As the food industry separates us farther from the sources of our foods—and the nutrients real food provides—people seeking more sustainable and healthier mealtimes are taking up the nearly lost art of home canning. Some of us remember the jars of peaches, pickles and tomatoes lining our grandmother’s pantry shelves. Sadly, others have been brought up on foods jarred, canned, boxed or frozen in factories—and know nothing else.

As the industry’s mouthpiece, the news media has Americans convinced that it’s difficult to cook from scratch and dangerous to can your own foods. But guess what? It’s easy and it’s safe. You don’t have to worry about those six-syllable food additives poisoning your family. And, canning your own food can save you bushels of money. (That can mean less time working to live and more time working at life.)

**Canning Applesauce**

- 36 medium apples, peeled, cored and quartered. (Peels can be left on organic fruit if you use a blender to puree them before putting them in jars.)
- Water
- 8 pint preserving jars with lids and bands

PREPARE boiling water canner. Wash jars, rings and lids in warm soapy water and set aside.

COMBINE apples with just enough water to prevent sticking in a large stainless steel saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat and boil gently, stirring occasionally, for 5 to 20 minutes, until apples are tender (time will depend upon the variety of apple and their maturity). Remove from heat and let cool slightly, about 5 minutes.

TRANSFER apples, working in batches, to a food mill, blender or a food processor fitted with a metal blade and purée until smooth.

LADLE hot applesauce into jars leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe rim. Center lid on jar. Apply band until fit is fingertip tight.

PROCESS jars in a boiling water canner for 20 minutes. Remove jars and cool. Check lids for seal after 24 hours. Lid should not flex up and down when center is pressed.
How to Can in 10 Easy Steps.

1. **Heat the Water.** Bringing a canning kettle of water to a boil takes a while – up to 45 minutes over high heat. Be sure to get it on the stove before you start anything else. The canner should be about half full for pint jars and two-thirds full for quart jars.

2. **Wash Jars, rings and lids** in hot soapy water and rinse very well. You will want to completely wipe the lids and rings dry before using them to close your full jars of produce. As you wipe used lids dry, inspect them for a good, smooth edge and holes in the rubber lining as damaged lids may not seal. Some experts recommend sterilizing jars and lids. To do this, set them in boiling water for 10 minutes or run them through the "sterilize" cycle on a dish washer.

3. **Clean Produce.** Thoroughly rinse and pat dry the produce you’re canning before you start the recipe. Cut away any rotten spots.

4. **Fill Jars.** Ladle food into sterilized jars through a wide-mouth funnel. Leave recommended headspace (the space between the top of the food and the top of the jar) specified in the recipe (usually one inch). Only process full jars. Keep leftovers in the fridge and eat them within a week.

5. **Release Air Bubbles.** Run a dinner knife along the inside of the jar to release any air bubbles along the sides of the jars.

6. **Wipe top edges of jars** clean with a damp cloth or the jars may not seal.

7. **Put Rings and Lids on Jars.** Center the lid so that the sealing compound around its edges touches the rims of the jars. Screw the metal rings on firmly but not tightly and don't force them. Just screw them on so they stay in place.

8. **Process Jars.** Lower the jars into the boiling water. The water level should be one inch above the tops of the jars. Add boiling water, if needed, during processing, to keep that 1-inch buffer. Cover the canning kettle to return water to a boil. Process for the time specified in the recipe.

9. **Remove Jars.** Lift jars out with tongs. Have a hot pad in your other hand, just in case you need to grab something.

10. **Test the Seal.** Check lids for seal after 24 hours. Lid should not flex up and down when center is pressed. Store unsealed jars in the fridge and use contents sooner rather than later. Or, reprocess or remove food to a freezer bag and store in your freezer.

You may want to label the jars with contents and canning date. Store them in a cool, dark place and use within a year (some of us keep them longer than that).