

Urban Prepping: How To Plan Your Fall Canning

You have to love autumn. The leaves are changing, the air is cooling down, and the joy of the holiday season is right around the corner.

Fall is also a time to do your canning in preparation for winter. Now, if you live on a farm, you have to harvest what you have and can it, but if you're an urban prepper who has to buy produce, then you have to plan a little better.

Unlike a farm garden that likely provides months, if not years, of food, urban preppers have to decide how much food will be necessary to get through the winter.

Then they have to decide how much you need to can based on how much space you have, how much money you have to spend on produce, how much time you have, and how much you want to invest in store-bought goods.

Then of course, you have to figure out what's available.

So, let's talk a little about what you need to do to optimize your fall canning plan.

[These Are The Ingenious Recipes That Helped Our Ancestors Stay Alive!](#)

Determine What's Available

This is the first step that you need to take before making any kind of plans at all. Are you planning on making blueberry pie filling or strawberry jam? If so, you're out of luck if you're planning on sourcing your produce locally. Both of those are spring and summer crops and are already done for the season.

Blueberries peak in the spring in Florida, so I can't find them locally now. Even though strawberries grow in some places as late as November, they're a summer fruit and peak season for them is May and June, so you may have problems finding them locally. My point is to keep an eye on the seasons for the produce that you want to can.

A Guide to Fall Food

By APAGE

It's hard to say **goodbye** to the fresh flavors of summer, but **autumn** ushers in a **wealth** of **healthy** and **tasty** seasonal foods as well.

PUMPKIN

THE BENEFITS

Pumpkin has become synonymous with autumn, which is great, considering the nutritional benefits.

- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Vitamin A**- Aids growth and development
- Folate**- Boosts cell renewal and fetal development



DIET TIP

You can buy pumpkin canned or you can roast it yourself. Try pumpkin brique or pumpkin squash risotto for a taste of fall.



SQUASH

THE BENEFITS

Squash come in all shapes and varieties (pumpkins, in fact, are a form of squash). Depending on the type, squash is an excellent source of:

- Vitamin A**- Aids growth and development
- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Potassium**- Good for blood pressure and muscle performance
- Fiber**- Aids digestion



DIET TIP

Choose a squash that feels heavy for its size. The skin should be thick and hard without blemishes. Squash is excellent by itself, or eaten in salads, soups or pilafs.



RUTABAGA

THE BENEFITS

They are not much to look at, but rutabagas are an excellent source of:

- Vitamin A**- Aids growth and development
- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Fiber**- Aids digestion
- Potassium**- Good for blood pressure and muscle performance



DIET TIP

Look for a rutabaga with smooth, thick skin. It should feel heavy for its size. They pair up well with strongly flavored meats, such as lamb or beef stew.



SWEET POTATOES

THE BENEFITS

These sweet autumn gems are wonderful sources of:

- Vitamin A**- Aids growth and development
- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Vitamin B-6**- Maintains healthy brain function and mood regulation
- Copper**- Maintains red blood cell and bone health



DIET TIP

Look for sweet potatoes that are firm, with tapered ends. Avoid potatoes with blemishes or signs of decay. They can be eaten in many ways including casseroles, baked chips and soups.



BEETS

THE BENEFITS

Beets are an underrated root vegetable which are a great source of:

- Folate**- Boosts cell renewal and fetal development
- Potassium**- Good for blood pressure and muscle performance
- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Betaine**- Aids cardiovascular health



DIET TIP

Beets are very versatile in sweet or savory dishes. Raw or roasted beets can be added to a lot of dishes and can take the spotlight in vegetarian entrees.



APPLES

THE BENEFITS

Apples might not be only a classic fall activity, but the fruits of your labor are packed with these nutrients:

- Fiber**- Aids digestion
- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Potassium**- Good for blood pressure and muscle performance



DIET TIP

Apples are excellent by themselves or baked. Different varieties are ideal for different uses. Gala apples are good for appearance and Jonathan apples are good for baking.



CLEMENTINES

THE BENEFITS

A refreshing citrus flavor is a welcome addition to the fall food list, and they're also an excellent source of:

- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Fiber**- Aids digestion
- Folate**- Boosts cell renewal and fetal development



DIET TIP

These mini oranges are easy to grab for an on-the-go snack. They can be used to complement pork dishes.



CRANBERRIES

THE BENEFITS

This pretty little berry is an excellent source of:

- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Fiber**- Aids digestion
- Manganese**- Good for bone health
- Vitamin K**- Aids blood coagulation



DIET TIP

Unless you are prepared for a mouthful of sour, avoid eating them raw. Look for cranberries that are shiny and not shriveled. They taste great in baked goods.



PEARS

THE BENEFITS

This sweet and nutritious fruit is an excellent source of:

- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Fiber**- Aids digestion
- Vitamin K**- Aids blood coagulation



DIET TIP

Pear varieties will vary slightly in color, but all pears should give a little when you squeeze them. Pears are great accompaniments to salads and are very good roasted or poached.



POMEGRANATES

THE BENEFITS

Pomegranate juice has enjoyed a rise in popularity in recent years, but its seeds are an overlooked source of:

- Vitamin C**- Helps antioxidant function and iron absorption
- Iron**- Aids hemoglobin formation
- Vitamin B-6**- Maintains healthy brain function and mood regulation



DIET TIP

Select a pomegranate that is heavy for its size and very plump. The top should be slightly soft when pressed and the skin should shine. Use the juice to flavor soups and desserts and add the seeds to salads.



Sources: <http://www.healthcentral.com/diet-exercise/cf/slideshows/10-healthy-fall-foods/pumpkin/>

HealthCentral

Prioritize

As awesome as it would be to have unlimited space to store canned goods and unlimited funds to buy the produce, that's not the reality for most of us. So, we have to decide what you want to can and what you're willing to buy.

I would suggest making a list of foods that you eat the most during the winter months. Spaghetti, salsa, jalapeno peppers, pickles, vegetable or vegetable beef soup. Apple pies, apple sauce, strawberry jelly. Green beans, chili. Choose what you eat the most. Then decide how often you eat them.

Say you eat spaghetti once a week and there are four people in your family. You need at least a pint, if not a quart, or sauce for each time. It's easy to figure – do you use the whole jar of Prego when you make spaghetti? If so, you use a quart.

Now, knowing that, go through and organize the foods you eat the most and figure out how much of them you need to get you through three months, six months, and a year.

Now that you know that eat a quart of spaghetti sauce a week, that's four a month, which means 12 quarts in 3 months, 24 quarts in 6 months, and 48 quarts in a year. Remember that this is planning to eat it every single week. If there's a pretty decent likelihood that you'll skip a week here and there, then dial those numbers back by a few jars.

Now do the same with each of your top foods. And don't forget the apple pie filling. As a matter of fact, include enough to give away few jars at Christmas! J

After you know what and how much you eat, it's time to do a space analysis. Do you have enough space to store all of that for the amount of time that you want to cover? If not, it's time to do two things. First, pick the ones that you

absolutely want to can.

Maybe you have a favorite peach crisp recipe and store-bought peaches just won't do. Nor, for that matter, is it easy to find canned [peach pie filling](#). You have to buy canned peaches and it's just not the same. Maybe you can't stand the taste of mushy store-bought green beans. Put these must-have items at the top of your list.

Now that you've pared down the list, you have two options. You can make enough of those favorite items to get you through till next fall, or you can pick some items off of the non-must-have list to fill in some spaces to get you through a shorter time period. This is a good plan if you're stocking up for a set amount of time, for instance, you want to have three months of food stockpiled.

Finally, you need to go through the non-essential list and decide which items are cheaper to buy at the store. I do love home-canned green beans, but unless they're on your must-have list, I'd buy them at the store. It's cheaper, especially if you [use coupons](#), and it's more efficient for you. It leaves you time to peel all those apples or blanch the tomatoes.

That's one of the primary skills that you need to develop as an urban prepper – the value of store-bought over home-canned. You have limited space and, unfortunately, can't grow thirty tomato plants for \$20 like a rural prepper can so you have to take cost into consideration. That's going to vary by location; for instance, I can buy cheap citrus fruits and strawberries dirt cheap because they're grown right here.

Most of the non-citrus tree fruits, on the other hand – peaches, apricots, apples, cherries – are crazy expensive because they don't grow down here.

Personally, I always choose to can tomatoes and apples if I can find them in bulk (sort of) at one of my local farmers markets because tomatoes are versatile – soups, sauces, salsas

– and apples are expensive.

I also can [entire meals in a jar](#), including vegetable soup, so that all I have to do is pour it in a pan and heat it up on nights that I don't feel like cooking. As a matter of fact, a lot of my canned goods are either ready to eat or close enough.

Source

Now that you have an idea of what you want to can and what's in season, you need to find a source. Honestly, I found my favorite two farmers markets and my U-Pick blueberry/strawberry farm on Facebook and by Googling "farmers markets near me." A lot of times, you can also find them under community events if you go to your town's website.

Look around at other towns that are within driving distance. If you live in a city but more rural places are within an easy drive, search those places too. It's a guarantee that food is going to be cheaper at rural, local farmers markets. And you may find a food co-op, too. Score!

Finally, the best source of organic, safe food is ... you. Do some [container gardening](#). You'd be surprised by how many tomatoes you can grow right on your porch or balcony, and strawberry hangers are adorable. Plus, that's basically free food.

[Urban prepping](#) is tough – a lot tougher than being a country prepper. I know, because I've been both. I worked harder when I lived on the farm, but I was also in better shape and had a real sense of accomplishment every time I popped open a jar of jam or sliced up a fresh jalapeno pepper for my homemade salsa. And those fresh eggs and milk!

But, that's not my life right now, so I, like you, do the best I can to eat healthy foods and prepare myself for emergencies

given my current living arrangements. And I look at it this way – I've learned a ton because I've had to be resourceful, and even when I make it back to the country, I won't be doing things the way I used to! Raised beds, container gardening – yeah, those tricks are going with me for sure!



The One Thing **TO DO NOW** To Terminate Your Store-Bought Dependency!

[Watch Video>>](#)

Good luck with your fall canning and if you have any questions or comments, please share in the comments section below.

*This article has been written by **Theresa Crouse** for **Survivopedia**.*