

FOOD PRESERVATION METHODS

There are a number of different ways to preserve food. Here are some of the main methods you might consider using.

ROOT CELLARING

Root cellars are typically in the basement of homes or buildings and are used for keeping foods at steady temperatures and humidity. In the winter, the food is kept from freezing and in the summer, the food is kept from spoiling in the heat.

FREEZING

For centuries, people depended on snow and ice if they wanted to freeze food to keep it from spoiling. In 1870, the first freezer was invented, although it never became incredibly popular until after WWII (1945). Most homes in developed countries have access to a small freezer as part of their refrigeration.

CANNING

The canning process involves sealing food in airtight containers. Canning became a proven method to preserve food in the early 1800s with the understanding that canning prevented microorganisms from contaminating the food once canned. The process changes the moisture, pH, or salinity levels to protect against microbes, bacteria, mold, and yeast. Canned foods can often stay on shelves for one to two years.

PICKLING

This may be one of the most ancient methods for preserving food. Pickling is the process of expanding the lifespan of food by either fermentation in brine (solution of salt in water) or immersion in vinegar. The resulting food is called a pickle, or, to avoid confusion, is referred to as being "pickled."

DRYING

Removing water from food to inhibit bacterial growth in food is the food preservation process known as drying. This method has been used throughout history, but, in more recent years, solar or electric food dehydrators are used to speed the drying process and dry food in even the most humid conditions. Dried food, if stored properly, can be kept indefinitely.



SMOKING

The process of burning or smoldering plants in order to flavor, cook, or preserve food is known as smoking. A variety of woods such as mesquite, hickory, oak, maple, and some fruit trees are used for smoking. The smoking method kills certain bacteria and slows down the growth of others. It prevents fats from becoming rancid and prevents mold from forming. It extends the shelf life of the product. Smoking is most known for its smell and the way it flavours meats.

It is important to understand the advantages and disadvantages of each food preservation method, as well as which methods are best used for different foods.

