower in heavily salted boiling water for 2 minutes after the water returns to a boil. Drain.

3 Combine the salt, vinegar, 2 cups water, sugar, curry, saffron, and cardamom in a saucepan, and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat, and allow to steep for 15 minutes; then bring the syrup back to a boil.

4 Evenly divide the garlic, sesame seeds, and kalonji seeds among four prepared pint jars. Pack the cauliflower into the jars, and layer the raisins throughout. Ladle the hot syrup over the top, leaving ¾ inch headspace. Pour 1 tablespoon of olive oil into each jar, seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. Allow to cure for at least a week before opening.

PICKLED CARDOONS OR CELERY | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

Cardoons are a kind of thistle, and the Greeks and Romans loved them. They pickled the buds with cumin and silphium, a vanished wild plant that may have gone extinct when the Emperor Nero ate the last known specimen. Today we prefer eating the cardoon's stalks, which look like brutish celery. They also have strings like celery, and destringing the ribs is tedious work. You inevitably cut away a disheartening amount of flesh, but the result is a unique flavor that combines artichoke and celery with a bracing bitterness.

This pickle is flavored with cumin seeds and anchovies, a nod to the Roman fish paste *garum*, and it is robust enough to eat with wintry things like grilled sausages, potatoes gratin, and dark greens. I love it.

Celery can be pickled the same way. Though I don't destring celery before it goes into the jar, I do like to cut it into matchsticks before serving.

2½ pounds cardoons or celery ¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice, for

acidulated water 1 teaspoon kosher salt, plus more for blanching 2 teaspoons cumin seeds, lightly toasted 2 cloves garlic, peeled Freshly ground black pepper 1½ cups white-wine vinegar 1½ cups dry white wine 2 tablespoons sugar 3 anchovy fillets

4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

1 Trim and peel the cardoons by running a sharp knife underneath the stalk's outer ribbed surface to remove the strings. Cut the peeled stalk into 4-inch sections. Soak the pieces in acidulated water to prevent browning.

2 Blanch the cardoons in well-salted boiling water for 4 minutes (only 2 minutes for celery). Drain. Loosely pack into two prepared regular-mouth pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Add 1 teaspoon cumin seeds and 1 clove garlic to each jar, and a few grinds of black pepper.

3 Combine the vinegar, wine, sugar, and kosher salt in a small saucepan. Rinse and pat dry the anchovy fillets, and mash them into a paste with a fork. Add the anchovy paste to the saucepan, and bring the mixture to a boil.

4 Ladle the boiling syrup over the cardoons, leaving ¾ inch headspace. Finally, pour 2 tablespoons olive oil into each jar, seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

LAURYN CHUN OF MOTHER-IN-LAW KIMCHI

It's the second day of making kimchi at Jang Mo Gip in Garden Grove, California, and Lauryn Chun, whose mother owns the restaurant, is standing over a plastic vat the size of a bathtub. It contains something like four times her weight in Napa cabbage.

The cabbages were quartered, cored, and salted the night before, and now an older Korean woman named Jung Sook Park, the kimchi master who has worked with Lauryn's mother for twenty years, is dusting the heaped vegetables with handfuls of dried red chilies and strewing bunches of garlic chives and scallions on top. Next she ladles out grated ginger and minced garlic and douses everything with liquid chili paste and a fragrant brew of puréed salted shrimp and anchovy sauce. Lauryn points out that Mrs. Park doesn't measure her ingredients: she judges quantities from experience and instinct. In Korean, one would say that Mrs. Park has "tasty hands."

As an assistant reaches into the vat up to his elbows to stir the seasonings into the cabbages, Lauryn tells me to lean in and inhale.

"It smells like the ocean," she says. "It smells like the earth. It's one of my earliest memories."

The chili fumes burn my lungs, but the smell is fantastic. Not yet blended and mellowed by the fermentation process that gives kimchi its signature sour tang, the fragrance is an assembly of clearly delineated elements, like a drystone wall. As Mrs. Park works, Lauryn shares a few useful tips (stir in the dry ingredients first, then the wet) and imparts one key ratio (twice as much ginger as garlic), but otherwise she guards the hereditary secrets of Jang Mo Gip, which means "Mother-in-Law's House."

"What's in the chili paste?" I ask.

"That's proprietary," she says.

Still, letting me see this much is already generous. Lauryn, who lives in New York, produces her own retail line of kimchi, the best I've ever eaten, and markets it nationwide under the brand name Mother-in-Law's Kimchi. When I asked for advice on mastering kimchi, Lauryn was initially cagey but then invited me to Garden Grove so that I could experience the smell of newly made kimchi, which in its complexity contains all the elements of a recipe.

"KIMCHI," LIKE OUR WORD "PICKLE," describes both the technique and the product. Fermented from any sort of vegetable, cabbage simply being the most familiar, kimchi is the Korean national dish. *The Cambridge World History of Food* supposes that kimchi is as old as agriculture and notes that the word first appeared in a poem by Lee Kyu-bo (1168–1241). Most Westerners will assume that kimchi is always fiery hot, but red chilies, which are native to North America, did not land on the Korean peninsula until the 1590s. Rather than chilies or any other single ingredient, kimchi's *sine qua non* is fermentation.

Regional variations abound, according to the *Cambridge* editors: *Although kimchi is eaten as an essential side dish throughout the year, different ingredients and methods of preparation are associated with the changing seasons and different regions. Almost all varieties include Chinese cabbage, radishes, red pepper and garlic. Salted shrimp provides the special flavor characteristic of the kimchi preferred by residents of Seoul; salted anchovy is used in southern regions, and various kinds of fish are favored in the northern regions, but the art of making kimchi can be applied to an almost endless variety of basic ingredients, spices and flavorings. Even the stem of the sweet potato vine can be turned into kimchi.*

Kimchi is second only to rice as a cornerstone of Korean cooking.

"It's a basic staple," says Lauryn, when we leave Mrs. Park in the Jang Mo Gip kitchen and retire to the dining room for a meal of eggy seafood pancake with scallions, stir-fried pork with chili paste, and at least four varieties of kimchi, including cucumber flavored with sesame oil, daikon radish, chopped cabbage, and the more assertive quartered cabbage. "It's a condiment, but you also cook with it. Koreans feel that if you're not eating kimchi you're not eating a meal."

The four-hundred-pound batch I saw being made lasts Jang Mo Gip about two days.

Kimchi was traditionally made in November, with the last of the cabbage harvest. Lauryn describes the scene from childhood memories: all the ladies of the neighborhood would convene in a festive mood to chop and spice the cabbage, then pack it into huge terra-cotta pots to be buried in the ground for overwintering. Kept at a steady, cool temperature, the cabbage ferments through the action of anaerobic bacteria that prevent spoilage and impart an agreeable flavor. According to Harold McGee, such benign micro-organisms "apparently evolved eons ago in oxygen-poor piles of decaying vegetation, and now transform our carefully gathered harvests into dozens of different foods across

the globe.” The many strains of lactic-acid bacteria have been culturally vital since time immemorial, because, when regulated by temperature and salt, they create an acid environment that prevents the growth of less desirable bacteria, such as *Clostridium botulinum,* which causes botulism. Besides kimchi, lactic-acid fermentation creates sauerkraut (literally, “sour cabbage”), brined pickles, cheese, yogurt, and cured meats such as salumi. Kimchi has 3 to 4 percent total salt by weight, much of it provided by the addition of salted shrimp and fermented fish sauces. When it is kept below fifty-eight degrees—in your fridge, for instance—a host of gas-producing bacteria create fizz. Lauryn calls kimchi the champagne of pickles.

“I can’t tell you how many times I’ve gotten e-mails from people saying, ‘It’s bubbling up and I didn’t know if it was safe to eat, so I threw it out!’ ” Lauryn says. “Don’t be afraid of the bubbles—it’s kimchi.”

Lauryn grew up in Downey, California, near the port of Long Beach, and learned the basics of Korean cooking from her mother and grandmother. After graduating from UCLA with a degree in political science, she veered unsteadily between opposing career paths, at times working conventional jobs in finance and marketing on both coasts, and then taking quirkier gigs at restaurants, at a wine magazine, and, for one harvest season, picking grapes in Barolo. Downsized from her last nine-to-five job in 2009, she started to think like an entrepreneur ready to embrace her Korean American heritage.

“I felt like it was the right time,” she recalls. “I loved what [Momofuku chef] David Chang was doing in taking Korean food, which had been so ‘ethnic,’ and transitioning it to the mainstream. Then there was a lot of artisanal pickling in Brooklyn, and I was living on the Lower East Side, which is like the pickle capital of the world. Kimchi is not that different than pickles. I just sort of made a decision to give it a shot.”

The name Mother-in-Law’s Kimchi may not strike the Western ear as propitious, recalling the nagging downside of marriage. But in Korean culture, Lauryn explains, the mother-in-law is esteemed for her skillful and generous cooking—a role we might assign to the loving grandmother. Lauryn explains that the mother-in-law’s house is where you eat best, since a man would go to his bride’s house to preview the food.

“The future mother-in-law wanted to ensure that her daughter would be married off,” says Lauryn. “It’s cooking to impress.”

The kimchi recipe Lauryn developed pulls in various regional variations. She compares it to Basque cooking, with its opportunistic use of multinational

influences. Her secret mix of medium-hot dried chilies will excite but not inflame the non-Korean palate.

How long to ferment the kimchi is a point of hot dispute between Lauryn and her mother. Surprisingly, perhaps, Lauryn says that Americans prefer their kimchi to be riper than do Koreans. Lauryn sides with the American taste for tangy bubbles; immature kimchi is to her “a salad.” Her mother thinks kimchi should always be eaten “fresh,” after only a day’s fermentation.

Lauryn makes her argument through analogy to wine, which undergoes two distinct stages of fermentation: “After the initial fermentation, you can smell the grapes in your glass,” says Lauryn. “Once it’s been aged optimally, the young fruit is really integrated. It’s a chemical transformation of grapes into poetry.”

Lauryn doesn’t pasteurize her product, which would arrest the fermentation. Mother-in-Law Kimchi is shipped and displayed under refrigeration, and the consumer who takes home a pint jar becomes the custodian of an active microbial ecosystem.

How long will it last? As long as it lasts, says Lauryn. She would prefer not to print a “use by” date on her jars, but New York state regulations require her to.

“Kimchi doesn’t spoil,” she says. “It’s a living food. That’s the whole point of fermentation.”

KIMCHI | *YIELDS ABOUT 4 QUARTS*

My recipe aims for a complex, balanced flavor that is warming but not fiery. One can fine-tune the temperature by altering the ratio of dried peppers—mild paprika, medium-hot seedless crushed Aleppo pepper, hot cayenne chili flakes—and by adjusting the amount of chili paste. I like the widely available Sambal Oelek Ground Fresh Chili Paste, from the makers of Sriracha Hot Chili Sauce.

Given some of the unusual ingredients, making kimchi will likely require a trip to an Asian market. Tiny salted shrimp can be found in the refrigerator case; Korean anchovy sauce or shrimp sauce will be shelved alongside the soy sauces. Each is an important ingredient, not just an optional flavoring, because it adds necessary salt to the fermenting brine.

Kimchi takes 2 days to make and additional time to ferment, although the exact time will depend on the ambient temperature. A cooler, slower fermentation will be easier to control and may give better results. Temperatures between 50 and 60 degrees would be ideal. Once the kimchi has soured to your liking, store it in the refrigerator to slow fermentation. It will remain mildly active, so don’t be alarmed if the kimchi bubbles. The natural effervescence is the result of desirable fermentation and of course is perfectly safe.

This recipe could be halved or doubled, and could also be made with other vegetables, such as daikon radish, small turnips (with their greens), or Savoy cabbage.

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5 pounds Napa cabbage (weighed after quartering and coring)

4 ounces noniodized salt

4 to 6 scallions, roots trimmed

8 to 10 chive shoots

1 shallot lobe, sliced

3 tablespoons sugar

2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons Aleppo chili powder 1 to 2 tablespoons dried cayenne chili flakes ¼ cup salted shrimp, finely chopped or ground into a paste ½ cup Korean anchovy sauce or shrimp sauce ½ cup strong beef stock (see note) or water

2 tablespoons sweet paprika

2 to 4 tablespoons fresh chili paste, or more to taste ¼ cup minced garlic

2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger root

1 Quarter the Napa cabbages, and cut out the tough core. Layer with the salt in a large nonreactive bowl or vat. Cover, and leave overnight, stirring a few times to ensure that the salt is evenly distributed.

2 The next day, drain the salted cabbage, rinse it in cool water, and lay it, cut side down, to drain. Toss the cabbage in a large bowl with the scallions, chives, shallot, sugar, 2 tablespoons Aleppo pepper, and 1 to 2 tablespoons cayenne chili flakes. Stir until well mixed.

3 Combine the ground salted shrimp and anchovy or shrimp sauce. Pour this mixture over the vegetables. Combine the beef broth or water, the paprika, the remaining 2 teaspoons Aleppo chili powder, and the chili paste. Pour over the vegetables. Add the minced garlic and grated ginger, and mix all the ingredients with your hands until everything is evenly moistened.

4 Firmly pack the cabbage mixture into four scalded quart jars, a crock, or any other nonreactive vessel. Closely cover the surface with parchment paper or plastic wrap. Alternatively, pack the cabbage mixture into food-grade plastic bags and loosely tie off. (Leave Ziploc bags partially unzipped, so that the gases produced by fermentation can escape.) Store in a cool, dry place. Taste after 2 days, and continue fermenting until the kimchi has soured to your liking. Stored in a refrigerator in a sealed container, it will keep for weeks.

[Note] To make beef stock, roast 2 pounds beef neck or knuckle bones in a 400-degree oven for 45 minutes. Put the browned bones in a pot with a small yellow onion, a carrot, and a few stalks of parsley. Cover with 6 cups of water, and cook at a bare simmer for 2½ hours. Strain the stock, salt lightly to taste, and refrigerate overnight. Carefully remove and discard the congealed fat. Yields about 3 cups.

KOGI TACOS

The national food-truck craze started in Los Angeles, when, in the late 2000s, young chefs and entrepreneurs crammed their ambitious cooking into old-school *loncheras,* the "roach coach" food trucks typically serving tacos for a buck apiece. (Gustavo Arellano, author of *Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America,* has reported that food trucks have an even older precedent: horse-drawn tamale wagons first appeared in L.A. as far back as the 1870s.) The trend was led by Kogi Korean BBQ, which offered a curbside fusion of Asian and Latin cooking, and Kogi tacos became an instant classic in L.A.

If you have kimchi, you can make your own kogi tacos at home. Basically, the idea is to fill a corn tortilla with shredded meat and top it with shredded lettuce, grated carrots, minced onions, and chopped kimchi. A sprig of cilantro wouldn't hurt, and a simple dressing of Sriracha Hot Chili Sauce stirred into sour cream will add both heat and a cooling richness.

KIMCHI GRILLED CHEESE

For a new variation on the inexhaustible classic, use levain or sourdough bread, aged Gouda cheese, and a sprinkling of chopped kimchi. Fry the sandwich in butter. Or make a kimchi quesadilla, using corn tortillas folded in half and heated in a dry cast-iron skillet.

SAUERKRAUT | *FIVE POUNDS CABBAGE YIELDS ABOUT 1 GALLON SAUERKRAUT*

Sauerkraut is as easy as any recipe in this book—add salt to shredded cabbage—and the results are dramatically better than any store-bought. The only requirement for making sauerkraut, which means “sour cabbage” in German, is patience: it can take up to 6 weeks to ferment. The exact time will depend on temperature, since the beneficial lactic-acid bacteria responsible for fermentation grow more quickly at warmer temperatures. Certain strains of bacteria prefer specific temperature ranges and salinity—one reason that sauerkraut has a different texture and tang from kimchi—but obsessing over the tiny details can make the process seem more complex than it really is.

Generally speaking, the best sauerkraut matures slowly at temperatures between 60 and 65 degrees, taking 5 to 6 weeks. At temperatures between 70 and 75 degrees, fermentation takes 3 to 4 weeks. The kraut may not ferment if kept below 50 degrees.

I age batches of sauerkraut in my garage, which is dug into a hillside, and where the winter temperature holds fairly steady at about 60 degrees. You should choose whatever cool place you have available—the refrigerator will be too cold—and see what develops. There’s no need to jump-start the process by adding a bacterial culture, as in making yogurt, because the necessary bacteria are already on the cabbage and in the air. Whatever is floating around will “seed” your sauerkraut. The final product is determined by the microecosystem in the jar and the microenvironment of the storage space, making sauerkraut the paragon of ultra-local food processing.

Sauerkraut can be flavored with spices such as juniper berries or caraway seeds. You could also add vinegar or wine and combine other shredded vegetables, such as turnips, onions, carrots, or beets. I like it plain, which I think is the best way to appreciate the rich, complex fermented taste.

Once the kraut has soured to your liking, store it in the refrigerator. It will keep for months. To use, remove a serving from the storage jar, rinse it with fresh water, and heat. Make sure that the kraut left in the jar is covered by brine.

Sauerkraut's classic match is cured meat—anything from a hot dog to the wonderful French *choucroute garnie*, which comes with a plateful of mixed sausages and cured pork. My simple version is to cover a pint of rinsed sauerkraut with hard cider, and cook it with 1 tablespoon apple-cider vinegar, ½ teaspoon juniper berries, cubed bacon, a sliced shallot, and small potatoes. See Jeffrey Steingarten's *The Man Who Ate Everything* for a definitive *choucroute garnie à l'Alsacienne.* Sauerkraut is also delicious with fried eggs, either for breakfast or on a fried-egg Reuben—the invention of my fellow Master Food Preserver Ernest Miller.

To learn more about sauerkraut, see the excellent chapter in Linda Ziedrich's *The Joy of Pickling.* Sandor Katz's *Wild Fermentation* and *The Art of Fermentation* are also valuable resources.

This recipe can be scaled up.

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5 pounds cabbage

1½ ounces noniodized salt, or more if needed

1 Remove the tough outermost leaves of the cabbage heads. Chop each head into quarters, and cut out the woody core. Using a chef's knife, shred the cabbage into thin slices—the thickness of a quarter. You could also shred the cabbage on a mandoline or an old-fashioned kraut board.

2 Toss half the shredded cabbage with half the salt in a large bowl, then pack it into the vessel you'll use to ferment it. Options include a large glass jar, a stone crock, or a food-grade plastic container; you'll need a 2-gallon capacity for every 5 pounds of cabbage. Press the cabbage very firmly into the bottom of the container. Repeat with the rest of the cabbage and salt. Set aside for 2 hours. Once the cabbage has softened and released some liquid, again press it very firmly into the bottom of the container, and weight it with a plate topped with a sealed quart jar of water or a clean rock.

3 The next day, the cabbage should be covered in its own brine. If not, dissolve ¾ ounce salt in 1 quart of water, and pour it over the cabbage to submerge.

4 Now wait and watch. Check the sauerkraut every few days. If any scum develops on the surface of the water, skim it, and also rinse the plate and weights. Don't worry if small specks of mold develop on the brine or the container's wall. Skim them, or wipe them away with a damp paper towel.

5 Wait and taste. The sauerkraut will start to sour within 2 weeks. As it ferments, small bubbles will rise, the brine will cloud, and the cabbage's vibrant green color will mellow to a pale khaki-gold. When the bubbles stop and the sauerkraut has developed a strong, slightly yeasty tang, the fermentation is complete.

6 The finished sauerkraut can be packed in quart jars to store in the refrigerator. Make sure that each jar has enough brine to cover its contents. The kraut will keep easily for 6 weeks. For longer storage, freezing will preserve the texture better than canning. But if you prefer to can it, heat the sauerkraut with its brine to a simmer in a saucepan. Pack into jars, covering the kraut completely with brine and leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes for pints, 15 minutes for quarts. Turn off the heat, and allow the jars to settle for 5 minutes before removing.

[ROAD TRIP]

MOLASSES MAKING

GREENVALLEY TO JOHNSON HOLLOW

The Houston family of East Tennessee loves molasses, especially their own, which is why, every year since the 1950s, they have grown sorghum and made molasses in the fall. In the past decade or so, the event has taken place at the Houston farm in Johnson Hollow, which is co-owned by siblings Ada Mae and Jim Houston and has enough level fields to park the hundred-plus guests who come in from as far away as Scotland and Japan. Ada Mae's house is right up the road from my dad's, so in 2008 I flew in from Los Angeles on the first weekend in October, on a day when the maples and dogwoods had turned fiery in the autumn woods.

The main molasses-making happened on Saturday, but the preparations were already in full swing Friday afternoon, when my dad and I went up to help cut the cane. Stripped of its leaves for harvest, the sorghum looked almost like spindly corn with russet seed heads. (Sorghum is a cereal crop that originated in Africa. Commercial molasses from sugar cane is a by-product of refining sugar.) Each stalk was about the thickness and length of a fishing pole, and you severed it at the ground in a swift chop with a hatchetlike cane knife. With six or eight hands working, it didn't take long to gather a wagonload. Jim's grandson Chase tractored the cane to a shed where it would be

processed the next day, and Jim saved a dozen or so seed heads for next year's planting. I asked him how much cane we'd need for a run of molasses.

"We'll grind a right-smart if we can," he said, meaning that we would crush as much as time would allow.

The next morning started early, and by six-thirty, when I arrived, the shed was already busy. Jim had been there for two hours to light the fire pit, and a group of younger men had also arrived in the dark, to prepare breakfast and smoke the pork shoulders for lunch. By eight-thirty, a group of ladies were arriving in Ada Mae's kitchen to make "dinner," which is what they call the midday meal in Johnson Hollow. Grace, one of the cooking crew, burst in like the village crier.

"We got a lot of cars showing up," she said. "They know it's time to come to Ada's to eat. And then we'll eat again for dinner. Wait around long enough, we'll eat *again*."

Up at the shed, Jim had started grinding the cane in an antique roller-contraption powered by a rumbling diesel tractor. The younger boys fed stalks into the grinder, and the juice trickled out, pale green and lightly sweet, almost like apple cider but without acidity. The taste was pure sugar. One stalk at a time, the juice accumulated slowly, slowly, in a large galvanized washtub.

"You think this is slow," said someone, "you should have seen when we ground it with mules."

After being strained through muslin sheets, the juice was poured into a shallow pan about the size and shape of a sleeping cot. The fire underneath had to be managed to maintain an even boil, so Jim fed it carefully with oak, maple, and dogwood, source of the best flame. The

juice would need to reduce for five to six hours. “It boils down about ten to one,” said Jim. All that time, it would have to be stirred and skimmed.

Uncle Willy, at ninety-eight years old retired from active work but still presiding as the clan’s honorary molasses boss, watched the progress from his chair. “They’re skimmin’ it more’n they need to,” he said, and it occurred to me that, although Uncle Willy was surely right, the reason was to give the younger boys a chance to learn through experience how it should be done.

As the post-breakfast lull gave way to the pre-lunch rush, a bluegrass band struck up tunes, and a local men’s civic group made apple butter in a copper cauldron over an open fire. In Ada Mae’s kitchen, the ladies were cooking and talking. Ada explained to me, as she has before, that the Wests from Blount County and the Houstons of Union County are related. When my dad moved to Johnson Hollow thirty years ago, she had quizzed him about his family tree until she could figure out where it intersected with hers. (The way it works is that Gran’s mother was a Mays and Ada’s mother was a Mays, making Ada Mae and my dad something like fourth or fifth cousins.) When my dad finally rolled in—he’s never been one to rush—he took up his accustomed role as the teller of family stories, including one I hadn’t

heard before, about his great-grandfather. Grandaddy, as he's called, remarried after his first wife died, but only briefly, since on his wedding night he snored so loud—"brayed like a horse" said my dad—that his new wife ran off and was never heard from again. Grandaddy was born on May 22, 1860 (we share the same birthday), and could recall having seen Union soldiers march past his house at the end of the Civil War. He lived long enough for my dad, as a boy, to know him, and it amazes me how family stories can leap the centuries.

Meanwhile, back up at the shed, the molasses was still bubbling over the fire pit, but by now the pale-green juice had taken on the slime-green look of pond scum, on its way to becoming a sticky brown-black syrup. After lunch, Jim let Uncle Willy know that the molasses seemed to be ready. Uncle Willy tottered over to the fire, used his pocketknife to whittle a spoon from the butt end of a cane, and dipped it into the molasses.

"They're good," he said, and with that, Jim and a half dozen others lifted the steaming vat off the fire. They decanted the hot molasses into five-gallon lard cans, and then, before it cooled, Jim set to transferring it into Mason jars. The run was twelve gallons, and in all, the half-acre field raised enough cane for three runs.

As the sun dropped behind the ridge, most of the crowd had already taken their molasses and dispersed. Those who were left—the Houstons and their Johnson Hollow neighbors—took out the lunch leftovers for supper, just as Grace had predicted at the start of the day. People pretended to grumble about the work they had done, and falsely claimed they would never make molasses again.

"I learned something today," said Ada's next-door neighbor Ray. "I

learned not to leave my porch.”

MOLASSES COOKIES | *YIELDS 3 DOZEN COOKIES*

Thanks to Bill Webb for sharing his family recipe.

¾ cup butter 1 cup sugar, plus more for rolling

1 egg

¼ cup molasses 9 ounces all-purpose flour 1 teaspoon baking soda 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon 1 teaspoon ground cloves

1 teaspoon ground ginger

1 Cream the butter and sugar in a mixing bowl. Beat in the egg and molasses. Sift together the flour, baking soda, and spices, and add to the butter mixture. Mix just until well blended. Chill the dough for an hour.

2 Lightly grease two baking sheets. Shape the dough into ¾-inch balls, roll in sugar, and place 2 inches apart on the baking sheet. Bake 8 to 10 minutes in a 350-degree oven, or until they are crinkled and dry on top. Transfer the cookies to a rack to cool.

ADA MAE HOUSTON [1935–2011]

My dad's neighbor Ada Mae Houston canned in quantities that were commensurate with her hospitality. The year when I sat down with her to record her childhood food memories, she had put up two hundred quarts of homegrown green beans and frozen forty-two *dozen* ears of corn.

Ada Mae was thirteen when electricity came to Johnson Hollow. She had written down the exact date: November 5, 1948. "That's when the lights were turned on," she said.

Before that day, her family lived in a local food culture that was largely unchanged since the American colonial experience. They hauled buckets of drinking water from a well and collected rainwater for bathing and washing. They grew practically everything they ate, including wheat for flour and corn for meal. (A local general store provided sugar and coffee.) Like most families in Johnson Hollow, the Houstons rarely ate beef, because without refrigeration a slaughtered cow was much too large for a single family to use before it would spoil. Instead, their fresh meat was from chickens and small game. Cured pork was their staple, and hogs were slaughtered annually with the arrival of cold weather—their legs and "midlands" salted for ham and bacon, much of the rest ground for sausage. Ada's mother canned the sausage as well as the ribs and bones, processing the jars in a fire-heated cauldron for eight hours.

Ada Mae Houston

The summer garden provided Ada Mae's family with plenty to eat. Autumn

produce—potatoes, turnips, pumpkins, apples, sweet potatoes—was stored in a root cellar beneath the house. The family's pantry held canned tomatoes, green beans, pickles, apple butter, jams and jellies, grape juice and grape jelly, canned wild cress, canned whole wild blackberries, and wild-strawberry preserves—"the best-tasting things you ever eat," said Ada.

In addition, Ada Mae's mother fermented sauerkraut and put up jars of sliced apples preserved with sulfur, which would be rinsed and used for pie. The preserved food provided calories and nourishment as well as another dietary essential—variety.

"On a cold, snowy day, there was nothing any colder than a jar of canned tomatoes from under the house," recalls Ada, "but I reckon we would open them in the dead of winter to give some color and have something a little different to eat."

In her adult years, Ada Mae didn't have to rely on home-canned goods to get through the winter, but she still liked her canned tomatoes "when the snow flies," she said, and she put up canned sausage because she liked the old-timey way of doing things.

Ada was one of those steady women who hold together families and entire communities. She never had children of her own, so she was everybody's grandmother. It seems simple to put it this way, but what Ada did was to feed people and remember—seemingly everything. She remembered birthdays and

family lore and any historic event of local significance. Her small house was often filled with a big crowd, and although Ada was not a technically accomplished chef, she laid a generous table and knew how to prepare everything that could be found in Johnson Hollow, including wild foods such as “creasies” or upland cress, polk, pawpaws, chinkapins, and wild game, from rabbit to deer to groundhog. She was a constant figure in my life for thirty years and a big inspiration for this book. Her pantry has long been my touchstone for the idea of saving the season. All those jars, put up with care, represent more than just bare sustenance. They hold the promise of family gatherings and stories and memories swapped across the generations. That was Ada’s gift, and this book is a tribute to the many things I learned at her table.

MASON JARS
MASON JARS

Winter

Wintertime’s the time for idleness.
Cold weather’s when the laborers can rest And feast together on what they’ve labored for: The winter festiveness unravels cares— It’s as when a ship at last comes into port With a full cargo, the voyage finally over, And the joyful crew bedecks the decks with garlands.

—*Virgil’s “first Georgic”*

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INTRODUCTION

WINTER RAINSTORMS ARRIVE in Southern California with the disruptive excitement of blizzards on the East Coast. Local meteorologists finally have something to talk about, and their weather reports are full of frothing drama. They'll say things like: A rising crescendo of powerful storms has tapped into a deep plume of tropical moisture and is taking aim at California, creating the conditions for heavy and potentially dangerous rainfall as it slams into the coast over the next twenty-four to forty-eight hours! In other words, it's going to rain.

In the kitchen, winter means taking down jars that I've been putting up all year. And it means citrus.

Oranges, lemons, limes, tangerines, and grapefruit are available year-round at the grocery store, so I never appreciated that they, too, have a season. Then I moved to California and discovered how much better just-picked citrus can be. One time, I was filling an order for a hundred jars of marmalade using the wonderful Washington navel oranges grown by Deborah and Hassan Ghamloush at their organic farm, The Grove, in Riverside, California. On the final batch, I

ran short of oranges, so I went to the grocery store and bought five pounds of whatever oranges they had. The contrast was huge: the store-bought fruit was pale and bland and had rinds like Styrofoam. I thought sugar would mask the difference, but it didn't. I wound up throwing out that batch of marmalade.

The California citrus belt also grows less familiar fruit, such as teardrop-shaped pomelos, rare yuzu, fragrant Seville oranges, blood oranges, kumquats, and bergamots. I always buy too much of everything, and bowls of citrus fruit decorate my living room until I finally get around to using it.

The winter section of this book is devoted almost entirely to citrus, although I also offer a short section at the end on tropical fruits, such as pineapples. Some of the citrus recipes are very easy: canning mandarin sections in light syrup doesn't even require a knife, so it's a good project to do with kids. Citrus syrups, candied peel, and dried citrus are likewise simple projects that yield a lot of pleasure. Citrus jelly can be transformed into a delicious jelly candy.

Marmalade takes some patience and skill, but the homemade versions are so far superior to anything you can buy that I obsessed over mastering the techniques. I'll show you how to do it, step by step. We'll start with my quick version—Time-to-Kill Marmalade and its variations—and then examine the different techniques that work best with each fruit, from limes to kumquats to grapefruits to the incomparable bitter Seville orange. The results are surprisingly varied.

In addition to recipes, I want to share some of the curious things I've learned about this ancient fruit family. Citrus has been cultivated by man for thousands of years, and because of its tendency to hybridize freely, I think of it as the most sexually promiscuous of all fruit. We'll take a road trip to Riverside, the birthplace of the California citrus industry, to learn more. We'll also drive to Northern California in a pounding rainstorm to visit Robert Lambert, a master marmalade maker, to discuss the intricacies of this most demanding but most rewarding of all sweet preserves. Don't forget your umbrella.

MANDARIN ORANGE SECTIONS | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

Here is a simple but pleasing recipe to make for and with young kids. The procedure doesn't require sharp knives, and there's almost no added sugar. Also, something about the mild flavor and diminutive size of mandarins makes them ideally suited for children. The result is similar to the canned mandarin "orange" sections that as a little boy I found so exotic.

The taxonomy of the mandarin clan is unwieldy. *Citrus reticulata* probably originated in northeastern India, and it has been cultivated in China since a very early date. The Latin *reticulata* means "netted" and refers to the network of fibers running through the pith just beneath the loose-fitting peel.

According to *The Oxford Companion to Food*, *C. reticulata* arrived in Europe in 1805, centuries later than the other citrus. The nickname "mandarin" commemorated the fruit's origin in China, and Waverly Root claims that its color and shape "recalls the button which topped the hats of imperial Chinese officials." There are a lot of different named varieties, but any of them will do.

Depending on the flavor and sweet-acid balance of your fruit, you may need to adjust the proportions of sugar and lemon juice.

2½ pounds mandarins ¼ cup sugar 2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice Optional: 1/8 teaspoon orange-flower water

1 Peel 1½ pounds of the mandarins with your fingers and separate them into sections. Remove as much of the stringy pith as possible, and discard. Pack the sections into two prepared pint jars, leaving ¾ inch headspace.

2 Juice the remaining mandarins, and add enough water to make 2 cups liquid. Put the liquid, sugar, and lemon juice in a small saucepan, and bring to a boil. Add the orange-flower water, if using, and ladle the hot syrup into the jars, leaving ½ inch headspace.

3 Agitate the jars gently to release any air bubbles, wipe the rims, and seal. Process the jars in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. To reduce venting, wait 5 minutes before removing the jars.

WINTER FRUIT COCKTAIL: CITRUS SECTIONS IN THEIR OWN JUICE | *YIELDS 3 PINTS*

This recipe for citrus sections captures a particular moment in the year when new-crop oranges and grapefruits are piled in the markets, their leaves still attached. Sectioning the fruit takes a little technique, but the short ingredient list is flexible enough to incorporate different citrus varieties, more or less sugar, this or that alcohol. When you go to the market, pick whatever large, pretty grapefruits catch your eye—preferably some combination of red, pink, and white—and balance them with any kind of orange, including pink Cara Cara navel oranges. Experiment. Serve the fruit cocktail with whipped cream.

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6 pounds mixed orange and grapefruit varieties 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice, plus 1 whole lemon ½ cup sugar Optional: ¼ cup Cointreau, brandy, bourbon, Scotch, red vermouth, Campari, or other alcohol

1 Using a vegetable peeler, remove large strips of zest from an orange, a grapefruit, and a lemon. Reserve. (While you're at it, remove the remaining orange and grapefruit peels to candy or dry.) 2 Peel and section all the oranges and grapefruits using the "supreme" technique. Reserve the peel. Place the sections in a large mixing bowl. Squeeze the leftover pith and connective tissue over the bowl to extract their juice. When all the citrus has been sectioned, add the lemon juice, and gently toss everything together.

3 Using a slotted spoon, loosely pack the citrus sections into three prepared regular-mouth pint jars, leaving ¾ inch headspace. Tuck a slice or two of lemon peel, orange peel, and grapefruit peel into each jar.

4 Measure the liquid remaining in the bowl. Add water if necessary to make 1½ cups total liquid, and combine it with the sugar in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil, and add the alcohol, if using.

5 Ladle the hot liquid over the fruit to cover, leaving ½ inch headspace. Run a skewer or other thin implement around the inside edge of the jar to remove air pockets, and top up again if necessary. Seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. To reduce venting, wait 5 minutes before removing the jars.

THE GREENVALLEY SOUR | *YIELDS 1 COCKTAIL*

The canning syrup left in the bottom of a jar is essentially a ready-made cocktail base.

1½ ounces bourbon ½ ounce Jamaican rum 2 ounces citrus canning syrup (see preceding recipe) Optional: egg white

Stir together the bourbon, rum, and syrup in a highball glass, and add ice. Or, for a fancier version, shake the ingredients with an egg white until frothy, then add ice and shake again until chilled. Strain into a cocktail glass.

HOW TO SUPREME CITRUS

With a sharp knife, slice a round off both ends of the orange, going deep enough to reveal the pulp. Stand it up like a barrel, and slice away the peel with a series of downward cuts that follow the curve. The slices will fall away like the staves of the barrel. Once you've gotten all the way around, turn the barrel on its head and trim any pith you may have missed.

Now place your knife alongside the membrane that divides two segments, and carefully cut to the center of the orange. Make a similar cut along the other side of the segment, and lift out the segment. Repeat, methodically cutting one segment at a time, until you've gotten them all. Squeeze the remaining membranes over a bowl to extract the juice.

Grapefruits can be segmented the same way.

Larger oranges and grapefruits will have a better yield.

[ROAD TRIP]

THE BIRTHPLACE OF THE CALIFORNIA CITRUS INDUSTRY

GREENVALLEY TO RIVERSIDE

Of all the fruit families, the citrus clan is the most sexually promiscuous, although Dr. Tracy Kahn, a curator at the University of California Riverside Citrus Variety Collection, didn't like that kind of loose talk when I tried it out on her.

Kahn was my guide when I visited the collection, a twenty-two-acre citrus museum that contains 1,036 citrus varieties, each represented by two trees. Established in 1910, today the collection is considered one of the world's most important repositories of citrus "germplasm"—living genetic material. From a commercial and scientific perspective, the Citrus Variety Collection is Noah's ark, an irreplaceable resource for researchers, breeders, growers, and flavor specialists wanting to explore the diversity of this remarkable fruit family.

One of Kahn's other jobs at the university is to teach Bio 30, a class on human reproduction and sexuality. And so, with the clinical chill of a sex-ed instructor determined to make the juicy material sound as icky-dull as possible, she launched into her explanation. "The fruit is maternal tissue," she said. In other words, a fruit is the mother tree's seed-delivery mechanism and always stays true to type, regardless of the paternal pollenizer. The shopper doesn't need to worry whether a Daisy tangerine, for instance, grew alongside a stately old W. Murcott

Afourer or a racy young Tango, because whatever pollenizer Daisy encountered, the fruit will taste like a Daisy.

But things get interesting with the sexual reproduction that leads to a seed—formally, a zygotic seed—which fuses the genetic potential of both the mother tree and the paternal pollenizer. The offspring will resemble both the mother and the father to a degree, but it will be different from both, as with human children. With citrus, however, the parents may come from different species (akin to a dog breeding with a coyote) and sometimes even from different genera (a house cat with a tiger). The Meyer lemon, popular with chefs and gardeners in California, is a cross-species hybrid between an orange and a lemon. A tangelo is part tangerine, part grapefruit. The grapefruit itself was unknown until the 1700s, when it first appeared in the West Indies after a pomelo enjoyed an anonymous dalliance with an orange. Laypeople dubbed the bastard offspring "forbidden fruit," although later botanists dignified it as *Citrus paradisi.*

What's really interesting is how often that sort of cross has resulted in valuable new species, which, when they do occur, are perpetuated through grafting, a technique first mastered by the ancient Chinese. Left to their own devices, the citrus hybridize easily, even rampantly. Oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruits, and the rest—in fact all 1,036 varieties housed at the Citrus Variety Collection and untold others growing around the world—descended from just three primordial ancestors. And what a trio! The citron (*Citrus medica*) is a sort of

dinosaur lemon with a fragrant peel and almost no pulp. The pomelo (*Citrus maxima*) looks like a head-size proto grapefruit and hides its juicy core deep inside a bitter pith, or albedo. The aboriginal mandarins (*Citrus reticulata*) that still exist in the wild are inedible. Yet from those three rough forebears come all the multitude of elegant citrus fruit we know today: the juicy Valencia orange, the peelable navel orange, the vivid blood orange, the pungent sour orange, the supremely fragrant bergamot.

Sometime after visiting with Kahn, I learned more about the racy secret life of citrus at a lecture by pomologist David Karp, a Los Angeles writer known as the Fruit Detective for his exhaustive research into the history and culture of fruit. “Nobody’s ever put together exactly what ancestral forms gave rise to the citrus we eat today,” he said. “Most clementines—even the satsuma, which is the classic mandarin—have some orange in them, because the orange played the dastard sometime generations ago. If you could determine what’s in a clementine, it would be a grand unified theory.”

Decoding citrus DNA may eventually provide all the answers. In the meantime, John McPhee’s masterpiece *Oranges*, a history of the Florida orange juice industry, gives a memorable illustration of how unruly citrus genetics are when approached through the orchard rather than the laboratory. In the 1950s, Florida’s lime groves were infected with a virus, so researchers set out to grow a new virus-free stock from seeds. First, though, they had to find some in the nearly perfectly

seedless Persian lime. When none appeared in the first 1,885 limes they cut, the scientists picked through two dump trucks full of pulp from a processing plant. The 250 seeds they uncovered grew into trees that produced an astonishing representation of the citrus clan, including sweet oranges, sour oranges, grapefruit, lemons, tangerines, limequats, citrons—and two Persian limes. “Most pomologists who are familiar with this story think that it has only one truly remarkable aspect,” writes McPhee. “They think it is fairly phenomenal that, out of two hundred and fifty seeds, [the researchers] got *two* Persian limes.”

Most cultivated citrus species can be traced back to Southeast Asia and northern India, where their ancient origin, as far back as seven thousand years ago, is suggested by the region’s density of citrus parasites. McPhee writes, “The main course of the migration of [citrus] closely and sometimes exactly kept pace with the major journeys of civilization.”

The first citrus to reach the Mediterranean basin from the East was the citron. Because it was thought to resemble the yellowish-green cone of the cedars of Lebanon, the Greeks called it *kedromelon* or “cedar apple.” The Romans’ translation was *malum citreum*, or just *citreum*, and in the eighteenth century Linnaeus committed the error to perpetuity by naming the genus *Citrus*. Today the clan is thought to have thirty-three genera, of which Riverside possesses twenty-nine—although deciding how to divvy untidy nature into formal taxonomies is “complicated,” says Kahn.

The reason that UC Riverside houses the Citrus Variety Collection is that there once was a local couple named Luther and Eliza Tibbets. They arrived in California from Washington, D.C., in 1872 to join a newly established abolitionist community at the foot of Riverside’s tawny Mount Rubidoux and showed themselves to be a peculiar pair: he trimmed his hat in a ladies’ veil, and she slipped in and out of mystical trances.

Orange groves had already been established in California by Catholic padres who brought citrus with them in the late 1700s. They kept their mission groves under lock for the next sixty years, but finally sold thirty-five orange trees to a Frenchman named Jean-Louis Vignes, who also happened to be the first commercial winemaker in California—as his name, French for “vines,” seemingly predestined. Vignes passed trees to an émigré Kentucky fur trapper with the equally apt name of William Wolfskill, and he established the state’s first commercial orange orchard at the pueblo of Los Angeles. Wolfskill grew rich during the gold rush by selling his golden fruit.

By the time the Tibbetses arrived in Riverside, Southern California was in an orange boom, but the couple nonetheless wrote to their former Washington neighbor William Saunders of the U.S. Department of Agriculture for some trees to get them started. As it happened, Saunders had something interesting to send: saplings grafted from a remarkable tree discovered in Bahia, Brazil, that produced seedless fruit with an embryonic twin embedded inside—a navel orange. The Bahia orange had come from a “sport,” a spontaneous mutation caused when stray cosmic radiation hit a leaf bud and rearranged a few genes. The affected bud then grew into a branch that bore oranges unlike those of the mother tree—unlike anything else, anywhere. Such mutations are common; sports are the second principal means by which the citrus clan has enlarged and diversified.

Back in Riverside, Eliza watered her two saplings with dishwater, and by 1886 the trees bore enough fruit that Luther could send a box

back to Washington with a note reading, “Without doubt the Bahia is the best orange I have ever tasted.” His note was published in the town’s paper on April 17 of that year, and everyone clamored to get one of those “Washington” oranges. Thus was the California orange industry launched. In 1894, the first oranges rolled east from Riverside; by 1914, there were 30,000 refrigerated boxcars annually. All of them were full of Washington navel oranges.

As the birthplace of the Washington navel, Riverside won the right to establish a research station to support industry needs, and the Citrus Variety Collection was created. While Florida owns the orange juice industry, California’s climate of dry days and cool nights creates the perfect conditions for fruit to eat out of hand: thick, easy-to-peel rinds and deep colors. (Oranges need a chill before they turn orange. Tropical fruit remains green even when ripe.) Today, nearly every navel orange in California descends from the Tibbets trees—including the Cara Cara, a pink-fleshed sport discovered in 1976 on a Washington navel orange growing in Venezuela.

One of the two original Tibbets trees survives into the present day, a monument to the single-most-valuable contribution to the history of American agriculture. The “parent tree,” as it’s called, is California State Historical Landmark #20, and it occupies a small park at the

intersection of Arlington and Magnolia Avenues in Riverside. Its pyramid-shape canopy falls to the ground in stately billows, like a ball gown. On the day I visited in March, the tree carried two simultaneous crops—the mature fruit and also the blooms for next year. I reached through the bars of the fence for an orange lying on the raked ground but, like Tantalus, couldn't stretch far enough to grasp it.

Today, orange trees are second only to palm trees as an emblem of the Southern California good life. Antiquarians collect paper orange box labels that once marked the crates sent back east for sale (see examples here and here), and a contemporary artist collective called Fallen Fruit has mapped citrus trees in Los Angeles neighborhoods. A charitable organization called Fruit Forward organizes volunteers to gather backyard surpluses and glean abandoned orchards, and by 2012, the group had distributed one million pounds of rescued fruit through food banks. Southern California remains a citrus culture in spirit, even though there are fewer and fewer orange groves. Orange County is nearly devoid of them.

"All the best land where fruit likes to grow is where people like to live," observed Karp, as he explained the citrus industry's shift north toward the San Joaquin Valley, where more than two hundred thousand acres of citrus grow. "The factories and developments of Southern California are built upon a pomological graveyard."

The California citrus industry is also shifting its emphasis away from oranges and toward mandarins, which consumers increasingly prefer for their sweetness and easy peeling.

At the Citrus Variety Collection, Kahn and I had been joined by Karen White, wife of UC Riverside's chancellor, who wanted to show off the most exciting thing growing in the orchards these days—an idealized seedless mandarin developed from a sweet but seedy progenitor. The new variety is essentially a sport, although one that was purposefully created when researchers irradiated a branch of W. Murcott Afourer in hopes of provoking a useful mutation. The experiment worked, and Tango is the result.

"This is being planted in huge numbers all over California, and we have licensing agreements with Spain, Australia, and South Africa," said Kahn, adding that the parent trees are considered so valuable that they are kept not at the Variety Collection, but in an undisclosed secure

location. For all that, most consumers will never know they're eating Tango, because the majority will be sold under the California Cuties brand name owned by a huge grower. For the university, however, the new fruit is a gold mine.

"This is the next hot thing that's going to compete head to head with the navel," said White, comparing Tango with the University of Florida's perpetual moneymaker Gatorade. "This is what's going to help fund our medical school and bring a stream of revenue to Riverside for a long time. It's going to be huge."

After seeing huge, I wanted to see small, so I made another trip to Riverside to visit The Grove, a ten-acre organic citrus and avocado farm run by Deborah and Hassan Ghamlouch. It was easy to spot in the middle of a stretch of orange groves near the California Citrus State Historic Park. Standard industry practice is to keep the ground between rows as bare as a bowling alley, but at The Grove, knee-high grass grew between the trees. The atmosphere inside the organic plot was palpably cooler and moister.

The Grove's oldest trees were planted in 1895, and Hassan suspects they came from the first generation of budwood grafted off the original Tibbets Washington navels. The Ghamlouches also have Rio Red grapefruit, which originated in Texas, and the Oroblanco, one of two

commercially important grapefruit-pomelo hybrids developed at UC Riverside. When I arrived in late afternoon, the Ghamlouches were sorting the day's harvest into large, pretty oranges, to be taken to L.A. farmers' markets, and juicers. The family dog, Oreo, lay under a tree eating windfall oranges, and a shy neighbor kid scurried off to pick kumquats from a tree at the edge of the backyard. Deborah explained that her family bought the property thirty-some years ago, and the couple decided to take it on in the mid-2000s rather than see it sold.

Deborah Ghamlouch

Hassan remembered something he wanted to show me: an oddity called a chimera, the result of a natural color mutation that affects citrus. Eight-tenths of the orange Hassan handed me was lemon yellow, but when I turned it around, two differently colored sections, seemingly in line with the segments inside, were revealed. (See the photograph.) "It's uncommon but not that uncommon," said Hassan when I asked if he'd ever seen similar mutations. "I'd guess it's one in ten thousand fruits."

A few days later at the Studio City Farmers Market, Deborah waved me over to her stand. The family had cut the chimera the night before and saved half to show me that the multi colors went clear to the core, perfectly in line with the internal segments.

When I bit into it, it tasted exactly like an orange.

VIN DE PAMPLEMOUSSE | *YIELDS FIVE 750-MILLILITER BOTTLES*

In his immortal essay “Politics and the English Language,” George Orwell gives six brief rules for proper English usage. Rule 5 is, “Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word, or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.” It’s a wise admonition, *n’est-ce pas*?

However, Mr. Orwell also issued a final guideline: “Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.” So you’ll have to excuse this recipe’s foreign name, because the elegant spritz *vin de pamplemousse* would not be the same if we called it “grapefruit wine.”

Chef Lora Zarubin, author of *I Am Almost Always Hungry*, taught me this recipe. She learned to make it in the south of France from the family who owns Lillet, which *vin de pamplemousse* resembles, although it is lighter and livelier. Lora says that what sets her recipe apart is the chamomile.

During its long maceration in a sealed jar, the wine-fruit mixture ferments and develops a slight fizz, which may or may not be robust enough to make it through to the final bottling. Be sure to taste the wine regularly during the 30 days you’ll be tending your jars. If you start a batch around Thanksgiving, it will be ready to drink on New Year’s Eve.

The special equipment you’ll need includes two 5-quart glass jars with wire-bail lids, and five 750-milliliter bottles with stoppers. Since the peel macerates for a long time in liquid that you’ll want to drink, it is important to use organic or unsprayed fruit.

The same technique could be used to make *vin d’oranges* or *vin de clémentines.*

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6 white grapefruits 6 pink grapefruits 2 limes or lemons 5 cups sugar 2 vanilla beans, split lengthwise Two 8-inch chamomile branches with flowers, or 4 chamomile tea bags 750-milliliter bottle vodka 6 bottles light, crisp white wine, such as a Chilean Sauvignon Blanc Optional: honey

1 Scrub the citrus in cold water, and, if using store-bought fruit, rinse it in very hot water to remove all traces of wax. Cut a round slice off either end of the grapefruits, going deep enough to reveal the fruity heart beneath the thick pith. Reserve the endcaps. Cut the grapefruits in half, and then into ½-inch slices. Slice the limes or lemons into thin rounds.

2 Thoroughly wash two 5-quart glass jars in hot, soapy water, and rinse well. Scald with boiling water, and drain. Divide the sugar evenly between the two jars. Add a split vanilla bean to each.

3 Layer the grapefruit slices and the lemon or lime, alternating colors and pressing the layers down as you go. When the jars are nearly full, add the chamomile branches or tea bags. Use the reserved endcaps, peel side up, as the top layer.

4 Divide the vodka evenly between the two jars, and cover the fruit with wine. You should have an extra bottle of wine left, which you will need later. Seal the jars, and invert them a time or two to eliminate air pockets. The sugar will dissolve over time.

5 Place the jars in a cool, dark place. Agitate them once a day for the first week. At the end of the week, top up each jar from the reserved bottle of wine. Over the next month, check on the jars and agitate them every few days. Once a week, top them up with wine.

6 After 30 days, unseal the jars and strain the contents through a colander to capture the liquid in a large bowl. Allow to drip for an hour, and then gently press to extract more liquid. The fruit can be saved to make marmalade, or discarded. Taste the wine, and add a few tablespoons of honey if you would like it to be sweeter. Cover it, and place in the refrigerator overnight to settle.

7 The next day, pour the wine through a damp jelly bag or a double thickness of damp cheesecloth, leaving its sediments behind. Transfer it to scalded bottles. Store in the refrigerator for up to 3 months. Sediment will settle out over time, but it’s not necessary to strain the wine before drinking it. Just pour gently, so as to leave the sediment in the bottle.

SALT-CURED MEYER LEMONS | *YIELDS 2 PINTS*

Acidity and salt are both strong preservatives, so salt-cured lemons are nearly infallible. Use them to season almost anything that gets along with citrus. I add the minced peel to salsa verde, vinaigrette, marinades, puréed carrots, and mashed sweet potatoes. Dorie Greenspan suggests preserved lemons on fish tacos—a great idea.

Robert Lambert uses lemon blossoms in his unusually fine salt-cured Meyer lemons. If you have a citrus tree in bloom—any variety would do—tuck a few blossoms into the jar.

To use the cured lemons, remove a piece of peel from the jar and scrape away the soft pulp. Rinse the zest, and it’s ready to go.

About 7 tablespoons kosher salt 2 bay leaves 4 sprigs dried or fresh thyme ½ teaspoon black peppercorns Optional: 2 dried chili peppers Optional: 4 fresh, unsprayed lemon blossoms 2 pounds Meyer lemons (about 10 smallish fruits), or more as needed

1 Put 2 tablespoons salt into each of two scalded pint jars. Divide the aromatics, including the chilies and blossoms, if using, between the jars.

2 Quarter 8 of the lemons without cutting all the way to the base, so that you'll be able to close the fruit to make it "whole" again. Gently open the quarters, and pour about 1 teaspoon salt into the center of each fruit to coat all the cut surfaces. Squeeze the lemon shut and put it in the jar. Repeat, packing tightly. You should be able to get four small Meyer lemons into each pint.

3 Squeeze the remaining lemons, and use their juice to top up the jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and agitate every few days. Check in the first week to

ensure that the lemons remain submerged. If not, mash down the fruit and top up the jars with more freshly squeezed lemon juice. Pectin leaching from the peel and seeds will give the liquid a slightly viscous “body.” The lemons will be ready to use in about a month. They will keep in the refrigerator for a year.

CITRON VODKA | *YIELDS 750 MILLILITERS*

Not long after I started my blog, I began to get requests to lead canning demonstrations around Los Angeles. One recurring gig was in the test kitchen at Surfas, a restaurant-supply store that also has a loyal civilian following. The standing-room turnout at those events—as many as a hundred observers who spilled out of the test kitchen and into store aisles—convinced me that my own interest in preserving was part of a larger groundswell revival. Canning had become trendy.

After each demonstration, I liked to open a few jars from my home pantry to give folks a sense of how broad the preserving repertoire can be. At one particularly crowded demo in 2009, audience members stayed for an hour after the class, emptying every jar and peppering me with questions.

The last visitor of the day was a woman of the Old World—a real babushka, to judge from her dress and heavy accent. She tasted a few things, nodding her appreciation, and then pointed toward an unlabeled bottle with bright-yellow strips of peel floating in a clear liquid. It was Citron Vodka, made using the ancient citrus fruit commonly called Buddha's hand. I poured her a taste of vodka. As the woman sipped her glass, she brightened, as if she had remembered some long-ago happiness. She stood and slowly finished her drink, then placed the cup on the counter, thanked me solemnly, and took her slow leave.

The next morning, an e-mail arrived via my blog's contact link. It read: *Hello! Mom was at Surfas when you had the demo. She said you served some sort of water, and she felt it was very healthy. She said the bottle you served from seemed to have some sort of long-shaped fruit. Any idea what she is referring to? I would love to get the recipe so I can make it for her. It really made her feel so well.*

Of course I knew exactly what she was referring to, and it makes me feel so well, too.

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6 “fingers” of citron, approximately 2 inches each
750-milliliter bottle good vodka

1 Cut the “fingers” away from the base of the citron, and split them lengthwise.

2 Pour off a few tablespoons of the vodka, and push the citron pieces into the bottle. Allow to infuse for a week before drinking. It will keep indefinitely, but certainly will not last long.

[Note] The peel of two lemons could be used in place of citron.

THE GREENVALLEY SCRATCH COCKTAIL | *YIELDS 1 COCKTAIL*

This is the payoff for a year of preserving. Remember the barman's warning that one is not enough and three is too many.

1 ounce Calvados 1 ounce Citron Vodka (preceding recipe) ¾ ounce Orgeat 1 ounce Grenadine

Shake all ingredients with ice for 20 seconds. Strain into a chilled glass.

CITRUS JELLY | *YIELDS 1½ PINTS*

You've heard of snout-to-tail cooking? It's the commonsense idea of using every part of the animal. This recipe for citrus jelly is the fruit equivalent of snout-to-tail cooking—a way to use the peels and pith left over from making Winter Fruit Cocktail. All that scrap is useful: the white albedo is full of pectin, and the oily zest is full of flavor. Don't throw it away! It will make a very pretty, slightly bitter jelly.

You could also use the trimmings from blood oranges to make red jelly.

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2 pounds peels and pith left over from making Winter Fruit Cocktail
8 cups water 2 Meyer lemons or 1 large orange 3½ cups sugar 2 tablespoons Cointreau

1 Place the peels and pith in a saucepan, and cover with 8 cups cold water. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer partially covered for 1 hour. Strain and gently press the solids to extract 4 cups pectin stock. Pour it into a quart jar or other container, cover, and keep in the refrigerator overnight to allow the solids to settle out.

2 The next day, remove the zest of a Meyer lemon or orange in fine threads. Soften the zest in a small pot of boiling water for 10 minutes. Turn off the heat, and leave them in the water until needed.

3 Strain the pectin stock through a damp jelly bag or double layer of damp cheesecloth. Leave the sediments behind in the jar. You'll have about 3½ cups clear liquid. Combine it in a preserving pan with 3½ cups sugar, stir to dissolve, and bring to a full boil. Rapidly reduce to the gel point, about 10 minutes.

4 Drain the zest, and add it to the hot jelly along with the Cointreau. Return the preserving pan to a boil, and boil for another 30 seconds. Check the gel set. Ladle the hot jelly into three prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[Note] For blood orange jelly, use Aperol or Campari in place of Cointreau. If you don’t have scrap from fruit cocktail and want to start with whole fruit, squeeze lemons (reserving the juice for another use) until you have 2 pounds of peel. Chop it coarsely, and proceed as above.

GUMMI CANDY | *YIELDS ABOUT 12 OUNCES*

Citrus jelly can also be poured into a flat-bottomed glass dish, where it will cool as a slab. Slice the slab into small squares and roll them in sugar for jelly candy —gummi bars.

½ recipe Citrus Jelly, freshly made and still hot Sugar

1 Pour the hot jelly into a flat-bottomed glass baking dish to a depth of ½ inch. Allow the jelly to cool overnight, and then put the dish in a barely warm oven to dry for several hours.

2 When the jelly is tacky to the touch, remove it from the oven and allow to cool for an hour. Sprinkle a heavy layer of sugar over a marble slab or cutting board. Run the blade of a sharp knife under hot water for a few seconds, and slice around the edge of the jelly to separate it from the dish. Put the bottom of the dish in a shallow pan of very hot water for 30 seconds to melt the contact between the jelly and the glass, then, with a smooth and fearless gesture, invert the dish on the marble or cutting board. The jelly will drop onto the sugar.

3 Using a hot knife, slice the jelly into whatever gummi shape you like: bars, bits, or even bears. Roll the pieces in sugar, and allow them to dry on the countertop for a few hours before storing them in an airtight box between layers of parchment liberally sprinkled with sugar.

LIME CURD | *YIELDS 1½ PINTS*

Limes are synonymous with green, but they would rather be yellow. Left on the tree, limes would ripen to resemble lemons. Commercial growers pick them "green," in the sense of underripe, as a convenience to grocery-store shoppers who might otherwise mistake the one thing for the other.

The ordinary gin-and-tonic kind of lime is *Citrus latifolia*, commonly called the Persian, Tahiti, or Bearss lime. It is the seedless offspring of the seedy Key lime, *C. aurantifolia.* The limequat belongs to the genus *Fortunella* and is a cross between a true lime and a kumquat. The Kaffir lime, *Citrus hystrix*, is favored in Southeast Asian cuisines mainly for its distinctively aromatic leaf.

This recipe for Lime Curd collects the subtle flavor variations of all the limes, although it could also be made entirely with bright-green supermarket Bearss limes, if that's what you have. You can make lemon curd by replacing the limes with lemons.

A fruit curd is a luxuriously thick custard that relies on the magical ability of egg proteins to bind into a smooth mass when heated. Harold McGee suggests that fruit curds may have derived from a popular seventeenth-century French preparation for eggs scrambled with tart fruit juice. The pitfall to avoid in making fruit curds is heating the egg-juice-sugar mixture too fast or too far. If it boils, it will curdle. Stop at 170 degrees on a candy thermometer, or when the hot curd looks like a loose custard. It will set as it cools.

Curds are less durable than other sweet preserves, so jars should be stored in the refrigerator for up to a month, or frozen for long-term storage.

This recipe is not intended for canning.

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1 pound mixed lime varieties, including Bearss limes, Key limes, and limequats 1 Kaffir lime leaf, sliced into a chiffonade 1½ inches lemongrass stem, lightly crushed ½-inch slice fresh ginger root 2 cloves 3 allspice berries 6 coriander seeds, lightly crushed 5 egg yolks 1½ cups sugar 2 sticks (8 ounces) chilled unsalted butter, cut into ¾-inch chunks

1 Using a Microplane grater, remove the fragrant outermost peel of half the limes, to yield 3 tablespoons lime zest. Squeeze all the fruit, to yield ¾ cup

juice, and strain it. (Reserve the unpeeled rinds for making syrup.) Combine the zest and juice. Tie the aromatics in a small cheesecloth sack, and add them to the juice.

2 Whisk together the yolks and sugar in the top of a double boiler over medium heat. Whisk in the juice and zest, then add the sack of aromatics. Whisk in the butter, one piece at a time.

3 Stirring constantly, gently cook the curd for about 10 minutes, until it has the consistency of heavy cream and coats a wooden spoon—170 degrees on a candy thermometer. *The curd must not boil or the eggs will curdle.* If the eggs start to curdle, you may be able to rescue the curd by immediately removing it from the heat and whisking vigorously. If you're unsure about the consistency, drop a teaspoon of hot curd on a cold saucer and place it in the freezer. After 1 minute, it should have a thick, spreadable consistency.

4 Pour the hot curd through a fine sieve into three sterilized ½-pint jars. Seal, and allow to cool overnight. Store in the refrigerator and use within 4 weeks, or else freeze for up to a year.

KUMQUATS IN BURNT HONEY SYRUP | *YIELDS 1 QUART*

East of Mount Ch’i Where the bluebird lives, Sweet kumquats grow.

—CHINESE POET I YIN [ABOUT 1500 B.C.]

The kumquat tree was first brought to London from China in 1846 by the noted plant collector Robert Fortune. The name came along with it: *kam kwat* means “golden orange” in Cantonese. Modern botanists take exception with three thousand years’ worth of Chinese familiarity with the *kam kwat* by denying that the olive-sized fruit is a citrus at all, even though it will cross-pollinate to create hybrids such as the limequat. The kumquat now occupies its own genus, *Fortunella,* in memory of its benefactor Mr. Fortune.

“A kumquat by any other name would taste as sweet,” says Waverly Root, who adds that kumquats reverse the usual order of things by being sweet on the outside with a sour pulp.

This recipe will work with kumquats or limequats. The honey is “burnt” by being heated until its sugars start to caramelize.

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1 pound kumquats 2 cups water 1¼ cups sugar ⅓ cup pale honey

1 Pick the stem nub off each kumquat, and make a shallow slash across the top of the fruit to prevent it from bursting as it cooks. Combine the fruit in a small saucepan with the water and sugar. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 30 minutes, until the kumquats are translucent.

2 Meanwhile, heat the honey over medium heat in a pan. It will darken as it boils. If you start with pale honey, it will be sufficiently “burnt” when it has turned the warm brown color of brandy, after about 5 minutes.

3 Add the honey to the saucepan with the kumquats, and stir to incorporate. Remove from the heat, cover, and set aside overnight at room temperature.

4 The next day, bring the fruit-syrup mixture back to a boil, and pack the fruit into two prepared pint jars. Ladle the syrup over the top, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[Note] You could also replace 1 cup of water with 1 cup of brandy, and tuck a vanilla bean into the jar.

CITRUS SYRUPS, CORDIALS, AND PRESERVED PEELS

Every year at the market I’m happy to find a few bergamots—a type of sour orange used to perfume Earl Grey tea—which are grown by Mud Creek Farm, a rare-citrus specialist. They don’t last long, but the haunting floral fragrance can be captured in a syrup that lasts for a year. Lemons, limes, and Seville oranges also make delicious syrups, and since a single process yields both syrup and candied peel, you might as well do both. Syrups are used to sweeten hot and cold drinks, or to drizzle over desserts.

If you add freshly squeezed juice to syrup, you have a cordial. Stir lime cordial into fizzy water for a simple soft drink, or add a splash to a double shot of vodka for an instant cocktail.

Citrus peels and thinly sliced citrus rounds can also be dried in a dehydrator or a warm oven. Minced dried peels can be tossed in with salads or sautéed greens, and the dehydrated fruit slices are great for braised dishes.

CANDIED ORANGE PEEL AND ORANGE SYRUP | *YIELDS ABOUT 2 POUNDS PEEL AND 4 CUPS SYRUP*

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8 oranges (or other citrus) 3 cups water 3½ cups organic sugar, plus more for rolling 4 cloves

1 Wash the oranges well in hot water, and wipe them clean. Using a sharp knife, remove the peel in quarters. Slice each quarter crosswise into ¼-inch strips. Put the peels in a pot of boiling water, and cook until soft, about 20 minutes. Drain. (For grapefruits, first blanch the peels in boiling water and drain. Then cook them in fresh water until soft.) 2 Place the 3 cups water and 1½ cups of the sugar in a saucepan, and bring to a boil. Add the peels and cloves, and return to a boil. Avoid stirring. Instead, shake the pot and use a slotted spoon to press the peels into the syrup. Remove from the heat, cover, and allow the peels to rest in the syrup overnight.

3 The next day, add another 1 cup sugar to the pan with the peels, shake to settle the sugar, and return to a boil. Remove from the heat, cover, and again set the peels aside overnight.

4 On the third day, add the remaining sugar to the pan, shake, and bring to a boil. Remove from the heat, cover, and once again set the peels aside overnight, or for up to a week.

5 Strain the peels through a colander, placing a bowl beneath the colander to catch the rich syrup. Allow them to drip for 15 minutes. Discard the cloves. Roll the peels in sugar, and spread them in a single layer on a rack or a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Leave overnight, uncovered, on a warm countertop, or in the oven with the pilot light on. Once they’re dry, store the candied peels in an airtight container between layers of sugar. They will keep for months.

6 Strain the syrup through a damp jelly bag. Put it in a small pot, and bring to a

boil. Ladle the hot syrup into prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[Note] Sweet oranges will work in this recipe, but Seville oranges, if you can find them, are incomparable. If working with Sevilles, omit the cloves. Grapefruit, lemon, and lime peels could be candied using the same technique.

LIMEADE SYRUP | *YIELDS ABOUT 3 CUPS*

If you ever find yourself with an excess of squeezed lime rinds (after making a party-sized batch of margaritas, for example), use them for limeade syrup, which you can dilute for limeade.

½ pound lime rinds 2½ cups water 3 cups sugar 10 coriander seeds 2 cloves 2 allspice berries Two ¼-inch slices fresh ginger root Optional: 1 Kaffir lime leaf and 2 inches lemongrass stalk, crushed

Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan, and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve. Store in a sealed bottle in the refrigerator for up to 6 months.

CITRUS CORDIAL | *YIELDS ABOUT 2 PINTS*

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1 pound lemons, limes, Seville oranges, or bergamots 2½ cups water 2½ cups sugar

1 Peel the citrus with a vegetable peeler, taking only the outermost zest to reduce bitterness, and simmer the zest in a saucepan with the water for 30 to 40 minutes, until soft. Stir in the sugar to dissolve, and remove from the heat. Allow to cool, cover, and set aside overnight. Squeeze the fruit to yield 1 cup juice, and refrigerate overnight.

2 The next day, remove the peels from the syrup with a slotted spoon, and bring the syrup back to a boil. Stir in the juice, and ladle into four prepared ½-pint jars. Refrigerate for up to a month. For long-term storage, ladle into four prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[Note] The potent bergamot peel can be used a second time to make another batch of syrup.

DRIED CITRUS AND CITRUS PEELS

Oranges, blood oranges, or lemons

Remove the citrus peel in strips with a vegetable peeler, or slice the citrus into very thin rounds. If using a dehydrator, follow the manufacturer’s instructions. Alternatively, arrange the slices or peels in a single layer on a baking rack, and dry in a cool oven (170 degrees) for about 4 hours, flipping the slices once an hour. When ready, the fruit will be leathery and dry to the touch but still pliable. Store in a sealed container in the refrigerator.

DUCK WITH OLIVES AND DRIED CITRUS

Lightly salt six to eight duck leg quarters, and refrigerate them overnight or for several hours. Brown the quarters on both sides in olive oil, and set them aside. Cut a large onion into ¼-inch slices, and sauté it in the pan used for the duck, along with a diced carrot, a crushed clove of garlic, a few thyme sprigs, and a bay leaf. Season with salt and pepper. When the onion is translucent, moisten with a splash of vermouth. Transfer the onion to a flameproof baking dish, and spread it in a thin layer. Tuck in a dozen dried blood-orange slices and a small handful of green Picholine or Lucques olives. Place the leg quarters on top, and pour in enough fruity red wine to come one-third of the way up the sides. Heat the dish on the stovetop until the liquid simmers, then cover it with foil and transfer to a 350-degree oven. Cook for 45 minutes, then remove the foil and cook 15 minutes longer, or until the duck is deeply browned and tender. Before serving, pour off the braising liquid and skim the fat, then return it to the baking dish with the duck.

[Note] This recipe is delicious made with chicken, as well.

MARMALADE BASICS

The difference between jam and marmalade is the peel. Although the word “marmalade” has a long history—in centuries past, it referred to quince

preserves—today it is generally understood to be a citrus preserve made with the whole fruit, peel included.

Marmalade is the most time-consuming of the sweet preserves, because it has to be boiled twice. The first time, in plain water, cooks the peel until it is completely soft. Then sugar is added and the mixture boils again, until it is reduced to the gel point. There are countless variations on the general process, often involving an overnight soak: You might peel, soak, cook, and reduce. Or peel, cook, soak, and reduce. Or peel, soak, cook, soak again, then reduce. Or cook the fruit whole, peel, soak, and reduce. You get the idea.

This section includes five different techniques for making marmalade, each one adapted to a specific citrus. The first technique, for a quick marmalade, incorporates just the fruit's outermost colored zest and bypasses the challenge presented by the bitter pith, properly called the albedo. The last will lead you through the multi-day process necessary to tame limes and lemons. In between is my somewhat idiosyncratic take on the supreme marmalade of them all—bitter Seville Orange Marmalade.

A few marmalade basics apply generally.

CHOOSING FRUIT: Since marmalade incorporates the peel, try to use unsprayed, organic (or backyard) fruit if at all possible. Store-bought citrus is often coated in wax to extend shelf life, so, if that's what you're using, scrub the fruit well in cold water, then rinse it with very hot water to remove the wax.

WATER: The large amount of water called for in making marmalade may at first look like a misprint. It's not. There has to be enough to last through the two-stage cooking process, and it all goes in at the start.

PEELS: Peels that are not cooked *all the way through* before you add sugar will

toughen in the jar. The peels are ready when they are tender and translucent, which can take an hour or more in some instances. Be guided by the recipes, but also test the peels as they cook. Taste one, and if you're still unsure, cut it in half. If it is opaque at the center, it needs more cooking.

The peel's other challenge is its bitterness, which is caused by phenolic compounds. Marmalade recipes cope in various ways. Technique No. 1 trims and discards a portion of the albedo. The water-soluble phenols can also be leached out. Technique No. 4, which allows the greatest amount of control when working with thick grapefruit peels, starts by blanching the peels and discarding the water, then adding fresh cooking water. Incidentally, the citrus flavor comes from oil glands in the peel's outer epidermis. The oils, impervious to water, remain in the peel throughout the watery stages of cooking, and the marmalade's final flavor is undiluted.

SEEDS: Seeds are also rich in pectin. It's never wrong to collect the seeds in a small cloth pouch and soak them or cook them with the peel, but often the extra step isn't necessary. I discard the seeds when making Time-to-Kill Marmalade and Scotch Marmalade, but I generally use them in making Seville Orange Marmalade. For Kumquat Marmalade I consider them indispensable. Each of the five marmalade techniques will give you specific instructions on what to do with the seeds.

SUGAR: I'll specify either "sugar" or "organic sugar." The former is white granulated sugar, which won't affect the marmalade's final taste or color. Organic sugar, wth its molasses residue, imparts a richer taste and darker color.

Marmalades require a lot of sugar, and there is no way around it. The sugar content makes sense if you think of marmalade not as a variety of jam but, rather, as a variety of jelly that incorporates pulp and rind. Most of my marmalade recipes use a one-to-one ratio of sugar to fruit (50 percent sugar). FDA regulations permit commercial orange marmalade to have 70 percent added sugar. Commercial Seville orange marmalade can use up to 75 percent sugar. Compared with grocery-store marmalades, the marmalades in this book are intensely flavored and dense with pulp and peel. They're fruit preserved with sugar, rather than sugar flavored with fruit.

As with making jelly, I sometimes suggest that you warm the sugar before adding it to the fruit. It's not essential, but it does speed up the process a bit.

QUANTITIES: The recipes in this book have been developed and tested using a 14-inch preserving pan with a 10½-quart capacity on a standard household gas cooktop.

Generally speaking, when you're making marmalade the preserving pan should not be more than half full at the start of the second cooking stage. *If you don't have a preserving pan large enough to accommodate the quantities given for a recipe, halve the recipe to fit your equipment.* Making two small batches will you give a faster and better result than attempting to cook a large batch in an undersized pan.

By the same token, I'd advise against doubling any of the marmalade recipes in this book.

HEAT: With all sweet-preserve recipes, *your cooking time may vary, perhaps dramatically, depending on the dimensions of the preserving pan you use and the heat output of your cooktop.*

That said, always reduce the fruit-sugar mixture at a full rolling boil, which is a boil that you cannot stir down. If your stovetop has an extra-strength "quick boil" burner, use that one—turned up as high as it will go.

When I give a recommended cooking time to reduce the fruit-sugar mixture to the gel point, I mean the time after the pot comes to a full rolling boil.

GEL SET: Citrus has abundant pectin, and I think marmalade should have the firm set of jelly rather than a drippy, soft set. I generally reduce the fruit-sugar

mixture until there is almost no excess liquid visible “in the corners” of the pan. (The exception is Marmalade Technique No. 5, as I’ll explain when we get there.) As hot marmalade approaches the gel point, it will start to look glossy or lustrous and move with glycerin’s heavy viscosity. In the cold-saucer test, I look for a coherent “skin” that holds together after one minute of chilling. If a sample doesn’t develop a skin, you don’t yet have a gel set. Cook for another two minutes and check again. The other indication I watch for is how the hot marmalade reacts as you stir it or splash it against the inside wall of the pan. When it reaches the gel point, there will be transparent jelly globules visible as the hot liquid flows back down. If the marmalade is not yet ready, the hot liquid will flow in a smooth sheet. You have to catch the light just so to notice tiny globules, but after you’ve seen them, they are easier to recognize.

If you’re ever unsure whether you have a gel set or not, don’t panic. Turn off the heat and continue to stir the pot for two to three minutes. The residual heat will boil off additional water, and you won’t have to worry about scorching. Once you and the marmalade have both cooled off a bit, test the gel set again, using the cold-saucer test.

As you fill the jars, stir the pot occasionally to keep the peels evenly distributed in the jelly; otherwise, you may come to the end and find that you have too much of one or the other.

STORAGE: Marmalade will keep for two years at least. Historian C. Anne Wilson’s *The Book of Marmalade* notes that marmalade was once popular with explorers and adventurers, because “long journeys and long keeping could actually improve it.” She cites the curious case of English manufacturer Frank Cooper’s marmalade, which had provisioned Captain Scott’s 1911 expedition to Antarctica. In 1980, a second expedition to retrace Scott’s route found an unopened tin of Frank Cooper’s product. The marmalade inside was in perfect condition.

Marmalade Technique No. 1: TIME-TO-KILL MARMALADE WITH BLOOD ORANGES AND MEYER LEMONS | YIELDS 2½ PINTS

This easy marmalade leaves you with time to kill because you don't have to soak the bitterness out of thick-cut peels or subdue them with prolonged cooking. Instead, you zip off the outermost zest with a vegetable peeler and chop it into a chiffonade that cooks in a jiffy. If you apply yourself, you can make a batch of Time-to-Kill Marmalade in less than 2 hours. Even so, the process is similar to the more involved marmalade preparations in the pages ahead, so, once you've mastered this technique, you'll be ready for what follows.

This was my first marmalade, and I learned it from my Deep Springs College classmate Tom Hudgens, author of the wide-ranging cookbook *The Commensense Kitchen.* Not long after I began preserving, Tom showed up at my house one January afternoon with a mixed bag of citrus from the Santa Monica Farmers Market: oranges, Meyer lemons, Eureka lemons, grapefruits, and limes. He dumped them out on the counter and sorted them into two piles, sweet and tart. He explained that any combination of citrus would work, as long as it balanced the sweeter fruits (oranges, Meyer lemons, tangerines) with the more bitter or acidic ones (grapefruits, Eureka lemons, limes). Over time, I've found that I especially like the combination of berry-scented blood oranges—a genetic mutation that spontaneously appeared in the eighteenth century and owes its reddish color to the presence of the antioxidant anthocyanin—with orangey Meyer lemons.

This is my favorite preserve for a toasted peanut-butter sandwich.

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2 pounds blood oranges 1 pound Meyer lemons ½ pound Eureka lemons 3 cups water 4 cups sugar Optional: ¼ cup sage or other pale honey Optional: 2 tablespoons Citron Vodka or bergamot cordial

1 Scrub the fruit well in cold water. If using store-bought citrus, also wash it with hot water to remove any wax.

2 Using a vegetable peeler, remove the colored zest from the citrus in wide strips, leaving behind as much albedo (white pith) as possible. Slice the peels into ¼-inch chiffonade, or wider confettilike pieces, for a more textured marmalade. Set aside.

3 Trim the remaining albedo away from the citrus flesh. Reserve the albedo for making jelly, or discard. Chop the pulp into ½-inch dice, and add whatever seeds you find to the reserved albedo, or discard.

4 Combine the sliced peel, diced pulp, and water in a preserving pan, and boil gently for 30 minutes, until the peel is cooked all the way through.

5 Add the sugar, bring the contents of the pan back to a boil, and reduce over high heat while stirring regularly. After about 20 minutes, test for a gel set and, if you like, stir in the honey for more sweetness and flavor. Stir in the alcohol, if using, and boil for 30 seconds longer. Confirm the gel set. Allow

the hot marmalade to cool for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Ladle into five prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Tom’s Mixed-Citrus Marmalade

Tom Hudgens’s recipe from *The Commonsense Kitchen* starts with 3 pounds mixed citrus, half sweet (oranges, mandarins, kumquats, Meyer lemons) and half sour or bitter (lemons, limes, grapefruit). Then he flavors the batch with ginger and Earl Grey tea—a terrific combination.

Proceed as for Time-to-Kill Marmalade, with these changes: Add a 3-inch “thumb” of fresh ginger root, peeled and finely grated, to the peels and pulp at the start of the first cooking (step 4). Once the peels are cooked all the way through, remove the preserving pan from the heat, add 3 Earl Grey tea bags, and allow to steep for 5 minutes. Discard the tea bags, add the sugar, and continue as directed.

Pink Marmalade

This variation takes advantage of the pretty pink-fleshed Cara Cara navel oranges that appear in Southern California markets just before the new year. Select 1½ pounds of Cara Caras, one large Ruby Star pink grapefruit (about 1 pound), 2 Meyer lemons, and 1 Eureka lemon (about ¾ pound combined). Use 3½ cups of sugar and 2 tablespoons of honey. Taste, and add a bit more honey at any point during step 5 if you like. Finish the marmalade with 2 tablespoons Aperol or Campari, then seal and process the jars as directed.

NEGRONI JELLY | *YIELDS 1 PINT*

If you’re in Rome and the weather is warm, you have to go to the Campo dei Fiori, where in late afternoon the elegant citizens convene to chatter, preen, and cruise each other in the outdoor cafés. Invariably, someone will be drinking Negronis, a sweet martini made from gin, red vermouth, and Campari. Tennessee Williams’s characters throw them back by the gallon in his novella *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*—later made into a movie starring Warren Beatty as the young gigolo and Vivien Leigh as his aging patroness—perhaps because they are sweet, bitter, and just boozy enough to lower your inhibitions without dulling your senses. The trio of alcohols translates into

jelly made of the scraps left over from Time-to-Kill Marmalade. The recipe can be scaled up.

1 pound albedo trimmings from Time-to-Kill Marmalade
4 cups water 2 cups sugar, or as needed 1 tablespoon each gin, sweet red vermouth, and Campari or Aperol

1 Place the trimmings in a small pan, and cover with the water. Simmer for 45 minutes, or until the albedo is very soft but not disintegrating.

2 Strain the contents of the pot through a damp jelly bag, catching the liquid in a bowl. Measure this pectin stock. You should have 2 cups.

3 Put the pectin stock in a preserving pan with the equal volume of sugar. Stir to dissolve, and bring to a boil. Reduce over high heat to the gel point, 10 to 12 minutes. Add the alcohol, and cook 1 minute longer. Check the gel set. Working quickly now, ladle the hot jelly into two prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Skim any surface bubbles or foam, seal the jars, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Marmalade Technique No. 2: SCOTCH MARMALADE | YIELDS ABOUT 8 PINTS

This classic breakfast marmalade blends sweet Valencia oranges, bitter Marsh grapefruits, and sour Eureka lemons to approximate the taste of Seville oranges. It's not quite the same, but what makes up the difference is a dram of single-malt whisky, which is why I call this recipe Scotch Marmalade.

Technique No. 2 calls for cutting the whole citrus into traditional ¼-inch "chips" and soaking them overnight to limber up the peels and begin extracting the pectin. I like to use organic sugar, for its darker color and flavor. The whisky is optional, but Scotch drinkers will thank you for using a peaty single-malt from Islay.

Scotch Marmalade has a deep and lingering flavor that is delicious with baked ham and ham sandwiches. In that vein, you might also try it with a rustic country pâté. On the sweet side, Scotch Marmalade is my favorite preserve to spread on warm crepes with butter, and it's a natural to serve with Scottish scones.

If you don't have a large preserving pan, consider making a half-batch instead.

2½ pounds Valencia oranges 2½ pounds Marsh white grapefruits (choose smaller fruits for their thinner rinds) 1 pound Eureka (sour) lemons 10 cups water 5 pounds organic sugar ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons good Scotch whisky

1 Day one: To prepare the fruit, start with the oranges. Slice a thin round off

either end, and discard. Cut the fruit into quarters. Slice each wedge crosswise into ¼-inch-wide “chips.” Discard whatever seeds you find. Cut the grapefruits and lemons the same way. Put all the chipped fruit together in a large bowl with 10 cups water. Cover, and refrigerate overnight.

2 Day two: Transfer the fruit-water mixture to a large preserving pan. Bring to a boil, lower the heat, and simmer for 60 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes to turn over the contents of the pot, or until the peels are tender and translucent.

3 Warm the sugar on a baking sheet in a 225-degree oven. Add it to the preserving pan, stirring well to dissolve, and bring the mixture back to a boil. Reduce at a full rolling boil, stirring frequently, to the gel point, 45 minutes or longer.

4 Once you’re satisfied with the gel set, stir in the Scotch. Boil hard for 1 minute, then turn off the heat, stir 1 minute longer, and verify the gel set. Allow the hot marmalade to cool for 5 minutes, stirring a few times. Ladle it into eight prepared pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process the jars in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

[Note] If you can’t find Marsh grapefruits, other varieties, including pink and

red grapefruits, would work as well. Avoid the very thick-skinned Oro Blanco white grapefruits that appear in late winter.

Vin de Pamplemousse Marmalade

After making Vin de Pamplemousse or Vin d'Orange, you'll be left with a mass of marinated citrus that's ready for making into marmalade. The technique is essentially the same as for making Scotch Marmalade. Start by weighing the marinated citrus and noting the amount. Chop the peels into ½-inch pieces, and put them in a deep pot. Cover them with water to a depth of 1 inch. Bring the pot to a boil, and simmer for 45 minutes, or until the peels are tender and translucent. Transfer the cooked fruit and its liquid to a preserving pan, and add an amount of sugar equal to the weight of the marinated fruit. Continue as for Scotch Marmalade, omitting the Scotch in step 4.

SCOTTISH SCONES | *YIELDS ABOUT 3 DOZEN 2½-INCH SCONES*

These scones come from Scottish artist Nicola Atkinson, who created the drawings in the introduction. Nicola is a talented baker who can whip up scones and cakes without measuring the ingredients. Pinning her down to a recipe proved difficult, so I watched her work and tried to repeat what she did at home. After several passes, my results were acceptable, even to Nicola, and I had a recipe.

6 ounces (¾ cup) unsalted butter, chilled 6 ounces whole-wheat flour, plus more for dusting 12 ounces all-purpose flour ⅔ cup sugar 3 teaspoons baking powder Pinch of kosher salt 4 ounces dried currants 2 large eggs ¾ cup milk

1 Cut the butter into small pieces, and freeze until needed. Generously dust two baking sheets with whole-wheat flour.

2 In a large mixing bowl, whisk together the flours, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Stir in the currants. Add the butter, and lightly work it into the dry ingredients, using your fingertips. Beat together the eggs and milk, and mix them in just until the dry ingredients hold together as a moist dough.

3 Drop the dough on the baking sheets by the tablespoonful, spaced 3 inches apart. Bake for 25 minutes in a 350-degree oven, or until the scones are lightly browned. Remove to a rack to cool.

[Note] The scones freeze well. Reheat them for 5 to 7 minutes in a 300-degree oven.

THE BOOK OF MARMALADE BY C. ANNE WILSON

Midway through her scholarly volume on that most distinguished sweet preserve, historian C. Anne Wilson pauses to flick aside the rumor, as persistent as a flea, that orange marmalade was introduced to England by a seasick queen. As the story goes, Mary, Queen of Scots, was taken ill during a rough crossing from Calais to Scotland in 1561, and she asked in French for something to soothe "Marie Malade" ("Sick Mary"). She received sweetmeats, then considered a tonic, and they settled her. Afterward, the queen's attendants popularized the cure, calling it "marmalade." Wilson says the story is bollocks. The truth is that marmalade was already well known on English shores by Mary's day, and its name derives not from a queen but from a quince.

The ancient Romans knew the quince and thought of it as an odd kind of apple that was inedible when raw but delicious when cooked in honey. They called it *melomeli* ("apple honey") and also discovered that the honey preserved the quince for many months. As the technique for keeping *melomeli* in honey made its way through the Empire, the word itself got dented in transit. *Melomeli* arrived in what is now Spain as *membrillo,* and by the time it reached what is now Portugal, it had been crumpled into *marmelo.* A preserved quince was, in the local tongue, *marmelada* (literally, "quinced"). The Portuguese were the first to substitute sugar, at that time a rare substance believed to have medicinal virtues, in place of the Romans' honey, and *marmelada* became an international success.

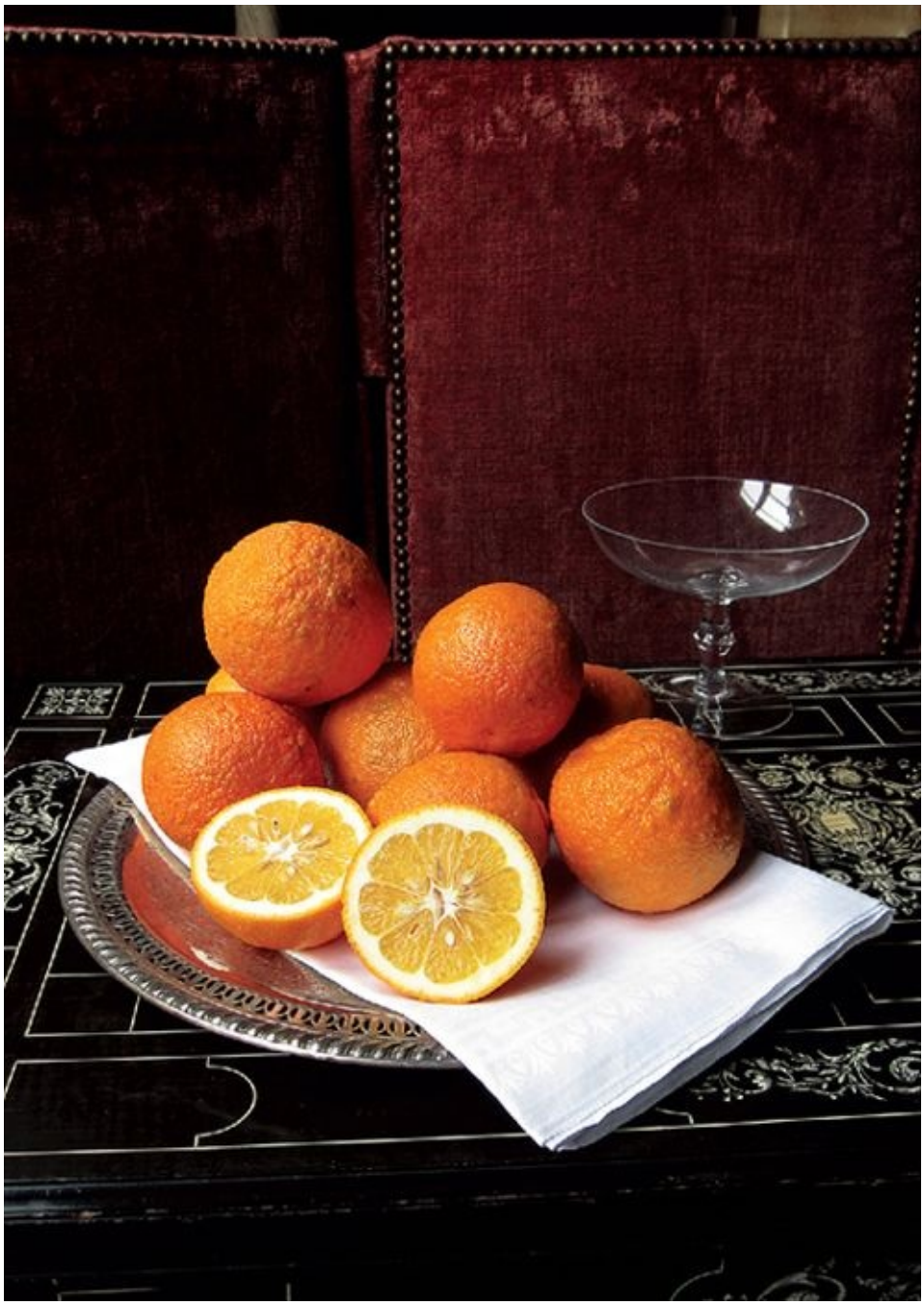
Marmelada arrived in England during the sixteenth century, and a recipe for marmalade was published in the translation of the *Secrets of Alexis of Piedmont* in 1562. The author boasted that a "better marmalade of quinces, sweeter and heartier than this, a man cannot make." (His recipe is more or less similar to one for "quince marmalade" published in Lettice Bryan's *The Kentucky Housewife* almost three centuries later.) If "Marie Malade" had in fact asked for marmalade, her physician would have given her what we call "quince paste" and the Spanish still call *membrillo.*

"Marmalade" was first used to describe Seville orange preserves in 1587, and citrus marmalades became widespread over the next century. I'm not sure we would recognize those antique marmalades—or, for that matter, want to eat

them. They were made of orange peels pounded into a paste with sugar and cooked without water for a very long time, until the marmalade was stiff enough to cut into blocks. It must have been powerful stuff. Over time, cooks began adding water to smooth out the flavor, and by the eighteenth century in Scotland, marmalade was suave enough to eat on breakfast toast.

The other most familiar story about orange marmalade's "invention" has it that in 1797 a storm-chased Spanish ship took refuge in the harbor at Dundee, Scotland, with a load of Seville oranges in its hold. An enterprising Scotswoman named Janet Keiller supposedly bought some and stirred up a type of marmalade that is still today being sold under the Keiller brand name.

Wilson says that the legend, though largely true, is misleading. By 1797, marmalade was already popular in Scotland, which was why Seville oranges were being imported by the boatload. Still, Mrs. Keiller gets credit as an innovator who improved upon the time-consuming "pounded peels" technique by "chipping" the fruit—cutting it into slices. A practical woman, she also saved time and increased yield by cooking her marmalade just enough so it would set. There have been refinements since her day, but no other marmalade revolutionary has come along to overthrow Mrs. Keiller's technique. Her product appears, from the perspective of time, to be the first truly modern marmalade.



Marmalade Technique No. 3: SEVILLE ORANGE MARMALADE | YIELDS 6½ PINTS

Citrus aurantium (“golden citrus”), which lives up to its common name of “sour” or “bitter orange,” was the original orange tree. Its primordial appearance in Southeast Asia probably resulted from a cross between the mandarin and the pomelo, and humans carried the hybrid to Polynesia, India, and the Arab world. The name by which we still know it comes from the Sanskrit word *naranga*, which became the Arabic *naranj*, the Spanish *naranja*, and our “orange.”

Bitter oranges arrived in Europe during the Dark Ages and were reported on Sicily as early as A.D. 1002. By the twelfth century, the Moors had planted groves of them around Seville, and Spaniards later carried their “Seville oranges” to the New World, where they spread throughout the tropics and even escaped cultivation by Native Americans in Florida to naturalize in the Everglades. Such wide dispersal among disparate cultures speaks to the bitter orange’s extraordinary appeal to humans. With its potent flavor, Seville orange marmalade has no equal.

For all that, the raw Seville orange is inedible. Until cheap sugar became widely available in relatively recent times, *Citrus aurantium* was valued mainly for its intensely fragrant peel and flowers, which is the source of orange-flower water. Some cultures also used the tart juice in cooking as a souring agent, the way we use lemon juice.

The sweet orange, *Citrus sinensis*, arrived in Europe some five hundred years after the bitter orange, and in many nineteenth-century cookbooks it was still distinguished from the Seville as a “China orange.” The sweet orange’s familiar, sunny perfume of citrus and blossoms—pure and welcoming—pales beside the Seville orange’s brooding and seductive scent.

Today Seville oranges are grown in America mainly to supply rootstock for more popular sweet-orange varieties. During the brief midwinter harvest, they can sometimes be found at ethnic markets. The Web site www.ripetoyou.com also sells them fresh in season.

The bergamot, *Citrus bergamia*, is a special form of the Seville orange—perhaps a hybrid with the Palestine sweet lime. Its rind is used to perfume cosmetics and flavor Earl Grey tea.

THERE IS NO SHORTAGE of recipes for Seville oranges. *The Good Housewife's Jewel* of 1596 includes five ways to preserve them, and the modern English authority May Byron gives at least fifteen in her 1917 *Jam Book.* For my recipe, I boil the oranges whole, discard the pulp, and cut the peels into long ¼-inch-thick slices. The pulp is very sour, and I'd rather see the peels suspended in a perfectly clear jelly.

Seville marmalade tastes like nothing else. The flavor is intense, oily, penetrating, and almost spicy. You'll sense oranges in your sinuses for minutes afterward. I'm crazy for it, but I don't give it to friends without first checking that they like *real* marmalade.

This is a big-batch recipe. As given, it will require a 10-quart preserving pan. You should halve the quantities to fit smaller pans. For the sake of time management, I suggest how to divide the work over 2 days, although an overnight soak isn't strictly necessary as long as you thoroughly cook the whole fruit.

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5 pounds Seville oranges 3½ quarts water 5 pounds organic sugar

1 Scrub the oranges in cold water. If using store-bought fruit, also rinse it with very hot water to remove all traces of wax.

2 Put the whole fruit in a stockpot, and add the water to cover. Bring to a boil, cover tightly, and simmer for 1½ hours. Diana Kennedy says that the oranges are done "when the handle of a wooden spoon can easily pierce the rind." Remove the oranges with a slotted spoon and lay them out on a baking sheet to cool for 30 minutes. Measure the cooking liquid, and, if necessary, reduce or add water to make 8 cups. Pour it into a large bowl and set aside.

3 Slice the oranges in half, and scoop out the pulp with a spoon. Without being too particular about it, separate the numerous seeds from the mushy pulp, and put them in a muslin jelly bag or cheesecloth pouch. Tie off the bag, and put it to soak in the cooking liquid. Discard the leftover pulp.

4 Cut the orange-peel halves in two, and then slice each quarter crosswise into strips about ¼ inch wide by 1½ inches long. Add the sliced peel to the bowl of cooking liquid as you work. When all the peels are sliced, you can cover the bowl and put it aside overnight if you wish.

5 Warm the sugar on a baking sheet in a 225-degree oven. Put the peels and liquid in a preserving pan, and squeeze the seed bag to extract as much liquid as possible. Continue to knead the bag for several minutes, “milking” it to extract several tablespoons of a thick, cloudy pectin gel. Add the pectin to the preserving pan. Bring the pan to a full rolling boil. If any of the peels are still opaque, cook them for another 15 to 20 minutes before adding the sugar. Otherwise, add the sugar, and reduce the mixture over high heat, skimming as necessary and stirring regularly.

6 After 45 to 50 minutes, the marmalade will be noticeably darker and glossy. Check for a gel set using the cold-saucer method. If necessary, cook a few minutes longer and test again. Allow the marmalade to cool for 5 minutes, stirring a few times, and ladle it into prepared pint or ½-pint wide-mouth jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Make sure all the strips of rind are submerged. Run a skewer around the inside edge of the jar to remove any air pockets. Seal, and process the jars in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes. Seville orange marmalade will keep for 2 years or more, and darken as it ages.

Seville Orange Marmalade with Lemon

Add 2 lemons to the recipe. Prepare them exactly as you do the oranges. Increase the sugar by ½ pound, or 1 heaping cup.

Dudley’s Egyptian Marmalade

Dudley and his wife, Ann, make a glamorous pair. When I saw them at a friend’s New Year’s Eve party in Laurel Canyon, Ann was wearing a floor-length gown and Dudley was dressed in a dinner jacket. Drinking champagne and chatting by the fire, they might have been at a weekend house party in the 1920s.

Dudley told me that their first trip abroad together had been to Egypt, where, on a terrace along the Nile, they ate an intense orange marmalade freckled with dried red chilies. To approximate it, try adding about ½ teaspoon dried chili flakes to a ½-pint jar of still-hot marmalade. Stir well with a skewer to incorporate, seal, and process normally. Serve it with cold ham or roast chicken.

Seville Orange Marmalade with Bergamot

If you have candied bergamot peel, add a 2-inch piece, finely chopped, when you stir in the sugar during step 5 of the preceding recipe. Add more to taste at any point during the cooking process.

Alternatively, add 5 Earl Grey tea bags at the beginning of step 5, the second boiling, and remove them when you add the sugar. Squeeze the tea bags into the pan before discarding.

Strong Marmalade

After tasting this marmalade, my friend John said, “There’s nothing like a stiff drink in the morning.” At the gel point, add ½ cup plus 2 tablespoons of Islay single-malt Scotch, and boil for 1 minute. Verify the gel set before jarring.

A Bear Called Paddington BY MICHAEL BOND [1926–]

In this classic children's book, published in 1958, Mr. and Mrs. Brown meet a small bear sitting on a suitcase in the Lost Property Office of Paddington Station. The Browns take the bear home, and delightful misadventures ensue.

> "I emigrated, you know" [said the bear]. A sad expression came into its eyes. "I used to live with my Aunt Lucy in Peru, but she had to go into a home for retired bears."
>
> "You don't mean to say you've come all the way from South America by yourself?" exclaimed Mrs. Brown.
>
> The bear nodded. "Aunt Lucy always said she wanted me to emigrate when I was old enough. That's why she taught me to speak English."
>
> "But whatever did you do for food?" asked Mr. Brown. "You must be starving."
>
> Bending down, the bear unlocked the suitcase with a small key, which it also had round its neck, and brought out an almost empty glass jar. "I ate marmalade," he said rather proudly. "Bears like marmalade."

Marmalade Technique No. 4: OXFORD-CUT GRAPEFRUIT MARMALADE | YIELDS ABOUT 7½ PINTS

Bitter, sour, and fragrant, the grapefruit is well suited to marmalade, though its thick peel and tough interior connective tissues require special attention. Marmalade Technique No. 4 gives the preserver maximum control by treating the peel and pulp separately.

It all comes together in the preserving pan, with sugar and a bit of Darjeeling black tea, which adds a nice tobacco-and-leather quality. (Or try using Earl Grey or smoky Scottish Breakfast tea for their pronounced flavors.) I like the visual effect of scattering loose tea leaves directly in the marmalade. If the idea of dark "floaters" bothers you, use tea bags instead. Also, I like a mix of grapefruit varieties, combining white, pink, red, and orange-fleshed "cocktail" grapefruits, and even throwing in a pomelo if there is one to be found.

The quantities below are big-batch-sized and will require a large preserving pan, or they can be halved to fit smaller ones. Grapefruit marmalade will not set as firmly as marmalade made from other citrus. You can expect it to remain a bit oozy.

5 pounds mixed grapefruit varieties 1 gallon plus 8 cups water 1 tablespoon kosher salt 2 tablespoons loose-leaf black tea, such as Darjeeling, Earl Grey, or Scottish Breakfast, or 5 tea bags 5 pounds sugar

1 Scrub the grapefruits well in cold water. If using store-bought fruit, also rinse it with very hot water to remove all traces of wax.

2 Remove the grapefruits' peel in quarters by scoring the skin with a sharp knife and carefully working the peel away from the flesh. Try to keep the quarters as intact as possible. If the peels have a very thick albedo underlying the exterior zest—in pomelos it can be 1 inch or more—scoop away the excess with the edge of a spoon.

3 In a large pot, dissolve the salt in a gallon of water, and bring it to a boil. Blanch the peels for 5 minutes. They will float: weight them with a metal colander, or a lid that's one size smaller than the pot. Drain the peels, and

discard the salted water.

4 When they're cool enough to handle, cut the peels crosswise into extra-chunky ¾-inch-wide strips. Place them in a large preserving pan with 8 cups fresh water, and cook at a low boil for 15 minutes.

5 While the peels cook, pick or scrape as much albedo from the outside of the grapefruit flesh as possible. Break into quarters, remove the central "rag," and use a sharp knife to slice off the tough seam of membranes where the segments converge. Discard any seeds. Chop the quarters into ½-inch dice, taking care to remove any tough connective tissue you may have missed before. After the peels have cooked for 15 minutes, add the chopped flesh and the black tea to the preserving pan. (Sprinkle up to 1 tablespoon of loose tea directly into the pan, if you like. The remainder should be in tea bags or a tea ball.) Simmer 15 minutes longer. Cut a piece of peel in half to check that it is cooked *all the way through.* Warm the sugar on a baking sheet in a 225-degree oven for 15 minutes, while the grapefruits finish cooking.

6 Add the sugar to the preserving pan, and stir to dissolve. Reduce over high heat to the gel point, about 40 minutes. Allow the hot marmalade to cool for 5 minutes, stirring a few times, and ladle into prepared ½-pint or pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Marmalade Technique No. 5: FINE-SHRED LIME OR LEMON MARMALADE | YIELDS 6 PINTS

Limes are the most acidic citrus fruit: as much as 8 percent of their total weight comes from citric acid. To make lime marmalade requires special handling and copious sugar, but the results are spectacular.

If you've already worked your way through the earlier marmalade recipes in this section, the general steps for Marmalade Technique No. 5 will be familiar enough: slice the fruit, soak it, cook it once with water, and cook it a second time with sugar. But for this recipe the results are quite different. There is much more jelly—a translucent mass suspending a tumult of finely shredded green peels—and the powerful flavors of raw lime and ginger become elegant through dilution. Should the queen ever stop at my house for tea, this is the marmalade I would serve. It is veddy proper.

This is a three-day process, as water and heat unravel the pectin from the lime's white albedo, which during this time very nearly dissolves into a thick pectin broth. But the effect of all that pectin is striking. Once jarred, the marmalade will solidfy even before it's cool.

I like to melt a tablespoon of lime marmalade in boiling water for a tonic, or else add bourbon to make it a toddy. A friend uses it to season broiled fish.

Lemon marmalade can be made using the same technique, leaving out the ginger. I also use this technique with other very strongly flavored citrus, such as limetta and bergamot.

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2 pounds seedless Bearss limes or sour Eureka lemons 10 cups water 3½ pounds sugar (8 level cups) Optional: 3 tablespoons grated or finely minced fresh ginger root

1 Scrub the limes in cold water. If using store-bought fruit, also rinse it with very hot water to remove all traces of wax.

2 Remove the zest in wide strips with a vegetable peeler, working along the axis from the stem to the bottom nipple. Stack the strips of zest, a few at a time, and slice them with a very sharp knife into fine strips. Remove a round from either end of the peeled fruit and discard it, then slice the flesh into the thinnest rounds possible. Cover the peels and sliced rounds with the water and leave overnight.

3 The next day, gently boil the fruit and water for 20 minutes. Allow it to cool, cover, and leave overnight.

4 On the third day, warm the sugar on a baking sheet in a 225-degree oven for 15 minutes. Work the fruit lightly with your fingers to break up any rounds of albedo that haven't disintegrated. Put the fruit and its pectin stock, along with the ginger, if using, into a preserving pan, and bring to another boil for 5

minutes.

5 Add the sugar to the pan. Skim as soon as the sugar-fruit mixture returns to a boil, but don't bother to skim again. Reduce the sugar-fruit mixture over high heat to the gel point, about 15 minutes. When it's ready, there will still be abundant liquid in the pan, but the hot marmalade will set up within 30 seconds in the cold-saucer test.

6 Remove the pan from the heat, and allow to cool for 5 minutes, stirring several times. Ladle the hot marmalade into twelve prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

LIME TODDY AND LIME SMASH | *YIELDS 1 COCKTAIL*

For a toddy that will soothe the sick and invigorate the healthy, melt 1 tablespoon of lime marmalade in ⅓ cup boiling water. Add 1 ounce of bourbon.

To make a lime smash, allow the melted marmalade to cool. Shake it with 2

ounces of bourbon, and pour over cracked ice. Garnish with a mint sprig.

KUMQUAT MARMALADE WITH ORANGE ZEST AND RUM | *YIELDS 4 PINTS*

Kumquats make one of the prettiest marmalades, but they can be expensive, and seeding the little olive-sized fruits is a pain. A friend with a kumquat tree says her strategy is to order a long movie from Netflix and do the prep work in front of the TV.

Kumquats are sour-fleshed and thin-skinned. I use Marmalade Technique No. 5 to extract the maximum pectin from the peels and reserved seeds, and the result is a beautiful clear jelly that suspends tiny rounds of zest. The kumquat's mild flavor benefits from the addition of orange juice, orange zest, and aged rum.

Serve Kumquat Marmalade with any kind of duck or roast chicken. It's also my favorite sweet preserve to eat on biscuits.

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2 pounds kumquats 6 cups water 6 cups sugar 2 oranges ¼ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice ½ cup aged rum, such as Barbancourt or Appleton

1 Rinse the kumquats, and slice them into ¼-inch rounds. Remove the seeds, and put them in a small dish with ½ cup of the water. Pour the remaining water over the sliced fruit, and set both containers aside overnight.

2 By the following day, the seeds will have released a clear pectin jelly. Strain it through a fine-screen sieve to remove the seeds, and put it in a pot with the kumquats and their soaking liquid. Bring to a full rolling boil, then turn off the heat and allow the pot to cool. Cover, and set aside overnight.

3 The next day, warm the sugar on a baking sheet in a 225-degree oven. Put the kumquats and their liquid into a preserving pan. Zest the oranges with a Microplane grater. Squeeze the oranges (you should have 1 cup juice). Add the zest, orange juice, and lemon juice to the pan with the kumquats.

4 Bring the contents of the preserving pan to a boil for 3 minutes. Add the sugar, stir to dissolve, and reduce to the gel point, about 10 to 12 minutes.

Once a gel set has been achieved, add the rum and boil for 30 seconds longer. Verify the set, then ladle the hot marmalade into eight prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

ROBERT LAMBERT: THE MASTER'S TOUCH

Citrus fruit may have the sweetness and color of sunshine, but the prime California citrus harvest arrives during the rainy season, which is why the slow work of making marmalade often happens under damp skies.

The day I visited marmalade maker Robert Lambert, a pounding rain had settled over San Francisco. His modest house in a bland subdivision across the Bay wasn't at all what I expected from the man responsible for the best marmalades made anywhere, selling for as much as $20 per half-pint. What his followers get at those prices is rarity and labor-intensive craft, marmalade made from the nearly unobtainable yuzu and odd varieties of more commonplace species. His Five Lime Marmalade, for instance, has Bearss lime, Kaffir lime, Rangpur lime, Tavares limequat, and Palestinian sweet lime. For customers with even more rarefied tastes and budgets, Lambert offers greater rarities still: a limited edition trio of marmalades made from Kinkoji pomelo, Sampson tangelo, and Marrakech limetta. Each boxed set is, per the Web site, "numbered and signed by the artist." Price: $85.

Lambert, who is in his early sixties and has thick, wavy hair and a goatee that tints strawberry blond in the light of his desk lamp, works alone except for some limited assistance from two seasonal kitchen helpers brought in to cut fruit during the busiest weeks of the citrus harvest. He is initially awkward, addressing the answers to my questions at a spot ninety degrees left of where I'm sitting. But as talk turns to his kitchen process, he limbers up and seems genuinely compelled by the creative possibilities inherent in fruit, sugar, and aromatic ingredients.

Robert Lambert

“When I decided I was going to do marmalade, I got every recipe I could and read them all,” he recalls. “I looked for the things that seemed immutable, that were common to all the recipes, and I figured those things out. Then I figured out the loophole.”

The “immutable” technique, familiar to any marmalade maker, is a two-stage cooking process: boiling the cut fruit in copious water to soften the peels, then adding sugar and boiling a second time to candy the peels and reduce the syrup to the gel point. The “loophole” Lambert discovered is one of his two key innovations: replacing the water with freshly squeezed juice.

It’s extravagant, but throughout our long conversation in the office, garden, and kitchen of his San Rafael house, Lambert repeatedly reveals his exasperation with the typical commercial aim of realizing a profit.

“I don’t want to run a business,” he says at one point, a claim consistent with his impulse to sell food that has been “signed by the artist.” “I want to make stuff.”

If one believes that being an artist is more a state of being than the mastery of a particular set of manual skills, such as manipulating paint or clay—if, in other words, one accepts the phrase “conceptual artist”—then Lambert may indeed be an artist. It just so happens that, as an artist, he also makes sweet preserves.

LAMBERT'S STREAK OF ZEALOUS independence is his matrilineal inheritance. His English-born grandmother's mother was one of sixteen women arrested in 1873 for participating in farm laborer protests in the Oxfordshire village of Ascott-under-Wychwood. Queen Victoria herself pardoned the so-called Ascott martyrs, and a plaque in the village commemorates their ordeal. Lambert's grandmother was twelve years old when the family came to America, and Lambert speculates that his great-grandparents, both thirty-five at the time, left England because "they wanted to buy their own land and be their own masters." Their first house was a primitive sod structure in northern Wisconsin, although when his grandmother married at twenty to a logger twice her age, the couple moved into a log cabin. They went on to clear land and eventually built a handsome wood farmhouse, where Lambert stayed often while he was growing up. He looks back at the life there as a "peculiar mix of luxury and poverty." The luxury was, of course, in the food they ate, and Lambert vividly describes the memory of picking wild berries and watching his grandmother troop out to the garden every morning to gather fresh vegetables for the day's meals. Lambert now owns that farm with his brother and spends a portion of the summer growing season there, putting up sour cherry preserves, crab apples, and other old-timey favorites.

In 1972 he was living at the farm after a short-lived college career as an art student in Milwaukee had given him a taste of revolutionary politics and gay liberation. A member of his student circle, Jerry Dreva, moved to Los Angeles to crash with a friend named Richard Cromelin, a young journalist who was then writing for *Rolling Stone.* Dreva sent letters home to Lambert describing life on the edges of fame in L.A. Lambert headed west at age twenty-three to join Dreva in creating what Lambert calls "a conceptual rock-and-roll group," "conceptual" because they adopted the stance of glam-rock fame without bothering to make music. Dreva and Lambert—"Bobby" at the time—named their "band" Les Petits Bon Bons. The group dressed in outrageous drag outfits and donned wigs to attend every party they could, whether they were invited or not. Photographs of them in full regalia appeared in *People* and *Newsweek,* and Les Bons Bons also established themselves in the worldwide network created by the mail art movement—Lambert calls it "the original Internet."

Food didn't come back into Lambert's life until he left L.A. five years later and moved to San Francisco with a hungry boyfriend; he learned to cook by reading books and calling his mother for recipes. Always on the edge of "just getting by" financially, Lambert found work at a small café and later signed on at a fast-growing catering company called Edible Art, where his creativity with

sweets and fanciful architectural desserts—such as a cake in the form of the San Francisco–Oakland Bay Bridge—eventually earned him carte blanche in the kitchen. That's when he began experimenting with sweet preserves, putting into practice the book instructions he found for citrus syrups, candied peels, and pickled fruits.

He didn't launch the artisan condiments enterprise now known simply as Robert Lambert until Christmas 1999, a few weeks before the end of what he calls "a rough, weird" decade during which he watched many friends succumb to AIDS. His first day's sales at a local farmers' market netted him eight hundred dollars, and acclaim followed from there, including two gold sofi awards bestowed by the National Association for the Specialty Food Trade—the Oscars of the grocery business. Today Lambert's two largest accounts are Dean & DeLuca and Zingerman's, a gourmet emporium in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Growth has happened as fast as Lambert has allowed, which is to say that it has been limited by his refusal to hire any permanent kitchen help.

LAMBERT'S SECOND INNOVATION in making marmalade is a direct consequence of his being short staffed. Unable to process all the citrus harvested during the brief season, he freezes the cut fruit and then "cooks it off" later, as his schedule allows. It turns out that freezing the fruit has an unexpected benefit: it subdues the one element that defines marmalade but also proves to be most problematic for the uninitiated—the peels.

"Freezing breaks them down so that they're not too leathery," Lambert explains. "It's one of the things that makes my marmalade palatable to people who don't like marmalade."

Today marmalade is the cornerstone of Lambert's retail collection—he also produces chocolate sauce, caramel sauce, and fruitcake, as well as syrups, jams, and pickled fruit—but he didn't go heavily into citrus preserves until the mid-2000s, when he met Gene Lester, a retired IBM executive who has assembled one of the country's finest private rare citrus orchards. Lambert found Lester through the auspices of the University of California Riverside Citrus Variety Collection, one of the world's leading repositories of citrus germplasm, and now he enjoys access to Lester's three hundred varieties of citrus, including more than eighty types of mandarins.

The quantity of secret ingredient that Lambert adds to his products might be best described as homeopathic. Or magical, perhaps, like the minuscule pinch—eye of newt—that makes the witch's seething cauldron combust. One single

blade of star anise goes into twenty pounds of raw quinces as it becomes his *membrillo* ($40 per pound).

"It's a tiny bit," Lambert concedes. "But it makes the difference. I've had people tell me that my *membrillo* is better than what their grandmothers made in Portugal."

Of course the other transformative factor that goes into a twenty-pound batch of *membrillo* is seventeen hours of Lambert's time. He bakes, peels, and grates the fruit; then he combines the shredded pulp with sugar, the star anise, and yuzu zest, and stirs the boiling pot until the hot mass is nearly dry, all the while shielding himself from its volcanic bubbling with a protective covering of gloves, gauntlets, and a mask. Lambert, working alone, exhausts himself in his labors. You might say he puts all of himself into his product.

Earlier in the day, back when we were talking about assistants, Lambert had said that another reason he doesn't want to hire anyone is that he wants to "touch" every jar. Perhaps that touch is the true secret ingredient of Robert Lambert's artisanal condiments, akin to the fingerprint of a master sculptor who is himself touched by inspiration and driven to create *ex nihilo* from the dull raw materials in his hands. It's what allows Lambert to indicate without words what he forcibly says to me at one point in our conversation, "What I do is mine."

GUAVA JAM AND GUAVA PASTE | *YIELDS ABOUT 3 PINTS JAM OR 2 POUNDS PASTE*

My middle-school Spanish teacher, Miss Cindy Schirmer, was a brave woman: she took our seventh-grade class on a field trip to Mexico. I wish I could find her now to thank her, because the trip was a kind of initiation into what my adult life would become: an ongoing fascination with art, food, and—after my first taste of tequila in Acapulco—drink. Memories of the trip have remained so vivid that in recent years I went back to Mexico to retrace my youthful footsteps through the capital's archaeological museum and across the cobblestone streets of Taxco, a colonial silver-mining town in the state of Guerrero.

To her credit, Miss Schirmer undertook to feed us idiomatic Mexican food rather than whatever twelve-year-old suburban kids would have chosen on their own. I remember one lunch in a light-flooded restaurant in Mexico City's Zona Rosa where we ate shredded turkey vinaigrette dressed with fiery green chilies. And then there was *ate de guayaba,* a dense and dark-red guava paste that Miss Schirmer bought in an open-air market and sliced atop fresh *queso blanco.* How mysterious it is that I have retained the memory of that single bite of food from thirty years ago, when so many more dramatic experiences have vanished beyond recovery.

In Southern California, guavas show up in the market in late fall and winter. *Psidium guajava* probably originated in southern Mexico, and from there was spread throughout the tropics by birds, animals, and man—a testament to the fruit's rich flavor and the viability of its numerous seeds. Since European explorers first encountered guavas, the fruit has continued its travels throughout every frost-free region of the world. A plant registry maintained by Purdue University calls the guava "one of the most gregarious of all fruit trees." It hybridizes freely, and its fruit takes many forms, but generally the flesh is dense and moist, almost like a papaya, and the tender skin releases a heady scent of strawberries, bananas, and tropical fruits.

Through trial and error, I found that the best type of guava for making preserves is pink-fleshed, thick-walled, and acidic. An example is the cultivar 'Beaumont,' which is about the size of a tennis ball and either round or pear-shaped. The fragrance is lush, but the taste is sharp when raw. Select firm,

underripe fruit.

The only difference between guava jam and guava paste is the cooking time. The longer you reduce the hot fruit-sugar mixture, the firmer it will set up.

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5 pounds pink-fleshed guavas, such as ‘Beaumont’
2 cups water 4 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice Zest of 1 lemon 5 cups sugar

1 Rinse and drain the guavas. Cut a round off the stem and flower ends, chop the fruit in half, and slice the halves into ½-inch pieces. Place them in a pot with the water. Bring to a boil, and simmer for 30 to 40 minutes, stirring frequently, until the guavas are very soft.

2 Pass the cooked fruit and its liquid through the fine blade of a food mill. Discard the seeds. You should have about 8 cups purée.

3 Put the purée in a preserving pan with the lemon juice and half of the lemon zest, and bring to a boil. Add the sugar 1 cup at a time, to maintain the boil. Guavas are prone to sticking, so stir constantly while reducing the purée to the gel point, 15 to 20 minutes. Add the remaining zest.

4 If you want guava jam, ladle the hot purée into six prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

5 For guava paste, continue cooking for about 20 minutes longer, until the purée will hold a line drawn in the bottom of the pan with your spoon. In the final cooking stage, do not stop stirring for a second. If you have to step away from the stove, turn off the heat until you come back. Finally, pour the hot paste into a pan lined with parchment paper, or small molds such as brioche pans. Allow to cool overnight, then turn the paste out of its container and cut into ½-pound portions. Wrap in parchment paper, and store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. It will keep for months.

GUAVA PASTE APPETIZERS

The classic way to serve guava paste is thinly sliced on a slab of *queso blanco.* Dressed with chilies, cilantro, and lime, it's the perfect mouthful: sweet, milky, salty, acidic, spicy, and vegetal all in one bite. It's also neat enough to eat with your fingers.

Cut a block of *queso blanco* or other salty fresh cheese such as French feta into ¼-inch-thick slabs. Using a hot knife that has been dipped in hot water and dried, slice the guava paste as thinly as possible, and lay a piece on each slab of cheese. Sprinkle with ground cayenne, cayenne chili flakes, or minced fresh chilies. Scatter cilantro leaves over the top, and finish with a squirt of fresh lime juice. Serve with tequila or a zippy white wine such as a Txakoli from the Basque country.

CARAMELIZED PINEAPPLE WITH TEQUILA AND SAFFRON | *YIELDS 2 QUARTS*

Christopher Columbus's first voyage opened a transoceanic barter of species between the continents, and the cultural and ecological consequences of this so-called Columbian Exchange have been momentous, argues Charles C. Mann in *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created.* It's why Italians have tomatoes and the Asian cuisines have chilies. It's why Florida has oranges—as well as malaria, mosquitoes, and rats. The pineapple was among the New World treasures that Columbus himself tasted, and later explorers took cuttings back to Europe. The speed with which this Brazilian native won over foreign nations is amazing. Pineapples were being grown in India by the middle of the sixteenth century, and soon after made it as far as China and Indonesia. The first pineapple grown on English soil—in a hothouse—was presented to King Charles II in 1661. He loved it.

In America, the pineapple has long been a symbol of hospitality, so this recipe is sized for canning two fruits—one to keep and one to give away. The flavor is concentrated by caramelizing the pineapple in a hot oven before canning. It's more manageable to work with one fruit at a time. My advice is to make the syrup first, then can each pineapple in turn.

The roasted flavor and subtle spices go well with dark chocolate. Be forewarned that it will have a boozy flavor and kick. For a nonalcoholic syrup, replace the tequila with an equal amount of water, and process normally.

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12 allspice berries 12 black peppercorns 6 cloves 2 cups *reposado* tequila 2 cups water ¼ cup honey 24 threads saffron 2 pineapples (about 5 pounds each) 1 cup organic sugar

1 Crack the allspice, peppercorns, and cloves in a mortar. Combine them in a small saucepan with the tequila, water, honey, and saffron. Bring to a boil, remove from the heat, and set aside.

2 Core and slice one of the pineapples: cut off the top and bottom. Stand it upright like a barrel, and slice off the skin with downward strokes of a sharp knife, going deep enough to remove the brown eyes. Cut the heart lengthwise into quarters, and slice out the fibrous core. Cut each quarter crosswise into ½-inch slices.

3 Put the sugar on a plate, and press each pineapple slice into it to coat one side. Lay the slices on a foil-lined baking sheet, sugar side up, in a single layer. One sheet will hold about half a pineapple. Place the pineapple slices in a 500-degree oven and bake for 10 to 15 minutes, until they are partially caramelized. Use tongs to transfer the hot pineapple to a bowl. Repeat with the second half.

4 Pack the pineapple slices into a prepared wide-mouth quart jar. If there’s any liquid left in the bowl, add it to the saucepan with the canning syrup.

5 Bring the syrup to a boil and ladle it over the pineapple slices to cover, leaving ½ inch headspace. Reserve the remaining syrup for the second pineapple. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 20 minutes. Turn off the heat, and wait 5 minutes before removing the jar from the canner.

6 Repeat with the second pineapple, using the reserved syrup. Allow the jars to cure for at least 1 week before opening.

[Note] If you use pint jars, the processing time is 15 minutes.

Tequila could be replaced with brandy or rum, in which case you should omit the saffron and instead use a split vanilla bean, putting half in each jar.

If you omit the water and instead use 4 cups of straight tequila, it isn't necessary to water-bath the jars. The sealed jars can be stored in the refrigerator or in a cool cabinet. Allow to cure for a month before opening.

MANGO JAM | *YIELDS 1½ PINTS*

The mango is the peach of the tropics—sweet, juicy, and fragrant when raw, and equally good when cooked into desserts or preserves. *Mangifera indica* has been cultivated in India for four thousand years or longer, and *The Oxford Companion to Food* says that mango orchards long remained the prerogative of nobility. Chinese travelers liberated the fruit in the first century A.D. and carried it home to the east; Portuguese explorers later carried it west, to Africa, in the sixteenth century. Two hundred years later, the mango reached Brazil; another century after that, it completed its around-the-world tour in Hawaii. People esteem the mango wherever it grows. To me, its one defect is the large, flat seed anchored by stringy fibers that refuse to let go. Whoever first breeds a freestone mango—one with a seed that lifts out neatly, like a freestone-peach pit—will have done the world a great service. In the meantime, trim the flesh from the seeds as best you can, then cook the pits with the jam to extract their flavor, discarding them just before the jam goes into jars.

This exotic mango jam would go well with coconut ice cream or custard, or spread between the layers of a coconut cake.

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3 pounds ripe mangoes 2 cups sugar 1½ tablespoons freshly squeezed lime juice Zest of ½ lime 1 tablespoon white rum or vodka 1 teaspoon Cointreau

1 Peel the mangoes with a vegetable peeler, and “fillet” them by running a knife along the curve of the seed. Cut the flesh into ½-inch dice, and put it in a mixing bowl with the pits. Add the sugar, lime juice, and zest, and allow to macerate for ½ hour or more.

2 Turn the fruit-sugar mixture into a preserving pan, and bring it to a boil. Cook over high heat, stirring constantly, until the syrup is reduced and the fruit is translucent, 7 to 9 minutes. Turn off the heat. Remove the pits with a slotted spoon, and cool them on a plate in the freezer for 5 minutes.

3 While they cool, stir the hot jam with a wire whisk for 2 to 3 minutes, until

the consistency is nearly smooth. Remove the pits from the freezer, and scrape them clean, adding their flesh to the preserving pan. Discard the pits. Add the alcohols to the preserving pan, and stir them in. Bring the contents of the pan back to a boil, then ladle it into three prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

BENGAL SPICE MANGO CHUTNEY | *YIELDS 3½ PINTS*

Wandering the spice aisle of an Indian market one day, I came across a block of tamarind paste, the compressed pulp of the bean-looking fruit that grows on the tamarind tree, *Tamarindus indica.* I asked the proprietor if he had ever used it. Oh yes, came the reply, tamarind is what gives flavor to chutney. He took me to an aisle of jars to show me his selection of chutneys, including two of his favorites: date-tamarind chutney for chicken, and cilantro-tamarind chutney for lamb. The variety that caught my eye was called Bengal spice, which was flecked with the spices I associate with chutney: kalonji seeds, dried chili flakes, and whole mustard. Tamarind was among the ingredients, used as a souring agent in the same way that British and American chutneys use vinegar. It will darken the chutney but give it a rich, intriguing flavor.

If you can't find tamarind paste, increase the total amount of vinegar in the recipe below to 1½ cups.

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5 pounds underripe mangoes 3 cups organic sugar 1 tablespoon molasses 1 large shallot, minced 1 clove garlic, minced 1 tablespoon freshly grated ginger root 2 fresh jalapeño or medium-hot Serrano peppers, minced 4 ounces tamarind paste ½ cup apple-cider vinegar 1 teaspoon yellow mustard seeds 2 teaspoons brown mustard seeds 12 black peppercorns 10 green cardamom pods 10 cloves 1 teaspoon kalonji seeds, also called *Nigella sativa* (available at Indian markets or via the Internet) ½ teaspoon fenugreek seeds 1 or 2 whole dried red chilies, seeded and minced ½ teaspoon kosher salt 2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro

1 Peel the mangoes with a vegetable peeler, and "fillet" them by running a knife along the curve of the seed. Cut the flesh into ½-inch dice and put it in a mixing bowl with the pits. Add the sugar, molasses, shallot, garlic, ginger, and half of the minced hot peppers. Allow to macerate for 30 minutes or more.

2 Turn the fruit-sugar mixture in a heavy pot. Add the tamarind paste and

vinegar. Partially grind the mustard seeds in a mortar, and add them to the mixture. Crush the peppercorns, cardamom pods, and cloves. Add them to the pot, as well as the kalonji seeds, fenugreek seeds, dried red chilies, and salt. Bring the mixture to a boil, and simmer, stirring regularly, until dark and thickened, about 40 minutes. Chill a spoonful of the chutney, and taste. Add as much of the remaining minced hot peppers as you like, along with the cilantro. You may also adjust the seasoning by adding more of any of the other spices.

3 Bring the contents of the pot back to a boil, and cook for 5 minutes longer. Ladle the hot chutney into seven prepared ½-pint jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Seal, and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes.

Epilogue

The farmer’s labor circles back on him
As the seasons of the year roll back around
To where they were and walk in their own footsteps.

—*Virgil’s “Second Georgic”*

APPENDIX I
SOME POPULAR FRUIT VARIETIES

CHERRIES

Sour cherries (also called red, tart, or pie): Of the species *Prunus cerasus,* there are an estimated 300 varieties. Subdivided by color of juice, whether light or dark.

Griotte: Sour cherries with dark juice. From the Provençal *agriota*, which comes from the Old French *agre*, "sour," from the Latin *acer,* for "sharp tasting."

Selected varieties: **(English) Morello:** From the Italian *moro,* "dark skinned." It has red-black skin with dark red flesh and juice. Very sour.

Marasca: The original Maraschino cherry, this morello is grown in Italy and Croatia. It is small, with dark red-black skin, red flesh and juice. Very sour.

Amarelle: Sour cherries with light juice. From the Latin *amarus,* "bitter."

Selected varieties: **Montmorency:** From the Montmorency Valley. The most popular sour cherry in the United States. Moderately sour, bright red skin, light yellow flesh, clear juice.

Balaton: A Hungarian variety grown in the United States now. Lower quality than the Montmorency, but sweeter. They are firmer and less perishable than Montmorency.

Sweet cherries: Of the species *Prunus avium*, there are an estimated 900

varieties. Usually requires another variety for cross-pollenizing. Subdivided by firmness of flesh. Skin color ranges from light yellow to nearly black.

Bigarreau: Sweet cherries with firm flesh. Mostly heart shaped.

Selected varieties: **Bing:** Mahogany skin and firm, similarly colored flesh. Top commercial variety of sweet cherry in the United States.

Lapins: Sweet, dark red skin with lighter red flesh; self-fertile.

Utah Giant: Larger than Bing, with firm dark red flesh, similar skin.

Lambert: Dark red-black skin, dark red flesh and juice.

Selected varieties of "white" or light Bigarreaus: **Napoleon (Royal Ann):** Called "white," it is actually light yellow with reddish cheek. Colorless flesh. The variety used today to make commercial Maraschino cherries.

Rainier: Yellow with red blush, firm, clear flesh. Resists splitting better than the Napoleon.

Heart (also Guigne or Gean): Sweet cherries with soft flesh. These don't ship well. Mostly heart shaped.

Selected varieties: **Black Tartarian:** Purplish-black skin, dark red flesh, juicy, sweet. Soft flesh. Used to be a leading commercial variety.

Sweet-and-sour cherries: Commonly called "Duke," short for "May Duke," a bastardization of "Médoc," the birthplace of the Duke cherry. The French call them Royale. Classified as part of *Prunus avium.*

UNTANGLING THE BRAMBLES

Rosaceae: The rose family is large and encompasses, among other things, pome fruit (apples, pears, and quince), stone fruit (peaches, nectarines, cherries, etc.), strawberries, and brambles.

Rubus: Brambles (also called caneberries) are aggregate fruits composed of many tiny drupelets, each with a seed, formed around a receptacle. The huge genus *Rubus* includes the familiar raspberry and blackberry (see below), as well as such rarities as the orange cloudberry and the salmonberry.

Ideobatus (*batos* is the Greek for “bramble”): The subgenus for raspberries. Raspberries have hairy drupelets, and the aggregate fruit detaches from the receptacle when picked, leaving a hollow core. This hollow core is the main distinguishing feature between a raspberry and a blackberry, and helps explain why the raspberry is such a delicate fruit. Colors can range from white to black.

The **red raspberry,** as we know it today, includes several species. The European red raspberry, *Rubus idaeus*, originated in Europe but has since been brought to North America, where it has been cultivated and crossed with local species. The most significant is *Rubus strigosus,* which is very similar to the European raspberry, and is sometimes classified as a subspecies of *R. idaeus.* Many raspberry-blackberry hybrids descend from the two. The cultivars ‘Meeker’ and ‘Heritage’ are important commercial varieties in the United States. The yellow (or golden) raspberry is a mutation of the red raspberry.

The **black raspberry** or blackcap (*Rubus occidentalis*) is a North American native that is black in color. The black raspberry is slightly tart, and has a flavor that is distinct from the red raspberry’s. The purple raspberry is a cross between a black raspberry and a red raspberry.

Eubatus: The subgenus for blackberries. The term “blackberry” actually refers to numerous different species. Blackberries have smooth drupelets, and the receptacle detaches with the fruit. Blackberry cultivars are usually classified by cane architecture (erect, semi-erect, or trailing). Trailing blackberries make up a large percentage of the commercial blackberry industry. Some varieties are thornless, through either selection or spontaneous mutations (called “sports”). Just as raspberries are not always red, blackberries are not always black.

The **cut-leaf blackberry,** *Rubus laciniatus,* native to Europe and brought to

North America in the mid-nineteenth century, has since naturalized and grows wild. **Thornless Evergreen** (a thornless clone of *Rubus laciniatus* that is now cultivated) is a major commercial blackberry variety. It has trailing canes.

The wild **Pacific dewberry** (called, interchangeably, the California/Pacific blackberry/dewberry) is of the species *Rubus ursinus.* The term "dewberry," though applied generally to any trailing blackberry variety, also refers to numerous other species in the genus *Rubus* (*R. caesius*, *R. flagellaris*, *R. trivialis*, etc.). The Pacific dewberry has been an important genetic contributor to many of the popular hybrids listed here.

The **Himalayan blackberry** (or the Himalayan Giant) is *Rubus armeniacus* but is also referred to as *R. procerus, R. fruticosus,* and *R. discolor.* It is native to Europe (the common name is a misnomer) and was introduced to North America in 1885 by Luther Burbank, who called it the Himalayan blackberry. It soon escaped cultivation, and is now classified as a noxious weed by the USDA. It is not cultivated commercially, but the berries are picked wild.

MAJOR BERRY HYBRIDS

There are countless caneberry hybrids, and hybridization efforts continue today. Some notable centers for blackberry breeding include programs at the USDA-ARS/Oregon State University (e.g., 'Marion,' 'Black Diamond,' 'Obsidian') and the University of Arkansas (e.g., the erect blackberries 'Navaho,' 'Arapaho').

The **loganberry** ('Logan') comes from a cross between a native blackberry (*R. ursinus*) and a European raspberry (*R. idaeus*). The berry is named after Judge James H. Logan, who discovered the hybrid growing in his California garden in 1881. The loganberry is red in color. It is declining as a commercial variety.

The **boysenberry** ('Boysen') is a trailing type. Although its exact origin is uncertain (some suggest that it is the cross between a native Western blackberry and a raspberry or a loganberry), it was popularized by Walter

Knott, the California berry grower. Boysenberries are dark red or maroon in color.

The **olallieberry** (‘Olallie’) comes from George F. Waldo’s cross between a ‘Young’ and a ‘Black Logan.’ Although it was developed in Oregon, it became most popular in California. It is on the decline. The name is derived from the Chinook for “berry.”

The **marionberry** (‘Marion’) is a ‘Chehalem’-‘Olallie’ cross, also developed by George F. Waldo (USDA-ARS/OSU breeding program). A trailing cultivar, it is grown primarily in Oregon, accounting for almost half of the blackberry acreage in this state. It has a reddish-black color and is named after Marion County in Oregon.

The **youngberry** (‘Young’) is a cross between an Austin-Mayes and Luther Burbank’s ‘Phenomenal.’ The youngberry is named after Byrnes Young, who developed the hybrid on his farm in Louisiana. A thornless sport was discovered and cultivated by Elmer L. Pollard and Jubal E. Sherrill.

The **Tayberry** is named after the River Tay in Scotland. Patented in 1979 by Derek Jennings from the Scottish Horticultural Crops Research Institute, the Tayberry is actually a cross between the Aurora blackberry (from Oregon’s program) and a raspberry bred at the Research Institute. The fruit is long and purplish red. The receptacle comes off with the fruit, as on a blackberry.

APPLES

The **apple** (*Malus domestica*, synonymous with *Pyrus malus* or *Malus pumila*) is a descendant of the wild crab apples of Europe and Central Asia. Apple cultivation began at least 5,000 years ago. The apple turns up frequently in classical literature, although modern scholars dispute whether the term always refers to apples as we know them. Because the seeds do not grow true, every seedling represents a new variety. For this reason, systematic grafting has played a huge part in the development of the modern apple industry. Although agricultural experiment stations have produced very successful varieties, the

most popular varieties have often been the result of chance seedlings. One 1905 catalog of varieties compiled by the USDA pomologist W. H. Ragan listed nearly 7,000 named varieties, but most commercial production today is dominated by a few that are widely grown.

Dessert apples are generally crisp and have a balance of tartness and sweetness—perfect for fresh eating. Most varieties found in supermarkets are dessert apples. In the past, apples were stored rather than eaten right off the tree, allowing the flavor to age. Certain varieties store and age better than others.

Some **cooking apples** are valued for holding their shape when cooked rather than cooking down into a purée (especially in baking, for pies and tarts), but when apples are made into applesauce and stewed, the key virtue of the cooking apple is its flavor. Often dessert apples tend to lose their flavor when cooked, becoming bland. The traditional distinction between dessert and cooking apples is now much confused by the proliferation of "dual-purpose" varieties that are cultivated to be good either cooked or fresh. Cooking apples tend to be tart rather than sweet.

Although many different apple varieties can be used in producing cider, **cider apples** are generally hard and astringent—not good for fresh eating. Many of the old favorite cider-making varieties have disappeared. Only a few of the varieties opposite really count as cider apples, but most of the varieties can be used in cider, when combined to achieve the right balance of acid and tannins.

Pippins are hard, late-ripening, and semisweet. They keep well. The name means apples grown from seeds, or pips, and comes from the French *pépin.*

Russet refers to an apple that has a rough, dull-brownish skin, with a flavor sometimes described as pearlike. An apple may exhibit only partial russeting (referring to coloration and texture). The texture and color of a russeted apple have led to the nickname "leather-coats."

Reinette originally referred to an apple grown from a graft (the term comes from the Latin *renatus,* "reborn"), but has since come to refer to a specific type of apple: green, sometimes russeted, with slightly dry flesh and sharp flavor, and late-ripening. They tend to keep well.

Arkansas Black Uses: An excellent storing apple, the Arkansas Black should be given time to age before consumption. It can be cooked.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Tart **Notes**: Probably from a Winesap seedling in Arkansas, 1870. Red-black in color, with a flavor that mellows with age.

Ashmead's Kernel Uses: A dessert apple that can be cooked as well.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Sweet-tart **Notes**: An heirloom russet that originated in England in the seventeenth century. It has excellent flavor, which improves with storage.

Belle de Boskoop Uses: A cooking apple (it holds its shape when cooked). Good for cider.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Tart **Notes**: From the Netherlands in 1856. It exhibits some russeting. It is a Reinette and a good cooking apple.

Braeburn Uses: A dessert apple.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Tart **Notes**: The Braeburn was developed in New Zealand in 1952. It stores well.

Bramley's Seedling Uses: A cooking apple and a cider apple.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Tart **Notes**: From a seedling in England, 1809. A popular British cooking apple, it tends to lose its shape when cooked.

Cox's Orange Pippin Uses: A superior dessert apple.

Season: Mid **Flavor**: Sweet-tart **Notes**: The most popular apple in England, known for its distinct flavor. It originated there in 1825. It usually exhibits some russeting.

Crab Apples Uses: Most often used in cooking, preserves, and cider; certain varieties are eaten fresh.

Season: Varies **Flavor**: Tart **Notes**: The progenitors of the modern cultivated apple. Crab apples are very small, and are often considered unfit for fresh eating because they are very tart. The term generally refers to any small and sour apple in genus *Malus.* Certain varieties, like the Siberian Crab Apple (*M. baccata*) and the Transcendent Crab Apple, make very good preserves.

Elstar Uses: A dessert apple.

Season: Mid **Flavor**: Sweet-tart **Notes**: Originated in the Netherlands in 1955 from a cross between Golden Delicious and Ingrid Marie. The flavor improves with storage.

Empire Uses: This dessert apple is also good for baking.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Sweet-tart **Notes**: From McIntosh × Red Delicious, at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, New York, 1996.

Esopus Spitzenburg Uses: A superior dessert apple, it is good for cooking, and it stores very well.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Sweet-tart **Notes**: Sometimes just called Spitzenburg, it was supposedly Thomas Jefferson's favorite apple. It originated in New York during the late eighteenth century and has excellent flavor. The Spitzenburg is sometimes described as "sprightly subacid," a term that is lifted from old apple registers, like Ragan's.

Fuji Uses: A dessert apple.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Sweet **Notes**: From Ralls Janet × Red Delicious, developed in Japan in 1939. The Fuji is increasingly popular in the United States.

Gala Uses: A dessert apple **Season**: Mid **Flavor**: Sweet **Notes**: Another variety developed in New Zealand, the Gala originated from a cross in 1965

between Golden Delicious and Kidd’s Orange Red.

Golden Delicious Uses: This is primarily a dessert apple, but it cooks well and holds it shape.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Sweet **Notes**: A chance seedling found in West Virginia around 1900, the Golden Delicious (not related to the Red Delicious) has since become a major commercial variety.

Granny Smith Uses: The Granny Smith is good for fresh eating or for cooking.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Tart **Notes**: From Australia, 1868; this apple is bright green when ripe. It is grown around the world in warm climates.

Gravenstein Uses: A good apple for cooking and for preserves, it is sometimes eaten fresh.

Season: Early **Flavor**: Tart **Notes**: A seventeenth-century variety from North Germany, imported in the eighteenth century. The Gravenstein has recently been regaining popularity in California, after being displaced by the major commercial varieties. There is also a red sport. It does not keep for very long.

Honeycrisp Uses: A dessert apple.

Season: Mid **Flavor**: Sweet-tart **Notes**: Developed at the University of Minnesota, released in 1991. It was recorded as a Honeygold-Macoun cross, but recent genetic analysis has proved otherwise.

Jonagold Uses: A dessert apple.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Sweet-tart **Notes**: The result of Jonathan × Golden Delicious, New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, 1968. It is still grown in New York and has now become a major global cultivar. Considered to be a superior dessert apple.

Jonathan Uses: It is good for cooking and eating fresh.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Sweet-tart **Notes**: Originated as a seedling of Esopus Spitzenburg growing in New York in 1826, and named for its discoverer, Jonathan Hasbrouck.

Lady (Api) **Uses**: Very good for cider, it is also eaten fresh, but it should not be peeled, because the skin contains most of the aroma.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Sweet-tart **Notes**: A small and flat (meaning it is wider than it is tall) apple, the Lady is traditionally used in Christmas decorations. It is one of the oldest varieties, certainly dating back to seventeenth-century France, but is perhaps as old as ancient Rome.

Macoun Uses: It is primarily a dessert apple, but can also be used for cooking like the McIntosh.

Season: Mid **Flavor**: Sweet-tart **Notes**: From Jersey Black × McIntosh, NYSAES, 1923. The Macoun is small, and it doesn't store very well (although it will keep longer than a McIntosh). It is very popular in the eastern United States.

McIntosh Uses: A dessert apple, good for cooking as well. The McIntosh tends to lose its shape when cooked but is used in combination with other apples in pies and sauces.

Season: Mid **Flavor**: Sweet-tart **Notes**: It is supposed to have come from a seedling in Ontario in 1811. It is the Canadian national apple, and an important commercial variety.

Northern Spy Uses: A superb cooking apple (especially in pies). It is also eaten fresh.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Tart **Notes**: A seedling from New York in the mid-nineteenth century. Highly regarded as a baking apple, it holds its shape when cooked.

Red Delicious Uses: A dessert apple.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Sweet **Notes**: A seedling from Iowa in the 1870s, the Red Delicious has since become one of the leading commercial varieties in the United States. The name “Red Delicious” refers to many different “improved” strains of the original variety, and some connoisseurs say that the quality of these commercial strains is inferior.

Rome Beauty Uses: An excellent apple for baking and cooking (it keeps its shape when cooked), it is sometimes eaten fresh but may be mealy.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Tart **Notes**: This variety comes from a seedling in Rome, Ohio, during the early nineteenth century. It is sometimes just called “Rome.”

Smokehouse Uses: Can be cooked or eaten fresh.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Tart **Notes**: The Smokehouse originated in the mid-nineteenth century on a farm in Pennsylvania, where it supposedly grew beside a smokehouse.

Stayman Winesap Uses: A good dessert apple, but can be cooked.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Sweet-tart **Notes**: A Winesap seedling planted by Dr. Stayman (after whom it is named) in Kansas, 1866. It has better flavor than the Winesap.

Winesap Uses: A good dessert apple, but also good for cider.

Season: Late **Flavor**: Tart **Notes**: It is smaller than the Stayman Winesap. An old American variety, dating back to colonial times. Very juicy.

CITRUS

Primary progenitors The **citron** (*Citrus medica*) is thought to be a native of Southeast Asia or northern India, cultivated in China and Persia in ancient times. Spontaneous mutation produced the fingered Buddha's-hand citron.

The **pomelo, pummelo,** or **shaddock** (*Citrus maxima* or *Citrus grandis*) is native to Southeast Asia and Indonesia, but grows well in the Caribbean as well. It is large, with a thick layer of pith.

The **mandarin** (*Citrus reticulata*) may have originated in China or in India. Mandarins have loose skins and sections that separate easily. The term "mandarin" is often confused with tangerines, clementines, and satsumas: all various types of mandarin oranges, though commonly synonymous. Clementines (perhaps *C. aurantium* × *C. reticulata*) were discovered by Father Clément Rodier in Algeria; "satsuma" is the collective name of numerous seedless varieties of mandarin from Japan (sometimes called *Citrus unshiu*). The term "tangerine" comes from Tangiers, and is used in the United States to refer to darker varieties of mandarin.

Descendants

Sweet orange (*Citrus sinensis)* CROSSING: *C. maxima* × *C. reticulata* Thought to have originated in southern China, the sweet orange arrived in Europe five centuries after the sour orange and was called the "China orange." The most important commercial variety of the common sweet orange (or juice orange) is the Valencia.

Navel orange A commercially important eating variety of *Citrus sinensis.* It was known in the Iberian Peninsula in the seventeenth century, but the seedless Washington navel now grown in America came from a Brazilian variety in 1870 and was planted in California in 1873. It is characterized by a secondary set of carpels formed at the blossom end of the fruit, giving the appearance of a navel.

Blood orange A variety of *Citrus sinensis* characterized by red juice and flesh (the red comes from anthocyanins). The mutation probably came from Sicily (where it is still grown today) in the seventeenth century. Popular in Europe,

less so in the United States. Major American cultivars are ‘Ruby Blood’ and ‘Moro.’

Bitter, Seville, or **sour orange** (*Citrus aurantium*) CROSSING: *C. maxima* × *C. reticulata* Having originated in Southeast Asia, the sour orange was being cultivated in Spain by the twelfth century, probably brought by the Arabs. Many people consider it the supreme citrus fruit for marmalade.

Bergamot orange (*Citrus bergamia*) CROSSING: perhaps *C. aurantium* × *C. limettioides,* sweet lime Primarily grown for its fragrant peel oil, used by the cosmetics industry, and in Earl Grey tea.

Grapefruit (*Citrus paradisi*) CROSSING: *C. maxima* × *C. sinensis*, or perhaps a pomelo mutation The grapefruit is probably the result of a cross between a pomelo and an orange in the Caribbean. The details of the grapefruit’s origin are disputed, but it was introduced to the United States sometime in the first half of the nineteenth century. The popular red grapefruit varieties are the result of spontaneous and artificial mutations. Tangelos are the result of a cross between a grapefruit and a mandarin.

Lemon (*Citrus limon*) CROSSING: perhaps *C. aurantiifolia* × *C. medica* × *C. maxima* Originating in Asia, the lemon seems to have been known in classical times, but became established in the Mediterranean during the Middle Ages. The two major cultivars in the United States are ‘Eureka’ and ‘Lisbon.’

Meyer lemon CROSSING: (*C. limon* × *C. reticulata* or *C. limon* × *C. sinensis*) Brought to California from China in 1908, it is smooth-skinned and slightly orange in color.

Mexican or Key lime *(Citrus aurantiifolia)* The Key lime is seedy and small, and is thought to have originated in Southeast Asia. It is sometimes called the “true lime.”

Persian, Tahiti, or **Bearss lime** (*Citrus latifolia*) CROSSING: perhaps *C. aurantiifolia* × *C. medica* Unlike the Key lime, the Bearss lime is seedless. It is popular in the United States.

Kumquat *(Fortunella margarita)* Originating in China, the kumquat was thought to be a citrus until the early twentieth century, when it was given a separate genus, *Fortunella.* The kumquat has contibuted to hybrids such as the limequat and the orangequat.

Yuzu CROSSING: *C. ichangensis* × *C. reticulata* Sometimes called *Citrus junos,* it is really a hybrid. It originated in East Asia and is popular as an aromatic.

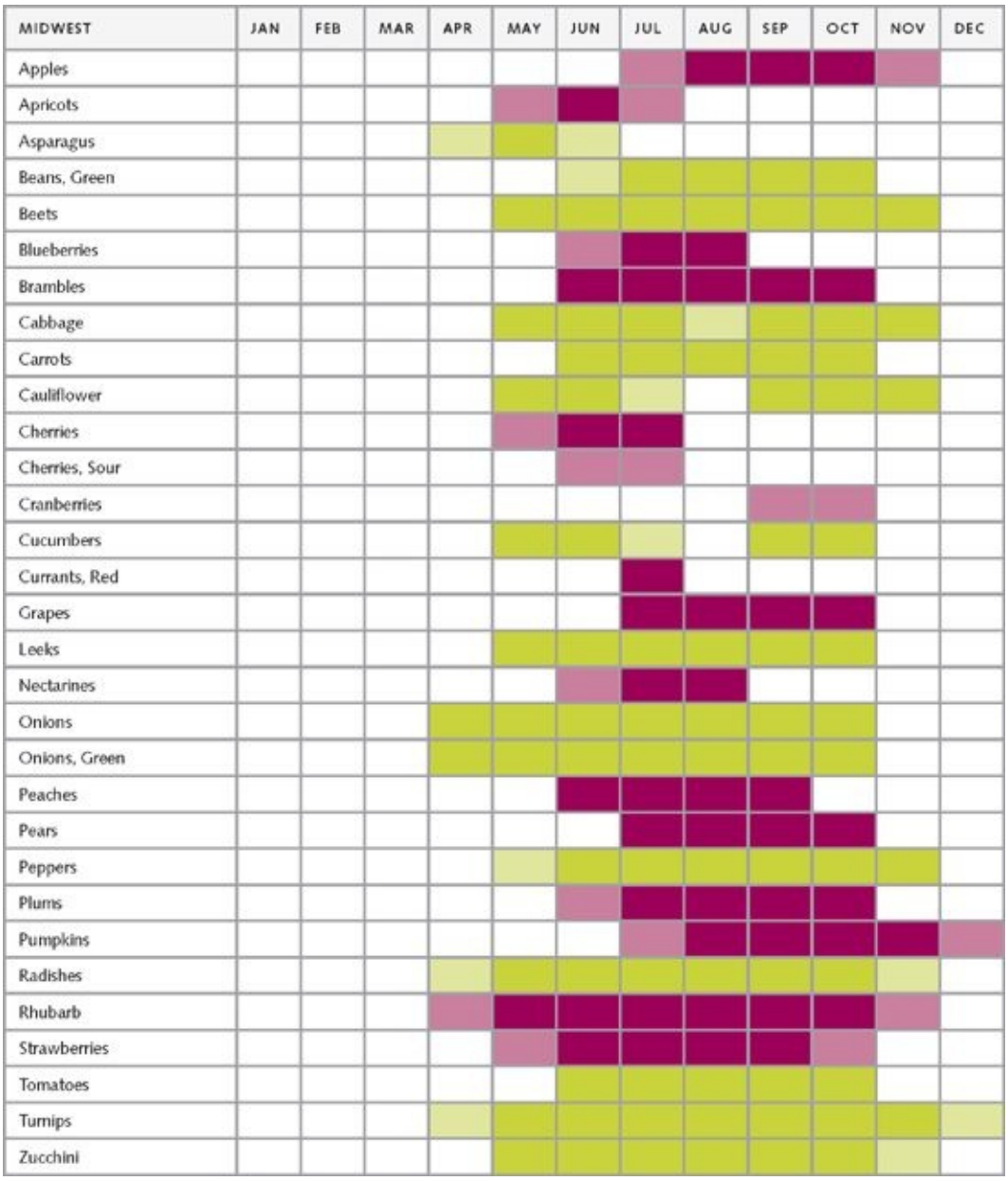
APPENDIX II
PEAK SEASONS BY REGION

To download the following charts as printable PDFs, please visit
http://rhlink.com/sts001

NEW ENGLAND	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Apples												
Apricots												
Asparagus												
Beans, Green												
Beets												
Blueberries												
Blueberries, Wild Maine												
Brambles												
Cabbage												
Cardoons												
Carrots												
Cauliflower												
Celery												
Cherries												
Cherries, Sour												
Cranberries												
Cucumbers												
Currants, Red												
Elderberries												
Grapes												
Leeks												
Nectarines												
Onions												
Peaches												
Pears												
Peppers												
Plums												
Pumpkins												
Quinces												
Radishes												
Rhubarb												
Strawberries												
Tomatoes												
Turnips												
Zucchini												

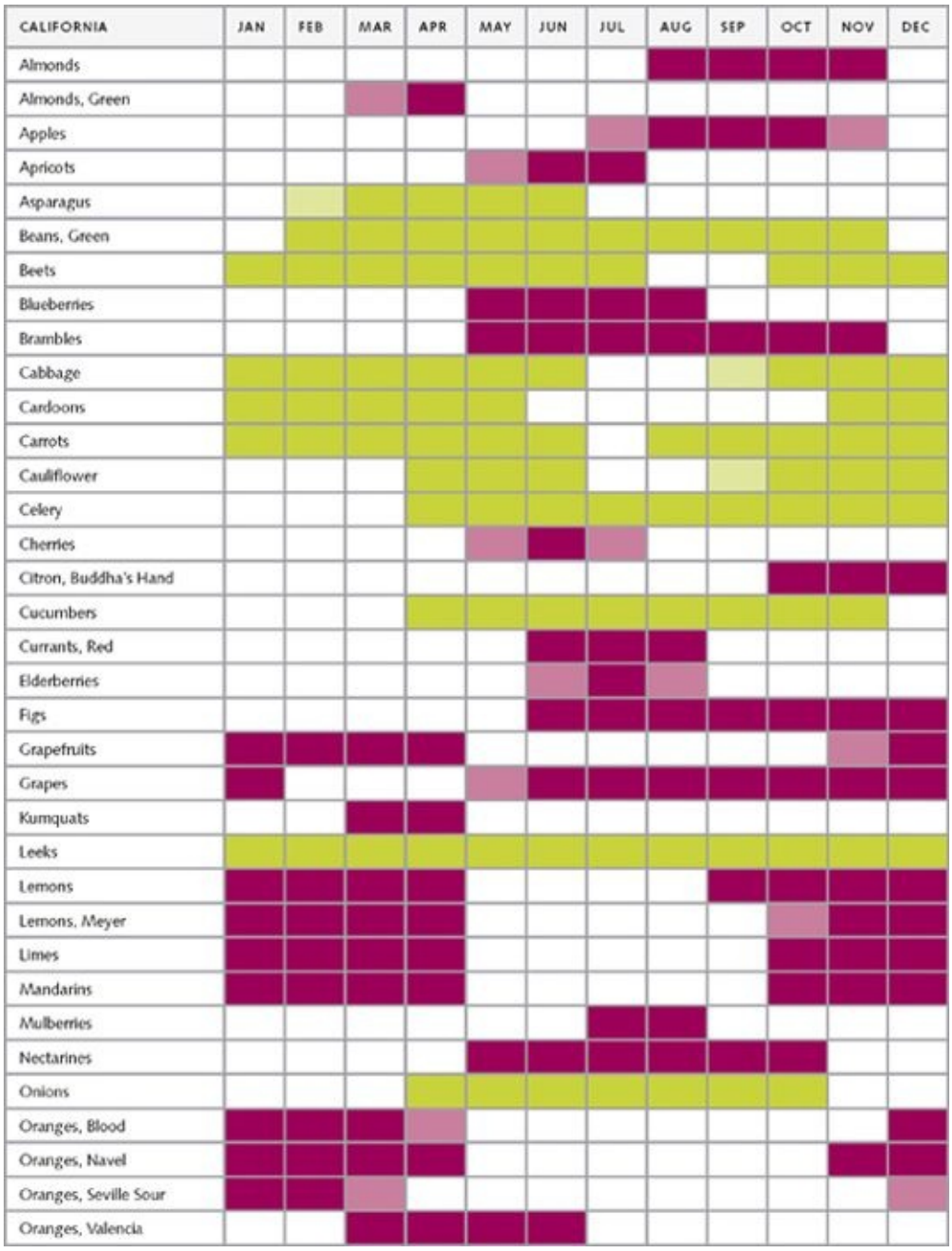
green = vegetables; red = fruits

SOUTH (INCLUDING TEXAS AND FLORIDA CITRUS)
JAN
FEB
MAR
APR
MAY
JUN
JUL
AUG
SEP
OCT
NOV
DEC
Apples
Apricots
Asparagus
Beets
Blueberries
Brambles
Cabbage
Carrots
Cauliflower
Celery
Cherries
Cucumbers
Figs
Grapefruits
Grapes
Green Beans
Kumquats
Limes
Mandarins
Muscadines
Nectarines
Onions
Onions, Green
Oranges, Navel
Oranges, Valencia
Peaches
Pears
Pecans
Peppers
Persimmons
Persimmons, Wild
Plums
Pumpkins
Radishes
Ramps
Rhubarb
Satsumas
Strawberries
Tomatoes
Turnips
Zucchini


MIDWEST
JAN
FEB
MAR
APR
MAY
JUN
JUL
AUG
SEP
OCT
NOV
DEC
Apples
Apricots
Asparagus
Beans, Green
Beets
Blueberries
Brambles
Cabbage
Carrots
Cauliflower
Cherries
Cherries, Sour
Cranberries
Cucumbers
Currants, Red
Grapes
Leeks
Nectarines
Onions
Onions, Green
Peaches
Pears
Peppers
Plums
Pumpkins
Radishes
Rhubarb
Strawberries
Tomatoes
Turnips
Zucchini

ROCKY MOUNTAINS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Apples												
Apricots												
Asparagus												
Beans, Green												
Beets												
Brambles												
Cabbage												
Carrots												
Cauliflower												
Celery												
Cherries, Sour												
Cherries, Sweet												
Cucumbers												
Grapes												
Huckleberries												
Leeks												
Nectarines												
Onions												
Peaches												
Pears												
Peppers												
Plums												
Pumpkins												
Radishes												
Rhubarb												
Strawberries												
Tomatoes												
Turnips												
Zucchini												

PACIFIC NORTHWEST
JAN
FEB
MAR
APR
MAY
JUN
JUL
AUG
SEP
OCT
NOV
DEC
Apples
Apricots
Asparagus
Beans, Green
Beets
Blackberries
Blueberries
Cabbage
Cardoons
Carrots
Cauliflower
Celery
Cherries, Sour
Cherries, Sweet
Cucumbers
Currants, Red
Figs
Grapes
Huckleberries
Leeks
Nectarines
Nuts
Onions
Peaches
Pears
Pears, Asian
Peppers
Plums
Pumpkins
Quinces
Radishes
Raspberries, Black
Raspberries, Red
Rhubarb
Strawberries
Tomatoes
Turnips
Zucchini


CALIFORNIA
JAN
FEB
MAR
APR
MAY
JUN
JUL
AUG
SEP
OCT
NOV
DEC
Almonds
Almonds, Green
Apples
Apricots
Asparagus
Beans, Green
Beets
Blueberries
Brambles
Cabbage
Cardoons
Carrots
Cauliflower
Celery
Cherries
Citron, Buddha's Hand
Cucumbers
Currants, Red
Elderberries
Figs
Grapefruits
Grapes
Kumquats
Leeks
Lemons
Lemons, Meyer
Limes
Mandarins
Mulberries
Nectarines
Onions
Oranges, Blood
Oranges, Navel
Oranges, Seville Sour
Oranges, Valencia

CALIFORNIA	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Peaches												
Pears												
Pears, Asian												
Peppers												
Persimmons												
Plums												
Pomegranates												
Pumpkins												
Quinces												
Radishes												
Rhubarb												
Strawberries												
Tomatoes												
Turnips												
Walnuts												
Zucchini												

APPENDIX III:
COMPARATIVE pH RANGES OF SOME COMMON FOODS

This chart is for illustration purposes only. Considerable variations are possible, depending on varieties, growing methods, processing techniques, etc.

2.0–3.0: limes, lemons, cranberry juice, gooseberries, some vinegars

3.0–4.0: apples, oranges, grapefruit, rhubarb, stone fruit, bramble berries, blueberries, strawberries, pears, grapes, pickles, sauerkraut, fermented olives, some vinegars, most wines, most fruit preserves

4.0–4.6: tomatoes, figs, mangoes, grapes, buttermilk, mayonnaise

4.6: **dividing line between high-acid and low-acid foods**

4.6–5.0: tomatoes, figs, persimmons, Asian pears, bananas

5.0–6.0: pumpkins, carrots, watermelon, beets, asparagus, cabbage, leafy greens, cauliflower, squash, most meats, peppers, green beans, molasses, bread

6.0–7.0: corn, peas, cantaloupe, dates, potatoes, avocados, egg yolks, milk, butter, rice, chicken, mushrooms, most fish and shellfish, coconut milk, tea

7.0: water: 7.0–8.0: hominy, ripe olives, egg whites

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A book is a project with a start date and an end point. The work in between is aided by many people, and in the case of *Saving the Season,* I can see others' contributions on every page. But a cookbook also has a long prehistory: it's the culmination of influences and inspirations that cannot be measured in specific ways.

Because my love of food and the natural world comes from my family, my greatest debt is to my mom, Gran and Papa, my dad, the West clan, and Nanny and Jack. This book is my tribute to them all.

My lasting and heartfelt thanks go to David Tanis, whose influence has seeped into every aspect of my kitchen life; to Dr. Thomas Spaccarelli, my academic mentor and a formative figure in my life; and to Karen Marta, who took me under her wing in 1995 and has nurtured me since.

I also hold a special sense of gratitude for a handful of friends who pushed me or pulled me toward my second career of rattling pots and pans. Dana Goodyear urged me to start a blog and, later, contributed her poem "Fig" for these pages. Lora Zarubin encouraged my jamming habit from the start, uttering the words, "I love it, hon, you're saving the season." Scott Sternberg created the Saving the Season logo, took my author's photograph, and boosted me along the way. Alex Pincus built the Saving the Season Website and showed me Woodstock, Brooklyn, and New Orleans. Valerie Gordon shared her subtle observations about fruit and sweet preserves. Tom Bledsoe designed the Saving the Season label.

Now for the book itself. My agent, David Kuhn, has my deepest gratitude for intuiting the spirit of *Saving the Season,* seeing in a blog the potential for a cookbook, and coaching me through every step of the process.

My thoughtful, perceptive, and patient editor, Lexy Bloom, steadied me through many ups and downs during two and a half years of working together. I am deeply grateful for her sure guidance. It is also an honor to thank Paul Bogaards, Sara Eagle, and the rest of the talented Knopf team, particularly Carol Carson and Pei Koay.

A large share of the credit for this book—and hence of my gratitude—belongs to the farmers: Bill and Barbara Spencer and the crew at Windrose Farm, especially Lincoln and Martha; James Birch of Flora Bella Farm; Mike Cirone of See Canyon; Bettina Birch of Bee Green Farm; Deborah and Hassan Ghamlouch of The Grove; Mud Creek Ranch; Murray Family Farms; Force Field Farm; Circle C Ranch; Friend's Ranch; J.J.'s Lone Daughter Ranch; Honey Crisp Farms; Andy Mariani; Burkart Farms. Also, Truman and Betty Kennedy, Fat Uncle Farms, Pudwill Farms, Zuckerman's Farm, and the rest of the farmers at the Santa Monica, Hollywood, and Studio City farmers' markets, as well as Laura Avery and Darra Adler Henigan of the Santa Monica Farmers Market. Thank you, as well, to the Angley family of Flax Pond Farms.

I am very grateful to those whose hard work contributed to my project. Above all, editorial intern Edward Pimentel was dauntless in compiling the appendices, among his many other efforts, which also included counting 808 pits to learn how many sour cherries are in five pounds. Nicola Atkinson lavished her time on the pen-and-ink drawings in the introduction, and also shared her gift for baking. Stephen Ringer, a valued friend, generously filmed the book trailer.

Saving the Season benefitted enormously from the participation of Lauryn Chun, Alex Day, Patrick Dunne, Ada Mae Houston, Dr. Tracy L. Kahn, Robert Lambert, June Taylor, Dr. Arthur A. Teixeira, and Linda Ziedrich. I thank them all for their interviews.

Recipes, stories, inspiration, kitchen help, and gifts of fruit came from: Willy Blackmore, Denise Bratton, JoAnn and Cris Cherry, Nina Corbett, Melissa Cortina, Anne Crawford and Dudley de Zonia, the Deep Springs College student body, Rosette Delug, Jeremy Floto and Cassandra Warner, Meg Glasser, the Hale family, Alex Hitz, Jim Houston, Tom Hudgens, Fabrizia Lanza, Luke Macfarlane, Robert Macmillan, Amanda Marsalis, Vishwa Marwah, the Master Food Preservers of San Bernardino and Los Angeles Counties, Ernest Miller, Sue Moore, Scott Peacock, Dr. Nicole Poliquin, Akasha Richmond, Shizue RocheAdachi, Frank Schork, Joseph Shuldiner, Jennifer Simchowitz, Sarah Stifler, and Alice Waters. Thank you to each. Craig St. John gets a special nod for his endless enthusiasm, and for introducing me to Lucullus and to his stepfather, Dr. Teixeira. Thanks also to Mike Schafer for recipe testing.

Helpful technical information was provided by: Dr. Eric E. Conn, Barbara Ghazarian, Dr. Thomas Gradziel, David Karp, and Harold McGee. The National Food Lab and Silliker conducted the nutritional analyses described in the introduction.

Key bibliographic references were suggested by Max Edelson, Chris Richardson, David Treuer, and Bill Webb.

Dr. Spaccarelli improved my translations of Spanish texts, and Dr. Malina Stefanovska reviewed my French translation.

Cook Books by Janet Jarvits and Cook's Library were valuable resources.

I appreciate contributions to the appendices made by Alex Blasdel, Dr. Jacqueline K. Burns, Dr. John da Graça, Dr. Marvin P. Pritts, Dr. Teryl Roper, Dr. Mikeal Roose, Dr. Julian Sauls, Dr. Bernadine Strik, as well as Dr. Anita Azarenko, Dr. Brent Black, Dr. Germán Bollero, Sheila Brooks, Dr. Michael Collins, Dr. Andrew Dalby, Dr. Louise Ferguson, John F. King, Lynn Long, Dr. Milt McGiffen, Jeff Olsen, James Quinn, William Shoemaker, Viridian Farms, Dr. Elizabeth Wahle, Dr. Michele Warmund, Dr. Richard Weinzierl, Robert Westerfield, and Dr. Amity Wilczek.

For permitting me the professional flexibility to work on a book, my sincere thanks to Gabe Doppelt and Patrick McCarthy; Stefano Tonchi and Armand Limnander; and Lauren Bon and the Metabolic Studio. Thanks also to Christine Muhlke at *Bon Appétit;* Scott Schy at *House Beautiful;* Peter Dunham, Amy Neunsinger, Hugh Garvey, and David Keeps for documenting Greenvalley. Ditte Isager graciously allowed me to reprint her pictures, and Josh Norris supplied publicity photographs.

For their friendship, generosity, and encouragement, I am indebted to Cathryn Collins and Dr. Gerald Unger; Garrett Colton; John Dewis; Paul Fortune and Chris Brock; Alan Hergott and Curt Shepard; Claire Hoffman and Ben Goldhirsh; Jessica Joffe; Bettina Korek; Lulu; David Morehouse; Amelia Posada and Erika Nakamura; Annie Philbin and Cynthia Wornham; John Pitblado; Gloria Putnam and Steve Rudicel; Bryan Ream; Don Satterfield; Bob Sharp; Danielle, Byron and Beckett Smith; Kathleen Sacchi; Alan Schulman; John Jeremiah Sullivan; Mathew Swensen; Frederic Tuten; Stan Weightman, Jr.; and Elise Woodson. I offer them all my warmest thanks.

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  with Pinot Noir
  with plums
  with red currants
  sour
  sour, with mint and honey
“Cherry-Ripe” (Herrick)
“Cherry-Time” (Graves)
“Cherry Time in Late May”
“chews”
  apricot
  cherry
Chez Panisse restaurant, 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3
chicken fricassee with preserved whole crab apples
  summertime grilled, with tomato jam
Child, Julia
chili(es) *ristras*

roasted jalapeños *en escabeche*
salsa verde with New Mexico green
chinois
chow-chow
Chun, Lauryn, itr.1, 3.1
chunky cranberry jam with nuts and ginger
Churchill, Winston
chutneys Bengal spice mango
green tomato
peach or nectarine
Cikovsky, Nicolai
Cirone, Mike
citron (*citrus medica*)
citron vodka
citrus
"Birthplace of the California Citrus Industry"
candied orange peel and orange syrup
citron vodka
cordial
dried, and citrus peels
dried, duck with olives and
gummi candy
jelly
kumquats in burnt honey syrup
limeade syrup
lime curd
mandarin orange sections
marmalade, *see* marmalade
primary progenitors and descendants of
salt-cured Meyer lemons
supremes of
syrups, cordials, and preserved peels
vin de pamplemousse
winter fruit cocktail: citrus sections in their own juice
Citrus Variety Collection, University of California Riverside, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5
Civil War, U.S., 3.1, 3.2

Claiborne, Craig
cloves, apple jelly with Chardonnay and
Coca-Cola
cocktail onions
cocktails Apricot Clover Club
  apricot shrub
  elderberry fizz
  elderberry rob
  Greenvalley Gibson
  Greenvalley Scratch
  Greenvalley Sour
  lime smash
  lime toddy
  Plymouth
  raspberry shrub
Cold Mountain (Frazier), itr.1, 2.1
Colette
Columbus, Christopher, 1.1, 4.1
Committee on Toxicity (COT), 2.1, 2.2
Commonsense Kitchen, The (Hudgens), 4.1, 4.2
Complete Book of Preserving (Cameron-Smith)
Complete Jam Cupboard, The (Leyel)
compote, ultra-low-sugar white nectarine
condiments prepared horseradish
  whole-grain mustard
confetti relish
confit, tomato
Conn, Eric E.
cookies, molasses
Cooking of Southwest France, The (Wolfert)
cooking times and heat for berries
  for jams
  for jellies
  for marmalades
Cook’s Library (store)
Cooper, Frank
Coorte, Adriaen

Corbett, Nina
cordials cherry ’shine
citrus
citrus syrups, and preserved peels
simple blackberry
see also liqueurs
coriander, blueberry jam with lime and
cornichons
corn relish
Cortina, Melissa
Cotán, Juan Sánchez
crab apples fricassee with preserved whole
savory, jelly
scrumper’s reward
whole preserved
Cran, Gabrielle, 3.1, 3.2
cranberry(ies)
chunky, jam with nuts and ginger
molded, jelly
“Cranberry Harvest, The”
crème de cassis
Cromelin, Richard
crostata, apricot
crushed tomatoes
cucumber dill spears and chips
Cultured (pickle emporium)
curd, lime
curried cauliflower pickle
Cypress Grove Chevre

damson plum
cheese and damson butter
conserve
Darius the Great
Davenport, Guy
David, Elizabeth, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
Dawson, Thomas, itr.1, 3.1

Day, Alex
Dean and DeLuca
Deep Springs College, 2.1, 4.1
Délices de la Campagne, Les (Bonnefons)
“Del loor de España (In Praise of Spain)”
Descamps, Jean-Baptiste
Devil Sauce (Sue Moore)
dicing of vegetables
Dickinson, Emily
Dictionarium Britannicum (Bailey)
Dictionary (Johnson)
Diderot, Denis
dill
  cucumber, spears and chips
  pickles, kosher
  relish
  zucchini spears
Dioscorides
Don Juan (Byron)
Dons de Comus ou les Délices de la Table, Les (Marin)
Downey, Kayti
draining and straining tools
Dreva, Jerry
dried citrus and citrus peels
  duck with olives and
drying herbs
Duchess of Malfi, The (Webster)
duck with olives and dried citrus
Dudley’s Egyptian marmalade
Dull, Mrs. S. R., 1.1, 3.1
Dunne, Patrick, 1.1, *72*, 1.2

East of Eden (Steinbeck)
“Edna Lewis and What Southerners Are Talking About When They Talk About Food”
eggs, pickled, in Sriracha sauce
Egyptian marmalade, Dudley’s

elderberry(ies)
  fizz
  Kir
  rob
  syrup
elderflower liqueur, strawberry preserves with
Emerson, Ralph Waldo
Encyclopédie (Diderot)
en escabeche, roasted jalapeños
Escudier, Jean-Noël
Estes, Rufus
Eugene Farmers Market
Everclear grain spirits

Fallen Fruit artist collective
fall fruit, truffled
fall fruit cocktail
fall recipes and lore
Fearnley-Whittingstall, Hugh
fennel relish
Ferber, Christine, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1
fermentation
fermented green beans
fig(s)
  brown turkey, jam with honey and wild aromatics
  whole, in red wine syrup
  see also Black Mission fig jam
“Fig” (Goodyear)
Fine Preserving (Plagemann)
fine-shred lime or lemon marmalade
First Crusade (1096–99)
“First Georgic” (Virgil), itr.1, 1.1, 3.1, 4.1
Fisher, M.F.K., 2.1, 3.1
fizz, elderberry
Flax Pond Cranberry Co.
Flora Bella Farm, 2.1, 2.2
Floto, Jeremy

Follit, Rob
Follit family, 2.1, 3.1
food mills
food preservation, culture of, itr.1, itr.2, itr.3
Food Rules (Pollan)
Food Safety Advisor Volunteer Handbook (Hillers and McCurdy)
“For Foodies, Ramps Are the New Arugula” (*Time*)
Fortune, Robert
Fouquet, Nicolas
Four Seasons, The (Arcimboldo)
Four Seasons, The (Chagall)
Four Seasons, The (Poussin)
Four Seasons, The (Robbins)
Four Seasons, The (Vivaldi)
Four Seasons pop group
Four Seasons restaurant
“Fox and the Grapes, The” (La Fontaine)
Frazier, Charles, itr.1, 2.1
Freezing and Canning Cookbook: Prized Recipes from the Farms of America
French Revolution
French style ramps in white-wine vinegar
fricassee with preserved whole crab apples
Frost, Robert, 3.1, 3.2
fruit butters apple
  apricot
  damson cheese and damson
  medlar
  persimmon
  pumpkin
  spiced peach
fruit cocktails fall
  summer
  winter, citrus sections in their own juice
Fruit Forward organization
Fruit Hunters, The (Gollner), 3.1, 3.2
Fruits and Fruit Trees of Monticello, The (Hatch)
funnels, itr.1, itr.2

Gainsbourg, Serge
Garden of Endangered Fruit, The (Lanza), 2.1, 3.1
garlic, storage of
Garnett, Constance
Gastronomica journal
Geiskopf, Susan
gel set
  for basic strawberry jam
  for jams
  for jellies
Genius of Rome, The (exhibition)
Gentle Art of Cookery, The (Leyel)
George III, King of England
Georgia, University of, Cooperative Extension
Gerard, John
Ghamloush, Deborah, 4.1, 4.2
Ghamloush, Hassan, 4.1, 4.2
Ghazarian, Barbara
Gibbons, Euell
Gift of Southern Cooking, The (Lewis and Peacock), itr.1, 1.1
gin, blueberry jam with
ginger
  chunky cranberry jam with nuts and
  golden beets with
  -lemongrass water, Asian pears in
  tomato jam with lime zest and
Giustiniani, Vincenzo
Glasse, Hannah
Godard, Misette
“Golden Age of Jam, The”
golden beets with ginger
Gollner, Adam Leith, 3.1, 3.2
Good Housewife’s Jewel, The (Dawson), itr.1, 3.1, 4.1
Good Things to Eat (Estes)
Goodyear, Dana, 1.1, 2.1
Gordon, Valerie, itr.1, itr.2, 1.1

Gourmet magazine
Gradziel, Thomas, 2.1, 2.2
Grandaddy (West)
Granny Younger (char.)
grape(s) brandied raisins
  jelly
  Mrs. Plagemann's savory
  pan-roasted quail with
grapefruit Oxford-cut, marmalade
  vin de pamplemousse
Graves, Robert, 1.1, 3.1
green almonds, pickled
green beans fermented
  pickled
green chilies, New Mexico, salsa verde with
green garlic, pickled asparagus with tarragon and
Greenhawk Ginsmiths
greens, cooking and freezing hearty
Greenspan, Dorie
Greens restaurant
green tomato(es) canned
  chutney
  Mrs. Dorsey Brown's, pickle
Greenvalley Gibson
Greenvalley Scratch cocktail
Greenvalley Sour
green walnut liqueur
grenadine
Grey, Charles, Earl
Grove organic farm, 4.1, 4.2
guava
  jam and guava paste
  paste appetizers
Guérard, Michel
gummi candy

Hale, Bill, 1.1, 1.2

Hale, Callie, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3
Hale, Clifford
Hale, Sarah Josepha
“Hale Family Ramp Dig”
Hall, Donald
Hall, Ian
ham
  -and-cheese sandwiches, hot, with bread-and-butter pickles
  shaved, pickled ramps with wild greens and
Harris, John
Harsch fermenting crocks
Hass, Robert
Hatch, Peter J., itr.1, 2.1
Hazan, Marcella
Heaney, Seamus
heirloom tomato sauce
Henri IV, King of France
Henry IV, King of England
Henry VIII, King of England
Heracles
herb(s) drying of
  vinegars
Herball, or Generall Historie of Plantes (Gerard)
Herbs and Spices: The Cook’s Reference (Norman)
Hernandez, Magali
Herrick, Robert
Hewlett-Packard Company
Hiatt, Jesse
Hibler, Janie
Hillers, Val
Hippomenes
Hitz, Alex
Holcombe family
Hollywood Farmers’ Market
home canning altitude adjustments and, itr.1, 2.1
  basics of
  brining basics for

cooking times and heat, itr.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1
essential equipment for
food acidity levels (pH range) and, itr.1, itr.2, itr.3
food spoilage and, itr.1, itr.2
getting started on
jam basics for
jelly basics for
pickle basics for
pressure canning basics for
relish basics for
storage tips for, itr.1, itr.2
useful equipment for
Home Ground: Language for an American Landscape (Lopez, ed.)
honey
apple jam with
apricot jam with lemon verbena and
brown turkey fig jam with wild aromatics and
Pliny's quince in
sour cherry preserves with mint and
syrup, burnt, kumquats in
Hoover, Herbert
Hopkins, Gerard Manley
horseradish, prepared
hot pepper jelly
Housekeeping in the Bluegrass, 1.1, 3.1
Houston, Ada Mae, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, *419*
Houston, Jim
Hubbard Rake Company
"Huckleberries" (Thoreau)
Huckleberry (char.)
huckleberry jam
Hudgens, Tom, 4.1, 4.2
Huntington Botanical Gardens

I Am Almost Always Hungry (Zarubin)
Ibarbourou, Juana de
Ichaporia, Niloufer

Indian spices, Black Mission fig jam with
Ingelo, Nathaniel
Institute of Domestic Technology, 2.1, 3.1
Irving, Washington

jalapeños, roasted, *en escabeche*
jam
apple, with honey
about apricot
apricot, with honey and lemon verbena
apricot kernels in
aromatics and alcohols used in
basics of
basic strawberry
berry basics for
berry–stone fruit
blackberry, olallieberry, or black raspberry
boysenberry
brown turkey, with honey and wild aromatics
choosing fruit for
chunky cranberry, with nuts and ginger
classic apricot
cooking times and heat for
fancy strawberry, with Pinot Noir
gel set and
guava, and guava paste
huckleberry
jars for
layered berry
making small quantities of
mango
mulberry-plum
pear
pectin content and
plum sauce and plum
preserving pans for
raspberry

rhubarb, with mescal
rhubarb, with rose geranium and raspberry vinegar
slow-cooked strawberry, with rosé wine
smooth apricot, with maple and vanilla
smooth cherry, and cherry “chew”
smooth pear, with cardamom
stirring and skimming of
storage of
strawberry-rhubarb
and sugar in modern history
summertime grilled chicken with tomato
“sun-cooked” preserves
sweetening and sweetness of
tart plum, with mint
tomato, with ginger and lime zest
tomato, with smoked paprika
whole-fruit raspberry
see also preserves(ed)
jam, Black Mission fig
with Indian spices
with Madeira
with smoky black tea
with Syrah
jam, blueberry
with gin
with lime and coriander
jam, peach
with champagne
–passion fruit
James Beard Award
Jameson Irish whiskey
Jameson jelly
Jams and Jellies (Byron), 1.1, 4.1
Jang Mo Gip restaurant
jar lifters
jars
headspace in

for jam
prepping of
processing of
sealing of, itr.1, itr.2
storage of sealed produce, itr.1, itr.2, itr.3
venting of
yields and
Jarvits, Janet, 1.1, 1.2
Jefferson, Thomas, itr.1, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.1
Jellies, Jams and Chutneys (Prince)
jelly
apples in Calvados
apricot
basics of
blue
cassis
citrus
cooking times and heat for
gel set and
grape
hot pepper
Jameson
molded cranberry
Negroni
Nostradamus's quince
pyracantha
red currant
savory crab apple
scrumper's reward
jelly, apple
with Chardonnay and cloves
with mint
with red wine and bay
Jimenez, Dianey
Jitterbug Perfume (Robbins)
Johnson, Philip
Johnson, Robert Flynn

Johnson, Samuel, itr.1, 1.1
Jolly Roger junk shop
Jones, Charles, itr.1, 3.1
Joy of Cooking, The (Rombauer)
Joy of Jams, Jellies, and Other Sweet Preserves, The (Ziedrich), 2.1, 2.2
Joy of Pickling, The (Ziedrich), 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1
"June Taylor"
Junior League of Charleston
Juvenal

Kahlo, Frida
Kahn, Tracy, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4
Karp, David (the Fruit Detective), 2.1, 4.1, 4.2
Katz, Sandor, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1
Keats, John
Keefer family
Keeney, Calvin
Keiler, Janet
Kennedy, Diana, 3.1, 4.1
Kentucky Housewife, The (Bryan), 1.1, 3.1, 4.1
ketchup, Canadian
kimchi
  grilled cheese
  Kogi tacos
King Philip's War
Kir, Canon
Kir apéritifs, 2.1, 2.2
  elderberry
Kir Royale
kitchen equipment for home canning
Klehm, Nance
Kogi Korean BBQ
Kogi tacos
Koran
kosher dill pickles
kumquat(s) in burnt honey syrup
  marmalade with orange zest and rum

Kyu-bo, Lee

ladles
Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains, A (Bird)
Laetrile
La Fontaine, Jean de
Lambert, Robert, itr.1, 1.1, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, *481*
Lanza, Anna Tasca, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2
Lanza, Fabrizia
Lauretti, Laura
lavender syrup, white peaches in (cold pack)
Lawrence, D. H., 3.1, 3.2
layered berry jams
"Lazy" (Lu Yu)
Leek Prize Taker (Jones)
leeks vinaigrette
Legend of Sleepy Hollow (Irving)
Leigh, Vivien
lemon(s) fine-shred marmalade
  Seville orange marmalade with
  see also Meyer lemons
lemongrass-ginger water, Asian pears in
lemon verbena, apricot jam with honey and
Leslie, Eliza
Les Petits Bon Bons (band)
Lester, Gene
Let's Be Frank hotdogs
Lewis, Edna, itr.1, 1.1, 3.1
Leyel, C. F., Mrs., 3.1, 3.2
lid lifters
Life of George Washington (Weems)
lime
  blueberry jam with coriander and
  curd
  fine-shred marmalade
  toddy and lime smash
  tomato jam with ginger and, zest

limeade syrup
Lincoln, Abraham, 3.1, 3.2
Lindros, Kathy, 3.1, 3.2
Linneaus, Carolus, 2.1, 4.1
liqueurs citrus cordials, syrups, and preserved peels
  fruit, syrups, and related beverages
  nocino
  plum
  strawberry preserves with elderflower
Lisle, Lady
Loohuizen, Ria
Lopez, Barry
Lord Grey's peach preserves
Louis XIV, King of France
Lucullus
Lucullus culinary antiques, 1.1, 1.2
Lute Player, The (Caravaggio)
Luxardo distillery
Lu Yu
"Lycidas" (Milton)

maceration
Macfie, Pamela
Madeira, Black Mission fig jam with
Madison, Deborah
Madison, James
Magic Mountain, The (Mann)
mandarin orange sections
mandarins (*Citrus reticulata*)
mandolines
mango
  chutney, Bengal spice
  jam
Mann, Charles C.
Mann, Thomas
Mansfield Park (Austen)
Man Who Ate Everything, The (Steingarten)

maple syrup smooth apricot jam with vanilla and
walnuts in brandy and
Maraschino cherries
Marin, François
marmalade basics of
Dudley’s Egyptian
fine-shred lime or lemon
gel set and
kumquat, with orange zest and rum
Oxford-cut grapefruit
pink
Scotch
storage of
strong
time-to-kill, with blood oranges and Meyer lemons
Tom’s mixed-citrus
vin de pamplemousse
marmalade, Seville orange
with bergamot
with lemon
Marsalis, Amanda
Mary, Queen of Scots
“Mary Had a Little Lamb” (Hale)
Marzetti Slaw Dressing
Mason jars, itr.1, 1.1, 2.1
Massasoit, King
Matisse, Henri
Mauviel preserving pans
McCurdy, Sandra
McEntire, John
McGee, Harold, itr.1, 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1
McPhee, John
medlar(s)
butter
“Medlars and Sorb-Apples” (Lawrence)
Meistersinger, Die (Wagner)
Meléndez, Luis

Melville, Herman, itr.1, 2.1
membrillo
mescal, rhubarb jam with
Mes Confitures (Ferber)
Metacom (Massasoit's son)
Meyer lemons
  salt-cured
  time-to-kill marmalade with blood oranges and
Michaels, Tom
Microplane zesters
Midsummer Night's Dream, A (Shakespeare)
Miller, Ernest
Milton, John, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
mint
  apple jelly with
  sour cherry preserves with honey and
  tart plum jam with
Mintz, Sidney, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4
Mirel, Elizabeth Post
Miss Manners
mixed-citrus marmalade, Tom's
Moby-Dick (Melville), itr.1, 2.1
Modern Cookery for Private Families (Acton), itr.1, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1
Modjeski, Helena
molasses, wild blackberry
molasses cookies
"Molasses Making"
molded cranberry jelly
Monopolowa vodka
Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch
Moore, Marianne
Moore, Sue
Moss, Kate
Mother-in-Law's Kimchi, itr.1, 3.1, 3.2
Mrs. Plagemann's Savory Grapes
Much Depends on Dinner (Visser)
Mud Creek Farm

mulberry(ies) -plum jam
"Stalking the Wild Mulberry"
Museum of Modern Art
mushrooms, wild, pasta with pancetta, pickled ramps and
mustard, whole-grain
My Beverly Hills Kitchen (Hitz), 3.1

nasturtium pods, pickled: California capers
nasturtium salsa verde
National Academy of Sciences
National Association for the Specialty Food Trade
National Center for Home Food Preservation
National Gallery of Art, 1.1, 2.1
Natural History (Pliny the Elder)
Nature (Emerson)
nectarine(s) chutney
ultra-low-sugar white, compote
Negroni jelly
Nero, Emperor of Rome
Neruda, Pablo, itr.1, 1.1, 2.1, 3.1
Newsweek
Nicholson, Jack
Nin, Anaïs
nocino
Norman, Jill
Northwood; a Tale of New England (Hale)
Nostradamus, itr.1, 3.1, 3.2
Nostradamus's quince jelly
nuts
chunky cranberry jam with ginger and
nocino
pickled green almonds
walnuts in maple syrup and brandy

Ocean Spray company
"Oda al Tomate"/"Ode to Tomatoes" (Neruda)
Odas Elementales (*Elemental Odes*) (Neruda)

"Ode on a Grecian Urn" (Keats)
okra, roasted, with pimentón
olallieberry jam
Old Testament
olive oil cake
olives, duck with dried citrus and
"Olor Frutal" ("Fruitful Scent")[Ibarbourou]
On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen (McGee), itr.1, 2.1, 3.1
onion(s) agrodolce spring
  cocktail
  confiture
  dicing of
  salad
  sweet, relish
"On Mrs. Leyel's *The Gentle Art of Cookery*"
open-kettle technique
Oral History (Smith)
orange(s) kumquat marmalade with, zest and rum
  peel, candied, and orange syrup
Oranges (McPhee)
orgeat (almond milk)
Orwell, George
Oxford Companion to American Food and Drink, The (Smith, ed.)
Oxford Companion to Food (Davidson), 2.1, 4.1, 4.2
Oxford-cut grapefruit marmalade
Oxford English Dictionary, 1.1, 2.1
OXO Digital Food Scale

Packard, David
Paderewski, Ignace Jan
Palladius
pancetta, pasta with wild mushrooms, pickled ramps and
pan-roasted quail with grapes
Paradise Lost (Milton)
Paris, 3.1, 3.2
Park, Jung Sook, 3.1, 3.2

Parsons, Brad Thomas
passion fruit–peach jam
pasta, with wild mushrooms, pancetta, and pickled ramps
pastes guava, and guava jam
  guava, appetizers
  tomato
peach(es) berry–stone fruit jam
  chutney
  compote
  jam
  jam with champagne
  Lord Grey's, preserves
  –passion fruit jam
  spiced, butter
  in syrup
  white, halves in lavender syrup (cold pack)
  yellow, slices in tea syrup (hot pack)
Peacock, Scott, itr.1, 1.1
peak seasons by region
Peale, Charles Willson
Peale, Raphaelle
Peale, Rembrandt
Peale, Rubens
Peale, Titian
Peale, Titian Ramsey, II
pear(s) Asian, in ginger-lemongrass water
  jam
  piquant, with bay leaf and black pepper
  smooth, jam with cardamom
pectin, itr.1, 1.1
  cherry preserves made with powdered
  jam basics and
  jelly basics and
peel(s) candied orange, and orange syrup
  citrus, and dried citrus
  citrus syrups, cordials and preserved
  for marmalade

Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts
People magazine
pepper(s) dicing of
  pickled
  roasted red, relish
  spicy, relish
Pepper No. 30 (Weston)
Perry, Matthew
persimmon butter
Petrarch
Peychaud's bitters
pH range home canning and, itr.1, itr.2, itr.3, 1.1
  of some common foods
Physiology of Taste, The (Brillat-Savarin), 1.1, 3.1
"Picking Blackberries with a Friend Who Has Been Reading Jacques Lacan" (Hass)
pickled asparagus with tarragon and green garlic
  beets in apple-cider vinegar
  beets with star anise
  cardoons
  carrots, bistro style
  carrots, taquería style
  celery
  cherry olives
  eggs in Sriracha sauce
  green almonds
  green beans
  nasturtium pods (California capers)
  peppers
  piquant pears with bay leaf and black pepper
  purslane
  ramps, in apple-cider vinegar, Tennessee style
  ramps, pasta with wild mushrooms pancetta and
  ramps in white-wine vinegar, French style
  ramps with shaved ham and wild greens
pickles agrodolce spring onions
  basics of

bread-and-butter, 2.1, 2.2
brined baby turnips
brining basics for
cocktail onions
cornichons
cucumber dill spears and chips
curried cauliflower
fermented green beans
golden beets with ginger
kosher dill
leeks vinaigrette
Mrs. Dorsey Brown’s green tomato
roasted jalapeños *en escabeche*
roasted okra with pimentón
salad onions
salt used for
spices and
spicy sweet squash
storage of, itr.1, 2.1
“sunshine”
texture of
traditional spiced beets
vinegars used for
watermelon rind
zucchini dill spears
pie filling, cherry, or sour cherries in extra-light syrup
Pig and Pastry Pie Co.
pimentón (smoked paprika) roasted okra with
tomato jam with
Pincus, Alex, 3.1, 3.2
pineapple, caramelized, with tequila and saffron
pine cone syrup
pink marmalade
Pinot Noir cherry preserves with
fancy strawberry jam with
piquant pears with bay leaf and black pepper
Pisgah National Forest

Plagemann, Catherine
Plant Kingdoms of Charles Jones, The
Plato
Plimoth Plantation
Pliny the Elder, 1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
plum(s) burgundy, with rosemary
  cherry preserves with
  liqueur
  -mulberry jam
  sauce and plum jam
  tart, jam with mint
  see also damson plum
Plum Crazy (Mirel)
Plymouth cocktail
Poliquin, Nicole
“Politics and the English Language” (Orwell)
Pollan, Michael, itr.1, itr.2, 3.1, 3.2
pomelo (*Citrus maxima*)
Poussin, Nicolas
prepared horseradish
preserves(ed)
  berry basics for
  chili *ristras*
  damson conserve
  Lord Grey’s peach
  mandarin orange sections
  Mrs. Plagemann’s savory grapes
  onion confiture
  peels, citrus syrups, cordials and
  Pliny’s quince in honey
  whole preserved crab apples
  wild blueberry
preserves, cherry with alcohol (cherry ’shine)
  made with powdered pectin
  with Pinot Noir
  with plums
  with red currants

sour
sour, with mint and honey
preserves, strawberry
with balsamic vinegar and black pepper
with elderflower liqueur
preserving pans
pressure canning basics
Prince, Thane
Prometheus
pumpkin butter
purslane, pickled
Putting It Up with Honey (Geiskopf)
pyracantha
jelly

quail, pan-roasted, with grapes
quince Nostradamus's, jelly
Pliny's, in honey
ten-hour membrillo

Rabelais, François
raisins, brandied
ramp(s) "Hale Family Ramp Dig"
pasta with wild mushrooms, pancetta, and pickled
pickled, with shaved ham and wild greens
Tennessee style, in apple-cider vinegar
trivia
in white-wine vinegar, French style
Randolph, Mary, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1
raspberry(ies) jam
shrub
whole-fruit, jam
raspberry vinegar
rhubarb jam with rose geranium and
Ray, Rachael
Realm of Fig and Quince, The (Loohuizen)
reamers

Recipes from a Spanish Village (Aris)
Red Apple Farm
red currant(s) cherry preserves with
jelly
red wine, apple jelly with bay and
red wine syrup, whole figs in
red-wine vinegar
relish(es) basics of
chow-chow
confetti
corn
dill
fennel
roasted red pepper
snap bean
spicy pepper
sweet onion
Relman, David
Rembrandt van Rijn, 1.1, 2.1, 2.2
Rexroth, Kenneth
rhubarb jam with mescal
jam with rose geranium and raspberry vinegar
-strawberry jam
Richmond, Akasha
"Rich Spot of Earth, A": Thomas Jefferson's Revolutionary Garden at Monticello (Hatch)
Rime Sparse (Petrarch)
Ringer, Stephen
ristras, chili
road trips Greenvalley to Cass, W.Va.
Greenvalley to Johnson Hollow, Tenn., 1.1, 3.1
Greenvalley to Pisgah National Forest, N.C.
Greenvalley to Plymouth, Mass.
Greenvalley to Riverside, Calif.
Greenvalley to Three Rivers, Calif.
Greenvalley to Woodstock, N.Y.
Plymouth to East Sandwich, Mass.

roasted jalapeños *en escabeche*
roasted red pepper relish
rob, elderberry
Robbins, Jerome
Robbins, Tom
Robert Lambert condiments
“Robert Lambert: The Master’s Touch”
Rolling Stone magazine
Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone, The (Williams)
Root, Waverly, 1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2
rose geranium, rhubarb jam with raspberry vinegar and
rosemary, burgundy plums with
rosé wine, slow-cooked strawberry jam with
rum, kumquat marmalade with orange zest and

saffron, caramelized pineapple with tequila and
Saffron Imports
Sagan, Françoise
Saintsbury, George
salad onions
salmon, canned
salsa verde nasturtium
  with New Mexico green chilies
salt
  brining with
  -cured Meyer lemons
Sambal Oelek Ground Fresh Chili Paste
sandwiches carrot club
  hot ham-and-cheese
  kimchi grilled cheese
San Francisco Zen Center
Santa Fe Bar and Grill
Santa Monica Farmers Market, itr.1, itr.2, itr.3, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 4.1
Satires (Juvenal)
Satterfield, Carol, itr.1, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2
sauces barbecue
  heirloom tomato

nasturtium salsa verde
plum, and plum jam
salsa verde with New Mexico green chilies
sauerkraut
Saunders, William
savory crab apple jelly
Schork, Frank
scones, Scottish
Scotch marmalade
Scott, Robert Falcon
Scottish scones
scrumper’s reward
“Second Georgic” (Virgil), 2.1, epi.1
Secrets of Alexis of Piedmont
See Canyon Ranch
Serra, Junípero
Seventy-Five Receipts for Pastry, Cakes, and Sweetmeats (Leslie)
Seville orange marmalade
with bergamot
with lemon
Sewanee: The University of the South
Shakespeare, William, itr.1, 2.1, 3.1
Sharp, Bob, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3
Sharp, Thomas
Shenandoah Red Ware
sherry and malt vinegars
Sherwin, Cindy
Shiva, Vandana
shrubs apricot
raspberry
Shuldiner, Joseph
Silliker, Inc., laboratory
Simply Quince (Ghazarian)
Sin Gin Blueberry Jam
smash, lime
Smith, Andrew F.
Smith, Lee

smoky black tea, Black Mission fig jam with
snap bean relish
So Easy to Preserve (University of Georgia Cooperative Extension)
"Song of Solomon" (Bible)
Southern Cooking (Dull), 1.1, 3.1
Spencer, Barbara, itr.1, itr.2, *5*, 3.1
Spencer, Bill, itr.1, itr.2, *5*, 3.1
spices
spicy(ed); beets, traditional
  peach butter
  pepper relish
  sweet squash pickle
"Spring" (Hopkins)
spring recipes and lore
squash, spicy sweet pickled
Sriracha Hot Chili Sauce, 1.1, 3.1
Stalking the Wild Asparagus (Gibbons)
"Stalking the Wild Mulberry"
star anise, pickled beets with
Stark, C. M.
Stein, Gertrude
Steinbeck, John
Steingarten, Jeffrey
Sternberg, Scott
Stifler, Sarah, itr.1, 3.1
Still Life with Box of Jellied Fruit, Bread, Silver Salver, Glass, and Wine Cooler (Meléndez)
stone fruit–berry jam
storage of garlic
  of jams
  of pickles, itr.1, 2.1
  of relishes
strawberry(ies) -rhubarb jam
  strong marmalade
strawberry jam basic
  with Pinot Noir, fancy
  with rosé wine, slow-cooked

strawberry preserves
  with balsamic vinegar and black pepper
  with elderflower liqueur
Studio City Farmers Market
sugar
  historical role of
  jam basics and
  jelly basics and
  marmalade basics and
Sukkot, the Feast of Tabernacles
summer fruit cocktail
summer recipes and lore
summertime grilled chicken with tomato jam
Sun (London)
“sun-cooked” preserves
“sunshine” pickles
Sure-Jell pectin supplements
Surfas restaurant supply
Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History (Mintz), 1.1, 1.2
sweet onion relish
Swenson, Matthew
Syrah, Black Mission fig jam with
syrup(s) cherry pie filling, or sour cherries in extra-light
  citrus cordials, preserved peels and
  elderberry
  from fruit
  grenadine
  kumquats in burnt honey
  limeade
  orange, and candied orange peel
  peaches in
  pine cone
  preparing of
  white peaches in lavender (cold pack)
  whole figs in red wine
  wild blueberries in light
  yellow peach slices in tea (hot pack)

tacos, Kogi
Taco USA: How Mexican Food Conquered America (Arellano)
“Talking Turkey: The Literary Origins of the Thanksgiving Meal”
Taming the Truffle (Hall)
Tanis, David, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2
taquería style, pickled carrots
tarragon, pickled asparagus with green garlic and
Taylor, June, itr.1, itr.2, 1.1, 2.1
tea, jam with smoky black
tea syrup, yellow peach slices in (hot pack)
Teixeira, Art
Temps des Confitures, Le (Godard)
ten-hour membrillo
Tennessee style ramps in apple-cider vinegar
tequila, caramelized pineapple with saffron and
Thanksgiving holiday
“There Is a Garden in Her Face” (Campion)
“This Is Just to Say” (Williams)
Thoreau, Henry David, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
thrifty applesauce
Tibbets, Eliza, 4.1, 4.2
Tibbets, Luther, 4.1, 4.2
Time magazine
time-to-kill marmalade with blood oranges and Meyer lemons
toddy, lime
Toklas, Alice B.
Tolstoy, Leo, itr.1, 2.1
Tom (truffle dog)
tomato(es) acidity of
  broth
  for Canadian ketchup
  confit
  crushed
  heirloom sauce
  jam, summertime grilled chicken with
  jam with ginger and lime zest

jam with smoked paprika
paste
see also green tomato(es)
Tom's mixed-citrus marmalade
Toussaint-Samat, Maguelonne
Tower, Jeremiah
Troy and Sons Distillers
truffled fall fruit
Turner, Joseph
turnips, brined baby
Twain, Mark
Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair (Neruda), 1.1

ultra-low-sugar white nectarine or white peach compote
Uncle Willy (Houston)
Uncovering the New World Columbus Created (Mann)
Updike, John
USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning, itr.1

Valerie Confections
Valli, Frankie
vanilla extract
smooth apricot jam with maple and
Varnish cocktail bar
Vavilov, Nikolai
vegetables brining of, 2.1, 2.2
dicing of
Venerable Bede
Verrazano, Giovanni da
Victoria, Queen of England
Vignes, Jean-Louis
Vilux vinegars
vinaigrette, leeks
vin de pamplemousse
marmalade
vinegars
apple-cider, itr.1, 1.1, 2.1

balsamic, itr.1, 1.1
blackberry
champagne
distilled white
herb
raspberry
red-wine
for relishes
sherry and malt
white-wine, itr.1, 1.1
Virgil, itr.1, 1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 4.1, epi.1
Virginia Housewife, The (Randolph), 1.1, 1.2, 2.1
Visser, Margaret
Vivaldi, Antonio
vodka, citron

Wagner, Richard
walnuts in maple syrup and brandy
Warner, Cassandra
Washington, George, 1.1, 3.1
Washington State University Cooperative Extension
watermelon rind pickles
Waters, Alice, 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2
Webb, Bill, 2.1, 3.1
Webster, John
Weems, Parson
West, Fred, itr.1, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1
West, John R. (Papa), itr.1, itr.2, 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2
West, Mae
West, Mary Eloise (Gran), itr.1, itr.2, itr.3, itr.4, 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1
West Coast Cook Book (Brown), 1.1, 1.2
Weston, Edward
Wheelock, Arthur K., Jr.
White, Karen
“White Apples” (Hall)
white peach halves in lavender syrup (cold pack)

white vinegar, distilled
white-wine vinegar
  ramps in, French style
whole figs in red wine syrup
whole-fruit raspberry jam
whole-grain mustard
whole preserved crab apples
wild aromatics, brown turkey fig jam with honey and
wild blackberry(ies)
  molasses
wild blueberry(ies)
  in light syrup
  preserves
Wild Fermentation (Katz), 2.1, 3.1
wild greens, pickled ramps with shaved ham and
wild mushrooms, pasta with pancetta, pickled ramps and
Wiley Encyclopedia of Food Science and Technology
Williams, Tennessee
Williams, William Carlos
Wilson, C. Anne, 4.1, 4.2
Windrose Farm, 1.1, 3.1, 3.2
winter fruit cocktail: citrus sections in their own juice
winter recipes and lore
Witches of Eastwick, The (film)
Wolfert, Paula, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2
Wolfskill, William
Wonderful Food of Provence, The (*La véritable cuisine provençale et niçoise*)
  (Escudier), 3.1
Woods, John E.

yellow peach slices in tea syrup (hot pack)

Zarubin, Lora, 2.1, 4.1
Ziedrich, Linda, itr.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
Zingerman's gourmet emporium
zucchini dicing of
  dill spears

Zuckerman’s Farm

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A NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHOR

KEVIN WEST is from rural Blount County in eastern Tennessee. He attended Deep Springs, an experimental college in the White Mountains of California, and Sewanee: The University of the South. For thirteen years he was on staff at *W* magazine, with postings in New York, Paris, and Los Angeles, where he was West Coast editor and where he still lives. He runs the blog *Saving the Season;* writes about food, culture, and travel; and produces a retail collection of jams and marmalades. He is certified as a Master Food Preserver by the University of California Cooperative Extension.