


Food in Jars: Preserving in Small Batches Year-Round

Marisa McClellan

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Marisa McClellan's first book for accessible home preserving for jams, jellies, pickles, chutneys, and more, as seen on her beloved food blog *Food in Jars*. Popular food blogger and doyenne of canning, Marisa McClellan, is using small batches and inventive flavors to make preserving easy enough for any novice to tackle. If you grew up eating home-preserved jams and pickles, or even if you're new to putting up, you'll find recipes to savor. Sample any of the 100 seasonal recipes:

In the spring: Apricot Jam and Rhubarb Syrup

In the summer: Blueberry Butter and Peach Salsa

In the fall: Dilly Beans and Spicy Pickled Cauliflower

In the winter: Three-Citrus Marmalade and Cranberry Ketchup

Marisa's confident, practical voice answers questions and quells any fears of accidental canning mistakes, and the book is written for cooks of any skill level. Stories of wild blackberry jam and California Meyer lemon marmalade from McClellan's childhood make for a read as pleasurable as it is delicious; her home-canned food-learned from generations of the original "foodies"-feeds the soul as well as the body.

Food in Jars: Preserving in Small Batches Year-Round Details

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PennyLady (Bev) says

Food In Jars Preserving In Small Batches Year Round (Marisa McClellan)

I don't know what I was hoping for...perhaps a totally new idea....it was the year round that piqued my interest and it was internet order...so I didn't look at the book first.

Lots of jam and butter combos that I would not have thought to put together...

Basic preserving talk.....

Things like peaches in bourbon..(I prefer mine plain), granola, pancake mix etc

I'll reserve judgment until I peruse further.

Leigh says

This book, above all is beautiful! The color for the beet page was just right. I'm definitely going to try making the cantaloupe jam, the slow cooker pear butter, the zesty lime curd, and the maple almond butter. I devoured my library copy in one sitting but would love to own a copy of this forever.

Heather WG says

I've tried three recipes already and can't wait to try more. The combination of flavors are fantastic, and the recipes are easy to follow.

Dixie Diamond says

This is probably a five-star for most people. I borrowed it from the library to preview as a possible gift for a friend. It's not really what I wanted for her, although I might consider getting a copy for myself.

After reading the Amazon reviews I feel like I need to add: Ms. McClellan specifies--I swear I read this in the book--that yields will vary considerably depending on the moisture in the fruit. If it was a dry year, the fruit will be less juicy and the jam yield less. The biggest complaint on Amazon was that jam yields didn't measure up. Apparently these people didn't read the book very carefully.

Also: The author has been very, very, conscientious about answering complaints in Amazon reviews. Kudos to her for that!

Full disclosure: I've never canned anything in my life so I can't actually tell if the information she gives is sufficient to get a neophyte started. It seems pretty good, but I haven't tried it. She seems, though, to do a decent job of telling the reader *why* she should or should not do something, and why canning guidelines have changed since our grandmothers' time, which is definitely useful. I abhor an information vacuum.

For my friend, I was looking for a book with a wider variety of recipes for staple foods and condiments, so that she could replace store-bought ones with homemade. This does a partial job of that, but I think I'll shop around a bit before I reconsider it (it's not off the list, though). However, if you're looking for some quirky jam recipes and baking-mix-in-a-jar gift ideas, this would be a good place to go.

Jennifer says

I ordered all the books from this author. I had originally got them from the library but after wanting so many of the recipes and the look of these beautiful books, I just had to order my own copies! I highly recommend! She has recipes for beginners and veterans of preserving. Beautiful beautiful books!

Jeslyn says

This summer I decided to learn canning, and have drawn on several books and the expertise of friends for coaching. Since I am single and live in a small apartment, I knew I wouldn't be canning 40 quarts of peaches on a Saturday; however, there are lots of small-batch canning cookbooks on the market so I forged ahead.

I'd heard about Food in Jars from several terrific cooking blogs, and I've really enjoyed this cookbook. I read it like a novel, rather than just skipping around from one recipe to another, and it ended up being the preferred method, since the author admittedly has several typos/oversights in the book (referencing methods or syrups on page "000", for instance) - these were VERY minor, and I simply corrected as I went along.

My goal in learning to can wasn't to simply master jams, but to put up fruit, etc. from our local farm markets; however, as I read through these recipes and the author's recommendations on incorporating the jams, preserves, etc. into meals, I will definitely be making more of these than I would have expected.

The content is excellent, great photography, instructions are helpful and not confusing - highly recommend as a wonderful cookbook to supplement the basics from Ball. I can only hope that the strengths of this cookbook will be confirmed when I open the jars this winter...!

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

If Marisa McClellan wanted to consider another profession, I think she would take easily to perfumer. Her flavor combination ideas just in this book alone make me want to try every recipe and stock my pantry with little batches of goodness.

The recipes catching my eye the first time through:

- Vanilla-Rhubarb Jam with Earl Grey
- Chunky Fig Jam
- Apple Pumpkin Butter
- Orange Vanilla Curd

You get the idea. I've had some of these recipes marked for a year and finally had a chance to make the

Vanilla-Rhubarb Jam, and instead of Earl Grey I used my Reading Envy tea which is part Earl Grey, part coconut. This is a lovely light but intricately flavored jam! I've been putting it on toast this week but will bring it to work in the form of oatmeal jam bars.

The recipes in this book include directions for small batch canning, but the recipes aren't in great quantities, so it is just as easy to consume what is made. The idea behind small-batch preserving is to eat some, save some. Many of the recipes could also be frozen. If canning intimidates you, you could either simply not do those steps or allow McClellan to instruct you in your first attempts.

She also has a fabulous blog, Food in Jars, with additional instructions (I went to it to find out how to substitute powdered pectin for liquid in the recipe I was trying, to great success.)

Just a personal note: Marisa McClellan is the sister of Raina Rose, a singer-songwriter from Portland who I first encountered on the streets of Memphis (during an art walk) and lives in Texas. It's a small world out there in internet land, and I had followed both before knowing they were connected.

Amy says

More work than I'm willing to do.

Shelby *trains flying monkeys* says

I borrowed this book from the library and it's so good that I want my own copy. I made her gingery pickled beets, blackberry sage jam and dilly beans. Everything I tried was really good.

Joanna says

This has some good recipes and some good information about home canning. I like that the recipes are designed to make three or four jars of each thing rather than ten or twelve. I also like that some of the recipes are for things that aren't really canned (e.g., apple pumpkin butter, which doesn't work for home canning, but she reports keeps well in the freezer).

I made the spiced applesauce already and am planning to turn part of the applesauce into apple pumpkin butter. Yum!

I'm looking forward to summer when we have more fruit and vegetables fresh and ready for preserving. I had wanted to can some tomatoes this year, but was too nervous about the safety issues, but I'm hoping that trying some of the small batch recipes here will give me confidence by summer.

Melissa says

full disclosure, Marisa is a friend. Before she was a friend, however, she was who I turned to for canning advice. She is still who I turn to for canning advice. I have a copy of this book and bought a copy for my SIL when she expressed interest in canning after helping me with a batch of salsa.

Marisa's science is good, her ideas and flavor combinations are fresh, and she gives lots of good ideas for using your preserved pantry once you have it.

Chris says

This book kicked my ongoing obsession with canning into high gear this summer - nearly every weekend (and sometimes after work), I'd be in the kitchen putting a bunch of something into jars. Marisa McClellan's lovely little book gave me some terrific recipes and new information, which surprised me, since I've been canning for a few decades now. Friends that are new to canning found it clear and easy to follow, too, so it's very accessible.

The book is a great companion to her blog of the same name (which is how I found it in the first place), and I just could not recommend this more highly.

Susan says

This is an outstanding cookbook. McClellan's blog of the same name is wonderful, and many of the recipes here are from the blog. Her emphasis on small -batch canning makes this a great starter canning book, and the range of the recipes makes it a great advanced canning book. I expected to enjoy the recipes, and I do. But I was surprised by the physical beauty of the book. It is gorgeously photographed and very well designed. An excellent addition to the kitchen.

Matt says

After returning home from a week at the lake, my wife and I suddenly found that our cucumber plant had produced 2 dozen cucumbers and had another 2 dozen about to ripen. At which point, we realized it was time to learn how to make pickles. This book was recommended to me by a friend who has been pickling for years, and its guidance is concise and easy to follow. My biggest concern with pickling is giving my friends and family botulism, so I was more than pleased that Marissa McClellan provides a simple yet robust system of sanitization for the jarring and canning process. As for the recipes, I have made a ton of pickles which ended up being a little too spicy for the kids, but I thought tasted great. It is also peach harvesting season in the Midwest, so I have made some bourbon peaches that are boozy and delicious. I'm sure that canning and jarring can get more complicated, but if you're a novice like me, Food in Jars is the right speed.

Jenn says

I love this book. These small batch recipes are fantastic for when you want to do a little canning, yet not devote an entire day to it. It's filled with many of the classics as well as many unique recipes that are new to me. The author has a talent for writing and many of her side notes have made me laugh; this is not your typical dull canning instruction manual. This book will be a reference in my kitchen for years to come!
