



A Preserving Guide & Cookbook

CREATIVE WAYS TO PUT 'EM UP
TASTY WAYS TO USE 'EM UP



lemons



vegetable stir-fry with lemon
ginger sauce



SHERRI BROOKS VINTON

author of the best-seller *Put 'em Up!*

FOREWORD BY TRACEY RYDER

PUT 'EM UP! FRUIT



Put 'em Up! Fruit

A PRESERVING GUIDE & COOKBOOK

Creative Ways to Put 'em Up, Tasty Ways to Use 'em Up



Sherrri Brooks Vinton

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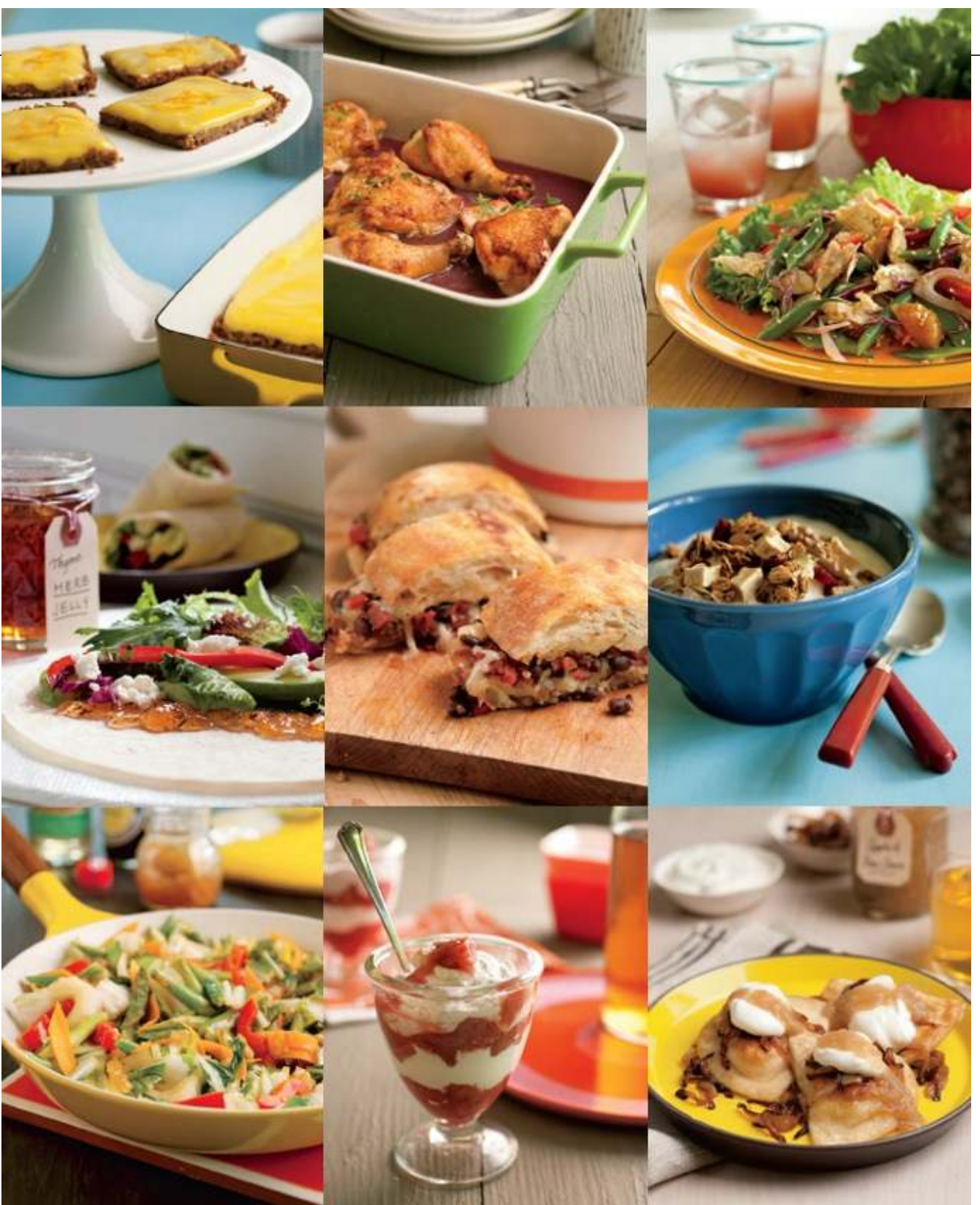
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FOR MY FAMILY

*— past, present, and future —
who have shared, celebrated, and will
carry forward the joy and tradition
of the dinner table.*



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FOREWORD

Sherri Brooks Vinton is a talented cook and food preserver, and I have been a fan of her culinary skills for many years now. It's actually hard to believe that we met nearly a decade ago, when she was traveling around the country doing research for her book *The Real Food Revival*, and I was in the midst of publishing *Edible Ojai*, the first "edible" magazine in the network that has become Edible Communities, a collection of nearly 80 regional food magazines published in various food communities across North America. It was during that first meeting that Sherri left a lasting impression on me that has endured all these years: not only was she writing a book that would help readers navigate confusing food labels and help them to find "real food" wherever they shopped, her personality was such that you felt good just being around her. To this day, it's rare to meet someone as warm or as kind as Sherri is (not to mention, as hard working)! That day, I found myself imagining how great it would be if we lived closer to each other and what it would be like to hang out in her kitchen over a cup of tea every now and then.

That feeling of camaraderie has now come full circle with *Put 'em Up! Fruit*, and I feel honored to have been asked to write this foreword. With it in hand, all of us have, in a way, been invited to hang out in Sherri's kitchen. Trust me, you are going to love your time with her.

Preserving fresh, seasonal foods has been a lifelong love of mine. Ever since my grandmother — the eldest of 17 siblings from a farm family in upstate New York — showed me how to make Concord grape jelly when I was four, I have been smitten with the process. I still remember the first time I watched Nana hang that grape-filled cheesecloth sack from the knob on her kitchen cupboard and how I held my breath as she placed a heavy rock on top of the fruit so that it dripped slowly into a bowl that was waiting to collect the juice on the counter below, certain the whole thing would come tumbling down at any moment. In the decades that have passed since that event took place, the act of canning and preserving foods has evolved from a tradition born out of necessity for some homemakers, into a full-fledged, modern-day, do-it-yourself food movement that is resonating with almost everyone who cooks or cares about where their food comes from. Whether for economic reasons, a penchant toward thriftiness, or having a sincere interest in sustainability, nothing else feels quite as rewarding as a well-stocked pantry full of home-preserved foods.

Whether you are new to canning or an old pro, *Put 'em Up! Fruit* will make you think about the range of fruit preserves in a new, refreshing way. Sherri has covered everything from various jellies and jams to poached pears in wine, dried cranberries, smoky tomato salsa, whole dried lemons, fruit cheeses, and even gastriques. Whatever recipes from this book become your favorites — and I know there will be many — be sure not to miss Sherri's recipe for Classic Concord Grape Jam on [page 14](#). Thankfully, it doesn't require any cheesecloth or heavy rocks and tastes just as wonderful as Nana did several decades ago!

Tracey Ryder

Cofounder, Edible Communities



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Jar suitable for refrigerator storage; not approved for canning



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Introduction

Over the past few years, home food preservation has been dusted off and prettied up. It's no longer sniffed at as that old-fashioned chore from your grandmother's time, like using hand-cranked laundry presses and coal-heated clothes irons (though it wouldn't surprise me to see these popping up in hip Brooklyn households sometime soon!). Home food preservation is being rediscovered for what it is — a practical, economical way to enjoy seasonal foods all year round.

The fervor for putting up your own food isn't just a trend. It's not just for hip, tattooed kids trying to push the culinary boundaries or back-to-the-landers living off the grid. Moms wanting better control over what they feed their families, gardeners looking to use up their backyard bounty, groups of friends looking for a new kind of "stitch and bitch" session, home cooks looking to further economize on their grocery budget — food preservers come from all walks of life and have varying motivations for getting back into the swing of putting food up.

I've always said that the food movement has something for everyone — you can be an anarchist, an environmentalist, or a hedonist. Whether you are looking to reclaim the food chain from corporate control, use your food choices to save the planet, or just have a great-tasting meal, you can find it all in the real food revival. And so it is with food preservation. A dedication to local farms, desire for wholesome ingredients, or love of hand-crafted flavors — any one of these would be a terrific reason to put up your own food.

Not Fancy, Just Food

Food preservation is driven by economy, resourcefulness, and a desire not to waste fresh food. Preserving can showcase a home cook's ingenuity at its finest — the ability to make something gorgeous out of something you would normally throw away, such as turning citrus rinds into glittering candies. And it soothes our little lizard brains to see the stores of food lined up on the shelves as the wind howls outside our doors.



You can see the necessity and beauty of food preservation across cultures and continents, from many of which I pulled inspiration for my own recipes. Colonial American blueberry shrub, membrillo from Spain and South America, Moroccan tagines, black lemons from the Middle East, Asian spring rolls, and stuffed grape leaves from Turkey — it has been inspiring and informative to rediscover some of the old traditions of food preservation and to attempt to carry these traditions and flavors forward.

I generally don't preserve food as a way of supplanting my seasonal diet. I have very little interest in corn in the middle of January. I don't yearn for handfuls of berries in the winter. What I do crave, though, is a little treat, a little break from my dietary routine. Preserved foods give me that. A little fruit chutney to go with my low and slow cooking. A dram of infused tippie to sip by the fire. Something to perk up my plate and palate.



LAMB TAGINE WITH POACHED QUINCE, [PAGE 218](#)



CARROTS WITH PLUM GLAZE, [PAGE 212](#)

That's what preserving food does for me and what I hope this book can do for you. Not to blur the lines of seasonality, but to offer a few ideas for preserving abundant seasonal produce and then some suggestions for using those lovely creations to supplement your larder in fun new ways. Yes, berry jelly is a fun thing to make. But you needn't save it just for your bagel. You can whisk a spoonful into a vinaigrette. Poached quince are sweet as candy straight out of the jar and bring just the right fruity note to an exotically spiced lamb tagine. Cherry jam is wonderful on a scone, but good as well when used in a pan reduction sauce. Plum jam turns a piece of whole wheat toast into a little slice of luxury and brings the same luscious touch to sautéed carrots. In these ways and more, you can bring the flavors of summer into your kitchen, not enough to scramble the calendar, but just enough to feel the sun on your face, if only for one brief moment.



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Jar suitable for refrigerator storage; not approved for canning

Getting Started

I know that the fruit waits for no one, and if you are as impatient as I, you want to jump right into your next project. But take just a minute to look through this next section. It gives you some pointers for getting the best results, some definitions of terms used in the book, a little rundown of the processes we'll be using, and a troubleshooting guide to make sure we keep the train on the rails. The way we can make the most of your gorgeous produce and your time spent in the kitchen.

Your Keys to Success

Like the first *Put 'em Up!*, *Put 'em Up! Fruit* is arranged by produce item so that you can look up the food that you have in abundance quickly and easily, and then plan what you would like to do with it.

For each produce item, there are a number of preserving recipes that utilize a variety of techniques for extending the life of the food. Some are very simple and take only a few minutes to accomplish, while others are more what you might consider “project cooking,” so you can pick the one that suits your day and tastes.

Each preserving recipe is accompanied by a “Use It Up!” recipe, a suggestion for using the preserve in your cooking. Many of these recipes can be used with a variety of preserves, so don't hesitate to mix and match the “Put 'em Up!” recipes with the “Use It Up!” recipes — there are endless combinations and I have listed some alternatives to try as well.

You can also try the “Use It Up!” recipes with preserves you have made using recipes from other books, preserved foods you have been gifted, or even those you have bought at the market. The “Use It Up!” recipes allow you to work with the preserved foods you have on hand in fun and creative ways.

Do not, however, make substitutions within “Put 'em Up!” recipes unless a recipe specifically notes that it is okay to do so. Home food preservation is not hard, but it is not very tolerant of improvisation. A jam recipe designed for one fruit may not give you good results when used with another. Some processes work really well with certain fruits but will give you abysmal results with other produce, so you can't always just trade apples for oranges.

FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS

The weights and volumes of produce and other ingredients have been carefully calculated to give you consistent, wholesome results. Use the measurements indicated, cut to the sizes indicated, and always add the ingredients to the pot in the order given. For reasons explained throughout the book, adding sugar and then berries will give you very different results than adding berries and then sugar, so try to stick to the playbook for consistent results.

That's not to say that you cannot make these recipes your own. The hand of the cook is very apparent in fruit preservation. I am sure that old hands can attest to the fact that every turn at the jam pot has made them that much more adept. If you're new to home food preservation, you will find your own style as you go. No matter your level of experience, the skill and attention you bring to your jam, jelly, infusion, or chutney will make every nibble and sip that much more delicious.

BUY GOOD FRUIT

The first step to making any good-tasting preserve — or anything edible — is to start with excellent locally grown ingredients. Shop at a farmers' market or farm stand, or glean from your backyard or that of your neighbor (after begging “please” of course). Food destined for home food preservation

should always come from as local a source as possible for peak ripeness and to minimize the amount of bacteria that will naturally develop from the time it leaves the farm until it is in the pot.

Buying directly from local growers also means that you will avoid the topical fungicides and waxes that are often applied to grocery store produce to extend its shelf life. Leaving aside the issue of whether these treatments are safe or not, food that has been treated will simply not be able to absorb the syrups and brines that often give preserved foods their flavor and keep them safe on the shelf. Untreated produce is best for preserving.

This book is organized by fruit so that, rather than finding a recipe you want to make and then searching for the ingredients to make it, you are free to respond to the market and what is in season by grabbing what looks good and putting it up. Not only does shopping this way guarantee that you are getting food that is of the best quality, but the sensory experience — enjoying the sights and smells of the harvest as it becomes available — is part of the fun. What's going in your canner this weekend? Well, only the most tempting, gorgeous things — the fruits that are so enticing you just can't stand the thought of passing them by. If you have your heart set on making something specific, say putting up many quarts of tomatoes, talk to your farmer about when they will be at their peak. Buy too early and you will be paying top dollar; too late and the fruit may be overripe. Work with your farmer to get fruit at its best and at its best price.

There is a misguided notion that food destined for preserving should be of inferior quality, and many canners look for “seconds” at the market — those items that aren't good enough to display and can be purchased for a discount. If this means that they just aren't pretty, that's fine, but badly damaged or rotting fruit is not. If you want wholesome, terrific-tasting preserves, you have to start with food that is already good enough to eat. No amount of simmering, freezing, or drying is going to resuscitate a gasping, half-dead thing back to vigor. And rotten food means food that has picked up a lot of bacteria — not a good place to start your preserving project.

When you are selecting fruit for preserving, look for produce that has been allowed to mature on the vine. These vine-and tree-ripened fruits will have the most flavor. Avoid overripened fruit, however, as their lower pectin levels can make it hard to achieve the desired gel stage. In fact, it is smart to include a portion of slightly underripe fruit in your preserving recipe. A good rule of thumb is that about 20 to 25 percent of the total volume of fruit should be a bit shy of full ripeness. Not green and immature, but strawberries with a bit of white shoulder showing and peaches that are still rather firm, for example, will have more pectin than fully ripened crops, making it easier to achieve a good gel.





The orchard fruits at Silverman's Farm and the gorgeous, organic produce at Sport Hill Farm are two of the best reasons to live in Easton, Connecticut. Eat good food: support your local growers!

Once you select your fruit, it should have a quick trip from harvest to processing. Some delicate fruits, such as hand-picked strawberries, will show signs of deterioration in as little as a day, even under refrigeration. Even hardier fruits, such as apples, will give you your best results if you preserve them soon after picking. For the best preserved foods, find lovely local things, buy them at their peak, and put 'em up!

sample content of Put 'em Up! Fruit: A Preserving Guide & Cookbook: Creative Ways to Put 'em Up,
Tasty Ways to Use 'em Up

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