

Preserve It: Canning Basics



Canning Water

CAN YOU? SHOULD YOU?

Experts recommend that households store at least a three-day supply of water per person to cover drinking and food preparation needs in the event of an emergency. With a minimum daily recommended amount of one gallon of water per person per day, plus one quart per small pet per day, that can add up to a lot of water. Is it possible to can your emergency water supply at home? Is it a good idea to can your own water for emergency purposes?

The short answer to the first question is yes, you can process water for storage. Whether you *should* do so is a personal decision and largely dependent on your circumstances. There are other ways to provide for emergency water supplies which may be preferable (including chemical treatments or simply purchasing bottled water), and there are definite pros and cons to take into consideration in canning your own emergency water supply.

On the plus side, if you're a canner you likely have glass canning jars already, and you can always add a jar or two of water if there is room when you're canning something else. In addition, for environmental reasons, and because plastic can degrade over time and be permeable to vapors and gases, glass may be an appealing option. Because heat-treated (canned) water is sterilized during the canning process, it also has the benefit of being able to be stored indefinitely, although you should check jars every 6-12 months to make sure that all is in order. On the minus side, it takes energy to run a canner load, and glass jars can be heavy and breakable, a liability in the event of a natural disaster. For this reason, the experts recommend that glass not be your sole method of storing an emergency water supply.

For procedures on canning water, visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP) at <https://nchfp.uga.edu/resources/entry/home-canning-water>.

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