

Preserving the Harvest tips from  
the Garden at the High Plains Food Bank

815 S. Ross St, Amarillo, TX 79102 [www.hpfb.org](http://www.hpfb.org)

### General Tips

- Try to use unblemished produce
- It's best to preserve as quickly after harvesting as possible
- Make sure you use clean and sterile equipment

### Canning

- Cook your produce according to your favorite recipe
- Sterilize all jars and lids, keep them warm
- Transfer your produce and liquid into the warm jars and seal tightly (if using a refrigerator recipe, skip the remaining instructions and place in the refrigerator)
- Set in water bath for the allotted time (2-40 minutes depending on the recipe)
- Let jars cool for 12-24 hours
- Always store in a dark, cool and dry place

#### Pickled Squash [www.foodnetwork.com](http://www.foodnetwork.com)

10 cups sliced squash, such as zucchini and yellow summer squash

2 cups sliced onions

Kosher salt, for sprinkling vegetables

2 cups white vinegar

3 cups sugar

1 1/2 tablespoons pickling spice

1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper, optional

In a large pot or bowl, layer sliced squash and sliced onions, and sprinkle each layer generously with kosher salt and let sit for 1 hour. Drain well.

In a large non-reactive pot, combine vinegar, sugar, pickling spice, and crushed red pepper and bring to a boil. Add squash and onions and return to a boil.

Divide vegetables between sterilized jars and ladle enough pickling liquid over vegetables to come within ½ inch from top of jar. Wipe rims of jars clean, cover with lids and screw tops in place. Process jars in a hot water bath for 10 minutes. Remove jars from water bath and cool. Jars should seal as they cool. Any jars that do not seal should be refrigerated and consumed within 2 weeks.

#### Refrigerator Dill Pickles

4 to 5 lbs firm cucumbers

2 teaspoon dill seed, or 12 to 15 heads of fresh dill

1 tablespoon pickling spice (cloves removed)

4 cloves of garlic

Pinch of red chili flakes

6 cups water

2 cups white vinegar

½ cup kosher salt

Wash cucumbers and cut in half lengthwise, seed if larger. Place the cut cucumbers in a ice bath for at least 2 hours. In the meantime, prepare the sterilized jars. Layer the cucumbers, garlic, dill, and spices and divide evenly between cans (depending on size).

Bring the water, vinegar and salt to a boil. Turn off heat and pour the hot solution over the cucumbers. Let the mixture rest with the lid open for 3 to 4 hours, covered with a clean towel.

Close the lids and refrigerate. Pickles are ready to eat in 2 to 4 days and will keep for up to a year.

### **Freezing**

- Wash and dry produce well to prevent ice crystals from forming
- Line a baking sheet with parchment paper and make single layers of produce
- Once frozen, bag, label and seal completely
- You can also freeze sauces and chopped fresh herbs with water into ice cube trays and then transfer into plastic bags for more efficient storage

### **Tomatoes**

Make sure to not let the tomatoes touch while freezing on the baking sheet. When thawing, use a colander set over a large bowl to catch the juices. Once thawed, peel the tomatoes and use the liquid as you would with canned tomatoes.

### **Squash, corn and fresh beans**

If using squash, cut into ½ inch thick slices. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and blanch the squash slices, whole beans or corn ears for 3 minutes. Cool and dry before following the above instructions. When thawing, use a colander over a large bowl and discard the liquid before use.

### **Oven Drying**

- Thinly slice vegetable and/or fruit, removing pits, cores and skin if necessary.
- Halve tomatoes, peaches and plums.
- Blanch vegetables except tomatoes, sweet pepper, okra, mushrooms, beets and onions.
- For apples and pears, dip into a solution of lemon juice and water.
- Arrange food on a foil lined baking sheet, not letting pieces touch. Halved fruit should be cut side down.
- Set the oven to the lowest setting (not exceeding 140F).
- If possible leave the door slightly ajar.
- Half way through drying, turn the food over, and alternate trays on shelves if using more than one.
- Food is done when dry and leathery, let cool and store between sheets of parchment paper in a cool place.
- A dehydrator can also be used.

### **Air Drying**

- Prepare the vegetables and/or fruit and treat for discoloration (see above).
- String thick slices onto thick sticks and arrange to allow air to circulate around the pieces. Place on a baking sheet.
- Leave in a warm, dry place. Food is ready when it is dried and shriveled.
- Air dry herbs by tying in bundles and hanging in a warm, dry place. Herbs are done when the leaves are brittle but still green. Store in tact or with just the leaves in an airtight container.