

Preserving the Harvest

LEARNING RECAP

- Specialty crops like fruits, vegetables, herbs, and nuts can be preserved using methods like freezing, canning, drying, pickling, fermenting, salting, smoking, and seed saving to enjoy year-round.
- Preservation connects seasonality, food science, and local food systems, helping reduce waste and keep communities healthy.
- Learning preservation skills keeps traditional practices alive, teaches practical food skills, and helps youth appreciate the journey from farm to table.

AT HOME ACTIVITIES

Save Seeds from Your Favorite Crop

- Choose a fruit, vegetable, or herb you've eaten recently. With an adult, carefully remove the seeds, clean and dry them, and store them in a labeled envelope or small container. Talk about how saving seeds can help you grow new plants next season and keep favorite crops available year-round.

Try a Simple Preservation Method

- Pick a small batch of fruit, vegetables, or herbs and try preserving it at home with an adult. You could freeze berries, dry herbs, or make a small jar of pickles or jam. Observe the changes, taste your creation, and talk about how preservation keeps food safe and fresh.

FUN FACTS

- West Virginia's food preservation history is rooted in necessity, using smoking, drying, and pickling to survive harsh winters.
- "Leather Britches" is a traditional Appalachian method of preserving green beans by stringing them and drying them until they become tough, brown, and leathery.
- Root cellars keep vegetables fresh for months by using the cool, humid underground and good airflow to stop them from spoiling.
- During the 1940s, families joined the "Victory Garden" effort, canning their homegrown fruits, vegetables, and jams in glass jars to save food, stretch rations, and support the war effort.