



“Teaching research-based practices of safe home food preservation to the residents of Solano and Yolo Counties.”

Preserving and Consuming Citrus Peels and Watermelon Rind, by Kathy Low

Growing up my parents told us stories of how as kids, they kept from starving during the Great Depression by not letting anything edible go to waste. The spoke of how they learned to eat beef tripe (stomach lining), chicken feet, cow’s tongue and other things not normally consumed to stay alive. It was their stories that got me interested in learning about and sharing information on parts of fruits and vegetables normally discarded that can be preserved and eaten. Examples include citrus peel and watermelon rind.

The next time you eat an orange, grapefruit, tangerine or other citrus, you don’t need to discard the peel. Instead, you can dehydrate it. You should remove the pith (the white fibrous material between the skin and the peel) before placing the peel in your food dehydrator. Be aware you can also dry your peels in other methods, such as in the oven. Visit the National Center for Home Food preservation (www.nchfp.uga.edu) for more information on these alternative methods. For more information on dehydrating orange peels, see <https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8199.pdf>.

What do you do with the dehydrated citrus peel? You can use the dried peels to add flavor to teas or boil them to infuse the flavor in soups or rice. You can also grind the dried peels into a powder and sprinkle it on yogurt, salads, baked goods and other edibles for added flavor. Fresh citrus peels are also often candied. It basically involves simmering the peels in either a sugary syrup or corn syrup. You can find recipes on how to candy citrus peel at <http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/files/226102.pdf>, https://ucanr.edu/sites/mfp_of_cs/files/312473.pdf and other sites such as the [Resources - Master Food Preservers - Solano and Yolo Counties \(ucanr.edu\)](https://ucanr.edu/sites/mfp_of_cs/files/312473.pdf).

If you’ve got a sweet tooth, remember citrus peel is a key ingredient in marmalades. And you’re just not limited to orange marmalade. If you also have lemon and grapefruit peel in addition to your orange peel, you can make a citrus marmalade. You can find the recipe at https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_07/citrus_marmalade.html

And when summer comes around and you partake of a refreshing watermelon, don’t throw out the rind. You can make watermelon pickles from the rind. The process to pickle the watermelon rind is similar to pickling other fruit. You’ll need canning salt, sugar, distilled white vinegar, cloves, cinnamon, and lemon. You can find the recipe and instructions for making watermelon rind pickles at https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_06/watermelon_rind.html.

But if you’re like me and don’t care for pickled foods, fear not, you can use the watermelon rind to make watermelon rind preserves. Besides the rind, you’ll need sugar, salt, lemon juice and ground ginger. You can find the recipe for making watermelon rind preserves at https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_07/watermelon_rind_preserves.html.

So, the next time you eat citrus or watermelon, don’t throw out the peels and rind before trying candied citrus peels and dehydrating the peels, and making pickles or preserves from the watermelon rind. Remember that old saying, “Waste not, want not!”

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