PRESTO®
Test Kitchen

LET'S PRESERVE TOGETHER

PROVIDING GUIDANCE IN HOME FOOD PRESERVATION

Boiling Water Canning
Pressure Canning
Vacuum Sealing
Dehydrating

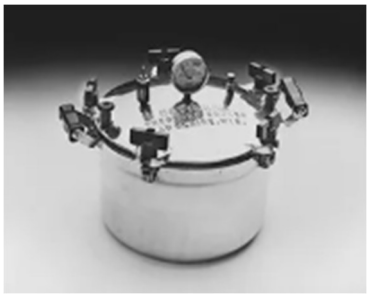
ISSUE NO. 6 - JULY, 2025

CANNERS – WHERE IT ALL BEGAN 120 YEARS AGO

National Presto Industries, Inc. has stood the test of time! It was founded in 1905 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin designing and manufacturing pressure canners (known at the time as "canner retorts") for commercial canneries. The company, originally called Northwestern Steel and Iron Works, was a major producer of fifty-gallon capacity pressure canners. Subsequently, the company also began production of thirty-gallon canners for hotel use and soon thereafter developed ten-gallon models suitable for home canning. The company installed an aluminum foundry in 1915 for the specific purpose of manufacturing large-size pressure canners for home use.

The business rapidly grew when the U.S. Department of Agriculture determined in 1917 that pressure canning was the only safe method for canning low acid foods without the risk of food poisoning. Soon after, the company decided to cater exclusively to the needs of the home market, rather than commercial business. The company marketed its products under the trade name "National" and became one of the largest manufacturers of cast aluminum cooking utensils in the world. To more closely identify with the now famous brand, in 1929 the company name changed to National Pressure Cooker Company. With its vast experience in manufacturing pressure canners and to more adequately meet the needs of the consumer, the company created the first saucepan-style pressure cooker in 1939 and gave it the brand name "Presto." This revolutionary pressure cooker eliminated cumbersome lug nuts and clamps and, instead, featured a rotating cover with a simple gasket sealing design that is still being used in modern day pressure cookers. The "Presto" Pressure Cooker was introduced at the 1939 New York World's Fair. It captured the attention of homemakers everywhere for saving time, vitamins, flavors, and fuel, and the Presto® brand soon became synonymous with pressure cooking.

Today, Presto continues to be a well-known company for pressure cooking and pressure canning appliances. We are proud to be able to have a relationship with University Extension Agents across the country, working together to provide necessary tools, assistance, and expertise to the canning community.



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QUESTION: **How do I store my dehydrated foods?**

ANSWER: Per NCHFP, dried foods are susceptible to insect contamination and moisture reabsorption and must be properly packaged and stored immediately. First, cool completely. Warm food causes sweating which could provide enough moisture for mold to grow. Pack foods into clean, dry, insect-proof containers as tightly as possible without crushing.

- Store dried foods in clean, dry home canning jars, plastic freezer containers with tight-fitting lids or in plastic freezer bags. Vacuum packaging is also a good option. Pack foods in amounts that can be used all at once. Each time a package is re-opened, the food is exposed to air and moisture that can lower the quality of the food and result in spoilage.
- Dried foods should be stored in cool, dry, dark areas. Recommended storage times for dried foods range from 4 months to 1 year. Because food quality is affected by heat, the storage temperature helps determine the length of storage; the higher the temperature, the shorter the storage time. Most dried fruits can be stored for 1 year at 60ºF, 6 months at 80ºF. Vegetables have about half the shelf-life of fruits.
- Foods that are packaged seemingly "bone dry" can spoil if moisture is reabsorbed during storage. Check dried foods frequently during storage to see if they are still dry. Glass containers are excellent for storage because any moisture that collects on the inside can be seen easily. Foods affected by moisture, but not spoiled, should be used immediately or re-dried and repackaged. Moldy foods should be discarded.
- Packaging and Storing Dried Foods - National Center for Home Food Preservation

QUESTION: **Can I can Ground Turkey?**

ANSWER: From NCHFP: The NCHFP does not have a process developed specifically for canning ground turkey. Ground turkey is approved for use **exclusively** in the **Spaghetti sauce with meat recipe.** This option does not appear in the USDA guidelines (last updated in 2015) because it was introduced after those revisions, so you will see this update in So Easy To Preserve and on our website, but not in the USDA guide. This is **NOT** a generalization that allows for other substitutions, like using the ground beef process for all ground turkey. **This is a recipe-specific allowance and should not be generalized.** NewsFlash | National Center for Home Food Preservation

QUESTION: **Why did my jars seal after canning, but then unseal during storage?**

ANSWER:

- Food was processed incorrectly (wrong method or insufficient processing time or pressure).
- Hairline cracks in jars permitted entry of spoilage organisms during storage.
- Tightening screw band after processing dislodged the seal.
- Loss of liquid during processing caused food particles to lodge on rim of jar.
- Thin or uneven layer of sealant on canning lid.

NOTE: ALL JARS THAT BECOME UNSEALED DURING STORAGE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED SPOILED AND DISCARDED.

QUESTION: **Why does fruit float to the top of jar when canning?**

ANSWER: Floating does not impact the quality of the food, but is caused by:

- Fruit was lighter than the syrup used for packing (use firm, ripe fruit and a light to medium syrup).
- Fruit was raw packed rather than hot packed. Raw fruit contains air that is released during heating.
- Fruit was packed too loosely (pack fruit as closely as possible without damaging it).

THANK YOU

We want to thank you for your interest and enthusiasm in this newsletter. Our mailing list continues to grow! The questions asked are excellent, and we encourage you to continue asking. Send your questions to Barb Milkert at bmilkert@gopresto.com so we can address them in a future issue.

SPOTLIGHT

Presto Customer Support

Presto Customer Support is comprised of a Team that works together to ensure the needs of our customers are met. This team is located "under the same roof" at our company headquarters in Eau Claire, WI.

Customer Service Department. We aren't the typical Call Center, but rather a Help Line for customers. We have a small staff of 7 knowledgeable Customer Service Representatives (CSR's) that are dedicated to providing excellent service and compassion to those who reach out for assistance. These 7 CSR's are knowledgeable of, and have personal experience using, Presto products. We have all current products physically in the office to help us better assist customers - see what they are seeing, troubleshooting, etc. On an annual basis, we handle approximately 30,000 in-coming phone calls, 30,000 in-coming emails, 1,000 chats. Presto has over 500 different models of products that are in operation today; this takes into consideration we have canners that go back to the 1940's! CSR's need to have a vast knowledge bank to be able to promptly assist callers. In addition, we have a Spanish-speaking representative. Our CSR's aren't just individuals on the "other end of the line", they are real individuals that use the products. They have a garden, grow vegetables and can foods, just like our customers.

Test Kitchen. We have an on-site Test Kitchen with 2 experts who have the training and skills to answer questions, provide recipes, troubleshoot difficult situations, and do hands-on testing of all Presto products. Our experts always offer NCHFP and Extension resources to customers who have food preservation questions. If you have a question, they will help find the answer! They also work cooperatively with Extension Agents and participate in committees to discuss issues, offer insight, share real-life customer experiences and questions. Our Test Kitchen experts provide routine canning trainings using both pressure canning and boiling water canning methods to our CSR's to help keep them current and ready to answer customer canning questions. In addition, they provide CSR's with training on all new products and how to properly and safely use them. Our Test Kitchen experts also offer canning classes to all Presto employees.

Quality Lab. We have a skilled team of individuals in our Quality Lab that strive to achieve a high level of product quality, as well as carefully reviewing customer situations and products when a problem is reported. They work directly with CSR's to help answer questions and resolve product issues customers are experiencing. This cooperation helps ensure our customers receive the quality service and experience for which Presto is known.

How to Contact Presto and Valuable Resources

PRESTO TEST KITCHEN – BARB MILKERT
715-839-2029 or bmilkert@gopresto.com

MASTER GAUGE/GAUGE TESTER INFORMATION – SHELLY
800-877-0441 or contact1@gopresto.com

PRESTO CUSTOMER SERVICE
800-877-0441 or contact@gopresto.com

WEBSITE: www.gopresto.com
FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/groups/prestodigitalcanner

FACS RESOURCES: www.gopresto.com/content/support/facs-resources (includes previous issues of this newsletter as well as a link to sign up to receive this newsletter)

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Enjoy a Cup of Tea?

If you enjoy a delicious cup of tea – why not use ingredients you grow and/or dry? You can dry leaves, flowers, stems, and seeds of herbs to get the exact taste you love. Herbs that can be used for tea include many varieties of mint, basil such as tulsi, lemon balm, chamomile, calendula, bee balm, lemon verbena, anise hyssop, lemongrass, red clover buds, raspberry leaves – plus many, many more to make your cup of tea taste just the way you like it. Combine flavors or use separately, either hot or iced. Experiment to find what you like best. You will find that the quality is much better than many commercial teas when you are in control!

Herbs and seeds that have been air-dried need to be treated to destroy any insects or insect eggs by heating the herbs or seeds at 160° F for 30 minutes. Avoid exposing the dried herbs to air, heat and light. Store in a cool, dry, dark place.

DRYING HERBS Drying your fresh herbs allows you to have a ready supply of economical herbs that are available to use all through the year. To retain the best flavor of your herbs, it is recommended that you dry them at the lowest temperature setting, 95°F (35°C).

SELECTION AND PREPARATION Pick herbs for drying just before the flowers first open. These herbs will be the most flavorful. The best time to pick herbs is in the early morning just after the dew has evaporated. Rinse leaves and stems in cool water to remove any dust or insects and then gently shake to remove excess water. Remove dead and bruised leaves or stems. Large leafed herbs, such as basil, sage, and mint, should be removed from their stems for faster drying. Smaller leafed herbs can be left on their stem and removed after drying. Placing the herbs on a mesh screen will help prevent them from falling through the grates in the tray during dehydration.

DETERMINING DRYNESS Herbs are acceptably dry when they are crispy and crumble easily. Refer to the Herb Drying Guide below and begin checking the herbs at the beginning of the average drying time range. Remove a few herbs from each dehydrator tray and allow to cool to room temperature. If the herbs do not crumble easily, re-check every hour.

PACKAGING AND STORAGE When the leaves are crispy dry and crumble easily between the fingers, they are ready to be packaged and stored. Place whole herbs or flowers in an airtight container and store in a cool, dry, dark area to protect the color and fragrance. Crumble the herbs when using to retain essential oils.

The Presto® Dehydro™ Digital Electric Dehydrator can be used for your dehydrating needs: Dehydro™ Digital Electric Food Dehydrator - Dehydrators - Presto®

HERB DRYING GUIDE

Dry herbs at 95°F or 35°C

Herb	Avg Drying Time	Herb	Avg Drying Time	Herb	Avg Drying Time
Basil leaves*	12-20 hours	Fennel	3-5 hours	Rosemary leaves	8-12 hours
Bay leaves	5-7 hours	Marjoram leaves	9-12 hours	Sage leaves	12-16 hours
Chives	9-15 hours	Mint leaves	9-14 hours	Tarragon leaves	5-7 hours
Cilantro leaves	6-8 hours	Oregano leaves	9-12 hours	Thyme leaves	4-6 hours
Dill leaves	3-5 hours	Parsley leaves	6-8 hours		

** break veins to speed drying*

STEP INTO PRESTO'S LEGACY AT THE CFMIT

Presto now has a dedicated history display at the Chippewa Falls Museum of Industry and Technology (CFMIT)! Our exhibit celebrates the legacy of Presto and the Chippewa Valley. It's a tribute to the innovation, craftsmanship, and community roots that define our company. If you are in the area, please be sure to stop by and check it out!

21 E Grand Avenue, Chippewa Falls, WI 715-720-9206 www.cfmit.org

REMINDER

CANNING SEASON IS HERE! If you haven't already, please send your master gauges or complete testing units in for an annual inspection to ensure you are ready to test your client's canner gauges! Instructions_v23-5871b.pdf