

Grandma's Spiced Peach Jam and Her Recipe Box

One of my most treasured items is my Grandmother's recipe box. Grandma passed away in 2010, after my Grandfather in 2008 and I miss them both so much. When the box was given to me, I loved it instantly. As I went through the recipes, I noticed that they are mostly beef and gelatin recipes. Who knew one could have so many different recipes for meatloaf??? I was shocked! It was surely a sign of the times that they lived in. Beef and gelatin recipes were big in the 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s. I also remember being told that my Grandfather refused to ever eat fish again after his time spent on ship as a young man in the US Army. It took some time to cross the ocean to fight in World War 2 and then return home the same way. Given supplies weren't what they are now, they ate a lot of fish, A LOT. \ As most men did back in those times, he was the head of the household and often was the "decider" on what meals would be eaten in the house. There were some recipes that snuck into the box in later years such as, shrimp dip and tuna noodle casserole, but that was it. Not many vegetable recipes were found in the box either, as he was a meat and potato kind of man. I found that quite interesting as he was a 2nd generation, full blooded Swedish farm boy from South Dakota. Likely, he grew up with the pickled herring and creamed herring, so I don't blame him for that. I've tried it and it definitely takes a well-trained palate to appreciate it. (Tried once and checked that off the bucket list). But, as you should know, the Greatest Generation also grew up in the depression. Food was scarce and what they had, they had to make the most use of and stretched it to last through the winter. Canning was a life saving solution in most families.

As a child, I remember seeing all of Granma's filled jars lined up on shelves in the basement, right in between the washing machine and Grandpa's work bench. (*Funny how I can remember those specifics, but I forgot what it was that I went to the pantry to get, just a minute ago.*) Of those jarring recipes I've acquired, some stood out to me, in particular: "Watermelon Pickles". Which it was interesting to me, as it happens to have come from my Swedish, Great Grandmother. It consists of cut watermelon, vinegar, brown sugar, salt and cinnamon. I've heard of pickled watermelon rinds, but not the fruit part itself! She and her husband were farmers, so, I guess it shouldn't be that surprising.

The other thing that stood out was that some do not give specific amounts of the fruit or vegetable to use nor the amount that it'll make. So, there's some guessing on my part that has to come out of it. Luckily, the peach jam recipe that I'm sharing with you did have specifics! She originally named it "Spicy Peach Jam", but I adjusted that name so as not to imply that it's spicy/hot vs spicy/flavoring.

As most of the nation has had some extra time on our hands, thanks to quarantine and shut downs related to COVID-19, more people have planted gardens. So, when we have excess products during harvest time, pickling and preserving are great ways to reap full benefits of your garden production year-round. This is also a great money saver! Upfront, you do have to spend some to get the appropriate equipment for successful processing, but that is necessary for your health and safety. With canning and jarring comes the responsibility for protecting your family, friends, neighbors and self from botulism. Botulism is a foodborne illness that comes from a bacterium that grows WITHOUT oxygen, called Clostridium Botulinum. So that means, your canned and jarred products are at the highest risk of this, if not prepared properly.

There are many different resources that you can utilize:

- [UD's Cooperative Extension](#), has a great spot for canning/jarring information! There's also a [webinar](#) that will be occurring Tuesday, August 11 regarding it!
- You can also access the [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#) website for detailed instructions for 1st time canners and other tips.
- Visit [Canning Supplies](#) website for all your preserving needs.

Be Well, Eat Well, Walk your dog and Bon Appetit!

~~ Chef Jen, RDN/LDN, RYT-200



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