

Canning Butter

Well, here in the UK you can't get tinned butter – at all. Ghee and clarified butter is around tinned at a huge price but not proper butter. Well, time to do it myself! I know this is old news to many of you, but for anyone who hasn't tried this, I hope this might encourage them to try.

I decided to do a test can of 2lbs (1kg) of butter.

I believed this would need about two pints of jar space – I decided to use two of the wide / low “Le Parfait” sprung sealable preserve jars and a couple of small jam jars in case my measurements were wrong. Mason Jars, Kilner Jars or any other airtight preserve jar should work fine



These need to be sterilised and heated. Warm the oven to 120C (250F), remove the seals and anything likely to melt and put the jars in (I tend to stand them in a baking tray for easy removal). Leave them in for 20 minutes. If you do the rest of this procedure right and start now on the butter, they should be done at the right time.

Now for the butter. I have heard that you should not use churned, oil added or “spreadable” butters for this, so I stuck to 4 half pound slabs of hard English butter.

You will need a large wide pan, a wooden stirring spatula and some way of transferring hot butter into the jars. I used a ladle here, but for small jars a jam / canning funnel would be a big help.



Put all the butter into the pan and set the pan to a low heat – you want it to melt, not burn



As the butter melts, keep moving the slabs and stirring the melted butter. As it melts, the butter separates into clarified butter and solids. The solids will sink to the bottom and burn if you don't stir regularly.



When the butter has all melted, you need to simmer it gently for about five minutes. Keep stirring – it will separate again if you don't.



After your butter has simmered for five minutes, your cans should be done. Remove the butter from the heat and take the cans from the oven. The cans will be HOT – I use a pair of metal tongs to handle them – its easier than oven gloves. Then don your oven gloves (I have a pair of knitted heat proof gloves that come in handy here) and re-fit the seals to the jars.



By now your butter will have separated again. Give it a good stir. Use your ladle (and funnel if needed) and transfer the butter into your jars. Leave about $\frac{3}{4}$ " of head space so the jars can be shaken as they cool.



Seal up your jars. You can see here that the butter will separate again quickly. As the butter cools you need to keep shaking to keep it mixed.



Shake every ten minutes until the jars are only faintly warm to the touch. Then move the jars to the fridge. Shake every 5 minutes as the final rapid cooling takes place. When they finally set, the butter will look as it did originally, but is sealed in an airtight container.



I'm told that the same effect can be achieved with hard margarine if that is your preference. These jars will be stored in a cool dark pantry - fortunately its easy to tell if butter has gone rancid. I'll test the small one after the summer and the larger ones over time to check longevity.

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#2 

28th June 2007, 01:55 PM



[British Red](#)

British Red Squirrel

Join Date: Mar 2006
State: On the High Chalk
Posts: 3,616



Nope, should be good "on the shelf" for around 3 years

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#3

28th June 2007, 02:05 PM



[British Red](#)

British Red Squirrel

Join Date: Mar 2006
State: On the High Chalk
Posts: 3,616



I'm absolutely sure that it would work very well with hand churned butter (or hand-thrust in our case since our butter maker is the straight up and down kind). I meant not to use the "machine churned spreadable" types since they have additives to keep them soft

Should have been clearer there sorry

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#4

28th June 2007, 02:26 PM



[no1g8r](#) 

A Frugal Squirrel

Join Date: Mar 2006

State: SE US

Posts: 52,573



I've canned several dozen half-pint jars of butter. I simmer mine a lot longer to try to drive out a lot of the water. I first did this by putting a candy thermometer into the pot and watching for when the temperature exceeded 212 degrees (it can't do this until the water is driven out), but I learned that this coincides with the point that the foaming dissipates and the solids start sizzling.

The reason for driving the water out? Simple. The bacteria that causes Botulism requires a 35% water content to break out of its spore. By eliminating the bulk of the water I ensure that I've minimized the botulism risk.

The reason for using half-pint jars is my climate. It's warm and humid here in the American Southeast, so without refrigeration my pint jars, once opened, were starting to mold within about a week. Half pint jars will do the same thing, but I've got a better chance of using all of a 1/2 pint jar over the course of a week than I would the full pint. In a drier climate this wouldn't be a problem.

As it is, the butter stays stable on the shelf with no problems. I've got some that are coming up on their 2nd year soon with no signs of problems.

In normal times now, I place the opened jar in the refrigerator to prevent mold. But it will store w/o refrigeration with no problems in most climates. Try it and see how it works in yours.

Other than the extended simmering time, I process mine as BR describes. I've also learned that with my refrigerator, and processing 24-36 jars at a time, that I can out shaking at 10 minute intervals, moving to 7, then 5 as they cool down. There's a point to watch for when a jar appears to be solidifying but when shaken shakes freely, that's when I move to the 5 minute cycle.

It's a great way to preserve butter. My daughter and wife both love it. I'd recommend starting with unsalted butter, then experimenting in future batches by adding a small amount of salted butter to your process until you get it just the way that you like it. If you start out with all salted butter the end product will be too salty for most folks.

Thanks for the great pictorial, BR. You did a GREAT job!