









The Travelling Jar

PRESERVING GUIDE
for the local food lover



To eat local
all year
long



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LET'S GO BACK A BIT

The days of our grandparent,s holiday oranges seem long gone, considered exotic rarities and practically put under the tree! Just 50 years ago, our diet was dictated by the capricious seasons of our harsh northern climate.

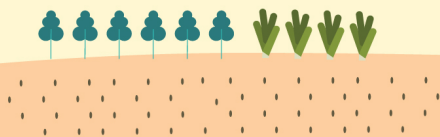
A reality quickly forgotten now that many fruits and vegetables are available year-round, from farms here and abroad. And yet, local (and 4-season!) food is a key issue of our time, one that will determine the resilience of tomorrow!

And yes, homegrown agriculture is one of our beautiful province's assets, spoiling us with its abundance despite a seemingly never-ending winter!

And why not prolong the enjoyment throughout the year?

Buying local, in the kitchen and beyond, means supporting a dynamic economic fabric across the country. It's also a tribute to the passionate people who bring our land to life. And it's a good deed for the planet, since it avoids food waste, pollution linked to transport and storage, and much more.

It's time to roll up our sleeves! The harvest season is in full swing, and we're going to try to make its generosity last all year long in our pantries! Arm yourself with this guide to (re)discover simple preservation techniques that celebrate produce grown right here on your doorstep!





FREEZING



THE METHOD IN A NUTSHELL

A popular home preservation technique, freezing helps you keep food fresh for up to several months in just a few simple steps. Organization and patience are essential if you don't want to fall into the method's lesser-known traps.

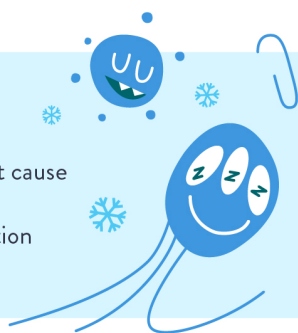


Store for:
1 week to
several months



How does it work?

- Water found in the food transforms into ice
- The cold slows down the chemical reactions that cause the foods to degrade
- The bacteria found in the foods go into hibernation (they don't die!)



PROPER FREEZING

Vegetables

Fresh vegetables continue to spoil (even frozen!) because of the enzymes they contain. **Blanch your vegetables** to deactivate the enzymes and guarantee preserving for up to 3 months without affecting their taste or texture.

How? By steaming them for a few minutes, followed by a very cold bath to halt the cooking process.



Fruits



There's no need to blanch fruit! Make sure to give them a good wash and dry them thoroughly. Cut them to lay them flat on a plate in the freezer, before storing them in a suitable container.





SERVING FROZEN FOODS

- Release as much air as you can from your freezer bags to limit the damage (such as freezer burn) to foods.
- Use tight containers, less susceptible to letting humidity in.
- Avoid freezing in their original packaging, rarely made for this usage.

Frozen foods don't keep indefinitely!

Write the contents and date on your container and refer to MAPAQ's thermoguide for recommended freezing times by food (new potatoes have a surprise in store!).



DEFROSTING FOODS



To properly thaw your food, patience is key! Defrosting at room temperature isn't recommended because it encourages the proliferation of bacteria, which will multiply between 4° and 60° C. Do not leave your container on the counter if you don't want to risk contaminating your meals!



So how, then? Place your containers in the fridge at a temperature between 0° and 4° C, ideal for safe defrosting.

Tip! To speed up the process, submerge the still-packaged food in a bowl of very cold water and place in the fridge.



Let's demystify! Microwave defrosting can be safe if the food is cooked immediately.





DEHYDRATION

THE METHOD IN A NUTSHELL

Less popular is a preserving method familiar to outdoor enthusiasts known as dehydrating, which makes almost any food easily storable and transportable! The good news is that it can easily be made at home using an oven or microwave!



Store for:
4 months to
1 year

How does it work?

- The water in food evaporates, leaving only 5-20%.
- Bacteria suffocate and have no place to grow!
The lower the humidity, the less likely they are to survive.



PROPER DEHYDRATION

Whichever appliance you use, you need to wash and dry your food, then cut it into thin slices 1 to 5 mm thick. Use a mandolin if you have one.

Dehydrator

It's the easiest and most efficient way to dehydrate, since it's self-contained and uses less energy than a large oven. Refer to a recipe or your appliance's instructions to find out the correct cooking time for your preparation.

Oven

Heat at low temperature, leaving the door slightly open to allow moisture to escape. Drying time is long so make sure you can keep an eye on your oven until the end.

Microwave

Use the defrosting function keeping an eye on the food to make sure it doesn't cook. This technique works well for small quantities and allows you to dehydrate things like fresh herbs in just 2 or 3 minutes!

PROPERLY PRESERVING YOUR DEHYDRATED FOOD



- Let your food cool completely before packing to prevent condensation and mould!



- Store dehydrated food in closed containers (in glass jars, bags or hermetically sealed containers) to limit contact with oxygen, great destroyer of foods!

REHYDRATE YOUR FOOD

Since it's all about restoring water to your food, all you have to do is soak it!

You can use a bowl of water in the fridge for a few hours (or overnight), or incorporate your dehydrated food directly into recipes that contain a lot of water: soups, broths, sauces, etc.

As you can imagine, the texture of rehydrated food is very different from that of fresh food! To discover these new flavours, you can mix in a food in its different forms within the same recipe and set off on a culinary exploration!



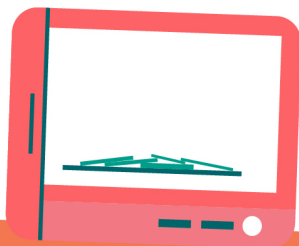
Apple muesli with
fresh and dried
apples



Tomato pasta
with fresh and dried
tomatoes à la
Mediterranean



Mushroom soup,
dried leek powder
and fresh broccoli





CANNING

THE METHOD IN A NUTSHELL

An ancestral method, canning leaves no one indifferent, and everyone has their own (family) formula for it! Sometimes considered dangerous, it's remains preferred by past generations for stocking the winter pantry!



Store for:

+ 1 year(s) at room temperature

How does it work?

- Cooked food undergoes a heat treatment that stops the growth of bacteria and other food-destroyin microorganisms.
- The contents are protected from oxygen through hermetic sealing.



Always follow a recipe that will indicate the safe way to apply the correct cook times and temperatures. This is the surest way to stay clear of Clostridium Botulinum, the bacterium responsible for botulism, which loves oxygen-free environments (like in canning!) and can be deadly!

Visit the *Bernardin* or *Ricardo* websites for detailed steps and certified recipes.



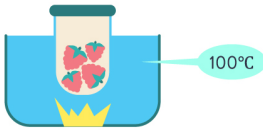
PROPER CANNING!

to can properly, **you need to know the pH of your food**, which will determine the heat treatment needed to make your preparation safe.

Acidic foods (pH < 4.6)

Meaning: fruits, jams, jellies, marinades, vinaigrettes, brines, etc.

Acidity naturally inhibits the growth of bacteria, so use household vinegar! Heat treatment doesn't have to be too aggressive: 100°C is the boiling temperature of water! It's...



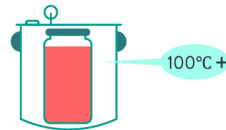
Pasteurization!

How? In a bain-marie, i.e., by submerging some of your jars in a boiling water bath for a few minutes.

Basic foods (pH > 4.6)

Meaning: vegetables, meats, soups, stews, fish, seafood, etc.

While acidity is the enemy of bacteria, basic mixtures are fertile ground for the development of many undesirable organisms. Aggressive heat treatment is thus required to ensure safe canning. It's...



Sterilization!

How? With an autoclave, which uses pressure to raise the temperature above the water's boiling point (100°C!) and keep it there.

What do we do for a neutral pH? Tomato sauces (without meat!) are well known for often straddling the line between acidic and basic pH. Some lemon or vinegar can be used to add acidity to recipes, as long as no meat, fish or other (very) soft foods are added.

For more information, refer to the MAPAQ food pH list!



READY, SET, CAN

01/
Wash jars
and lid rings



02/
Pre-sterilize your jars by placing them in simmering water (82°C) on a stand so that they aren't in contact with the bottom of the pot.

03/
Heat the lids always news
in the same pot.



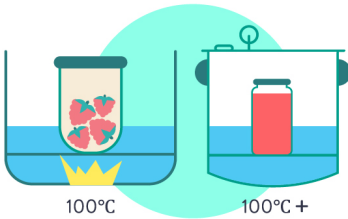
04/
Pour your mixture into the jars leaving room at the neck:
- *Low-acid foods* = 2.5 cm
- *Fruit, pickles, tomatoes, chutney and relish* = 1 cm
- *Jams and jellies* = 0.5 cm.

05/
Remove any air bubbles in your jars by running a non-metallic utensil around the edges. Add liquid as needed and wipe down jar rims.



06/
Center the lids and screw on the ring until resistance, not more, because oxygen must be able to escape.

07/ Place the jars on a stand in a pot or autoclave. Add about 2.5 cm of water unless the autoclave or similar product has instructions indicating otherwise.



08/ Follow the appropriate heat treatment method for your recipe.

After the treatment, **wait 5 minutes** before removing the jars while being careful not to tilt them. **Let the jars cool for 24 h** without tightening the rings to allow oxygen to escape.

09/



10/

Assurez-vous que le scellage est hermétique en pressant le centre du couvercle (aucun 'pop' ne doit être entendu).



11/

Store labelled jars in a cool, dark place.





LACTO-FERMENTATION

THE METHOD IN A NUTSHELL

Practised for thousands of years in Asia, this ancestral method has had a seat at our table for several generations. Simply using a jar, water and salt, you encourage the growth of beneficial bacteria—lactic acid bacteria—which naturally transform your vegetables into pickled versions. Invitation to cook and travel!



Store for:
+ 1 year at room temperature

How does it work?

- Pack the vegetables in a jar with water and salt.
- Remaining oxygen will be consumed by the still-living cells of the vegetables.
- In the absence of oxygen, the lactic acid bacteria found on the vegetables become active, multiply and convert the sugars into lactic acid.
- Lactic acid lowers the pH, creating an acidic environment that prevents the growth of harmful microorganisms.
- The vegetables are preserved, and their flavour develops over time.
- Once fermentation is complete, lacto-fermented vegetables can be eaten immediately or stored for months or even years!



PROPER LACTO-FERMENTATION — FOR SUCCESSFUL FERMENTATION:

- Choose fresh, clean, quality vegetables and cut them into pieces or thin slices.
- Pack the vegetables into a glass jar to eliminate air pockets.
- Make sure that the vegetables stay submerged in the fermenting liquid by using a weight (saltwater pebble, glass, bag filled with water, cabbage leaf).
- Cover the vegetables with filtered or non-chlorinated water mixed with salt and close the jar.
- Place the jar at room temperature, away from direct light.
- After three weeks, you'll have delicious, colourful, crisp, tangy-tasting vegetables, just like a marinade!

How much salt?

Calculate 2% of salt in relation to the weight of the food to be fermented. Here's an example for a 1-litre jar: **3 cups of vegetables** (550 g), **1 tablespoon of salt** (16 g), **1 cup of water** (250 g).



What about salt?

Salt promotes the growth of lactic acid bacteria over harmful microorganisms. It also helps to preserve the texture of vegetables and prevent spoiling. Knowing that iodine can prevent fermentation, choose a non-iodized salt (read the ingredients!).

Lactic = milk? Not at all!

The first time we discovered these bacteria capable of transforming sugar into acid, it was in dairy products... so we called them lactic bacteria. Good for your health, they are behind many of the foods we eat every day: cheese, milk, sausage, yogurt and even vinegar!



BEWARE, IT'S ALIVE! - MAINTENANCE REQUIRED DURING THE FERMENTATION PERIOD:

- If you use a Mason jar, be sure to release the pressure built up in the jar daily to prevent it from bursting. The "clip-on" jars do it all by themselves.
- Place the lacto-fermentation jar in a larger container to collect any overflowing liquid.



- If you detect mould—spots or fluffy formations (white, blue, green or black)—remove it immediately, place the jar in the refrigerator and eat it sooner.



- Fermentation time is about three weeks at room temperature... during that time, gas bubbles form, the water becomes cloudy, a white deposit forms at the bottom of the jar, and that's exactly what we want!
 - For a long-term storage, place the jar in a cool, dark and dry place until consumed (fridge, basement, cold room).
- If this is your first try, feel free to open the jar and taste as you go! Just be sure to place the jar in the fridge once you're satisfied and eat it sooner.

TREAT YOURSELF TO A TASTE JOURNEY WITH THESE HOMEGROWN VEGETABLES!



Crunchy cucumbers... like in Eastern Europe! Choose very small field cucumbers, fresh daily and add garlic.



Any colour cauliflower! Cut it into florets and add any spices you like. And... why not some beets for a nice pink colour!



Beans for the appetizer! Place small yellow or green beans in a jar and add dill, garlic and chili to taste.

PREPARE FOR WINTER IN SUMMER

Despite a short warm season and winter conditions that don't favour the annualization of crops, our land has a lot to offer!

In fact, our land is incredibly generous when it comes to the abundance and diversity of foods it has to offer! Small and large fruits, sunshine vegetables and herbs of all kinds coexist with squash, tubers, autumn roots and other hardy winter greens.

And even if the harvest season is short, it comes at just the right time, when the beautiful summer days give way to the mild autumn weather.

As the days get shorter and the abundance of local produce draws to a close, it's time to stock up! Invite your friends over, mobilize your family, knock on your neighbours' doors: an afternoon of preserving will go by faster in good company!

There are plenty of recipes for preserving the taste of summer for a long time to come! Let's you inspire by our recipes on the website *The travelling jar* — Fonds Éco IGA.



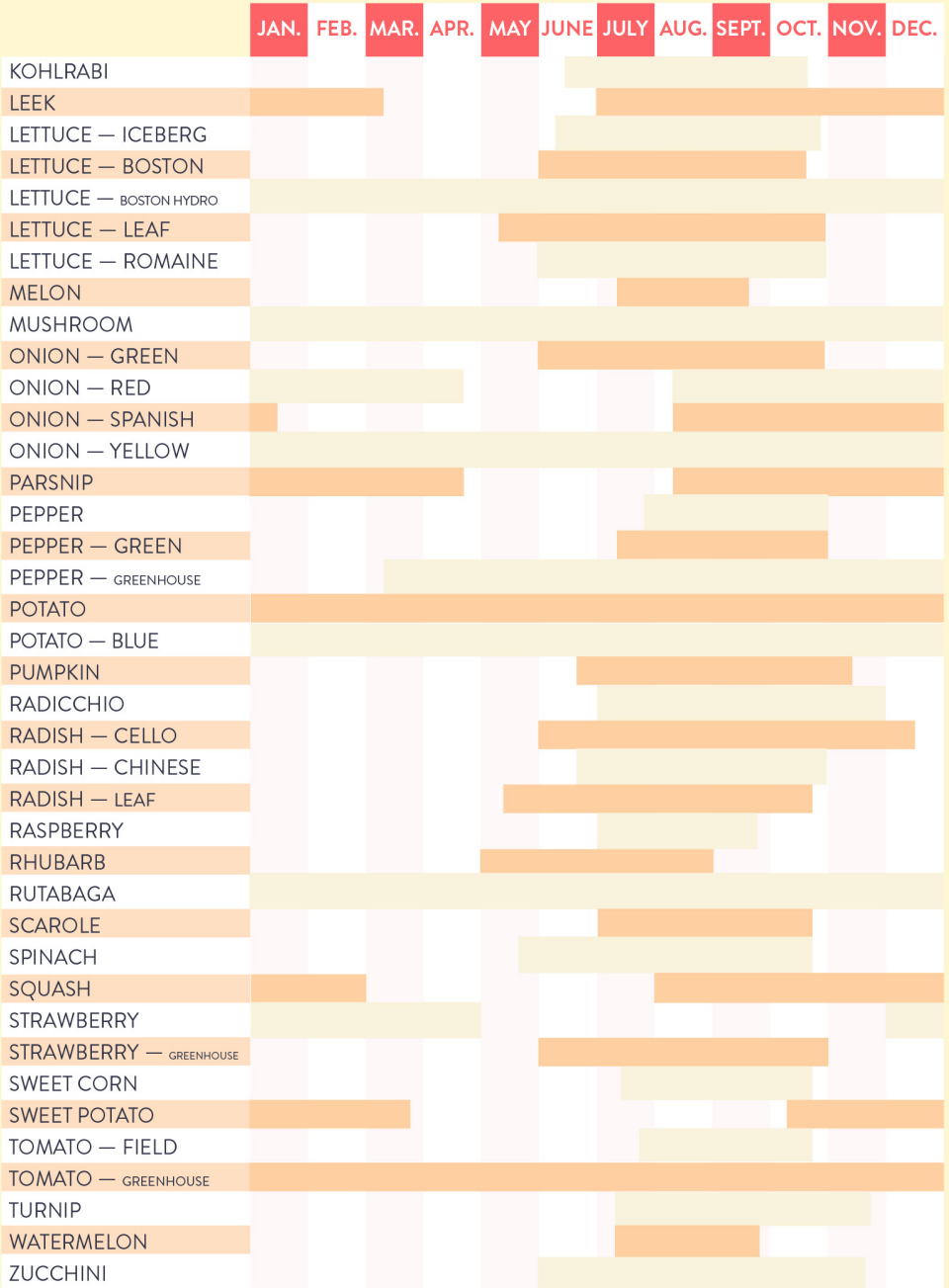
Here in Quebec! Find the “Espace Québec” zone in your IGA to quickly identify local products!
Don't hesitate to ask about the provenance of your foods if they aren't indicated on the product.



FRUITS AND VEGETABLES CALENDAR



	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APR.	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.
APPLE												
ARTICHOKE												
ASPARAGUS												
BEANS												
BEEF												
BLACKBERRY												
BLUEBERRY												
BROCOLI												
BRUSSELS SPROUTS												
CABBAGE — BOK CHOY												
CABBAGE — CHINESE												
CABBAGE — GREEN												
CABBAGE — NAPPA												
CABBAGE — RED												
CABBAGE — SAVOY												
CARROT												
CARROT — COLOURED, IN LEAVES												
CARROT — JUMBO/CELLO												
CARROT — NANTES												
CAULIFLOWER												
CAULIFLOWER — COLOURED												
CELERIAC												
CELERIY												
CHARD												
CHICORY												
CRANBERRY												
CUCUMBER — GREENHOUSE												
CUCUMBER — FIELD												
EGGPLANT												
ENDIVE												
FENNEL												
FRENCH SHALLOT												
FRESH PICKEL												
GARLIC												
GARLIC FLOWER												
GROUNDCHERRY												
HASKAP BERRY												
HERBS												
HOT PEPPER												
KALE												



SOURCES

FREEZING

Julie Schwob. *Encyclopédie pour tout conserver – Congélation, fermentation, déshydratation, confitures*. Paris, Flammarion, 2018

MAPAQ : *Thermoguide*

MAPAQ : *Defrosting*

RICARDO : *Congélation 101*

DEHYDRATION

Claudia Lorenz-Ladener. *Sécher et déshydrater ses aliments : fruits, légumes, plantes aromatiques, champignons... Autonomie et santé retrouvées*. Paris, Ulmer, 2019

Odile Dumais. *La gastronomie en plein air*. Éd. Québec Amérique, 2015

RICARDO : *Fruits séchés, confits, et compagnie*

CANNING

Judi Kingry et Lanren Devine. *Le grand livre des conserves – 400 recettes délicieuses et originales*. Québec, Ed. de l'Homme, 2021

Bernardin : *Guide pratique*

Institut Pasteur : *Botulisme : informations et traitements*

MAPAQ : *pH approximatif de divers produits alimentaires*

RICARDO : *Petit guide de la mise en conserve*

LACTO-FERMENTATION

Myriam Au tour du pot - conserverie mobile



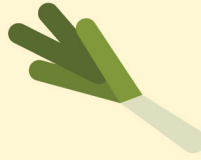
YOUR TURN TO PLAY!

You now have everything you need to start preserving Quebec fruits and vegetables!

Practice eating local year-round and join the movement by participating in Canned Food Day, the Sunday before Thanksgiving!

food preservation day





Find all of our tips and tricks
on preserving at lavireebocal.org



The Travelling Jar



This campaign to raise awareness of local produce preserving is made possible by the Fonds Éco IGA, a collaboration between Earth Day Canada and IGA merchants across Quebec and New Brunswick.

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