When you can fruits, tomatoes, sauerkraut, ripe pimentos, pickles, relishes, jams, preserves and marmalades, use a waterbath canner for processing them. Do this by filling the standard canning jar, adjusting the lid and submerging the jar in boiling water for a certain number of minutes. This heating of the food in the jar:

1. Helps destroy mold, yeast, etc., that get into the jar while it is being filled.
2. Removes air from the jar; food is therefore less likely to change in color.

When you can these foods, you will need to:

1. Prepare the fruits and vegetables properly.
2. Seal standard canning jars or cans correctly.
3. Keep jars or cans in waterbath at boiling temperature for the required processing period.

At left is a regular waterbath canner. The canner is 4 to 5 inches taller than the jars. It has a close-fitting lid and a rack in the bottom to keep jars or cans off the bottom of the canner.

The drawing at left shows you how to make a waterbath canner in your home.

Use a large wash boiler, bucket, or lard can with a close-fitting lid. It should be 4 inches taller than jar tops—2 inches for water to cover jars and 2 inches for boiling room. You can make a rack of wire or strips of wood to fit the canner.
USING THE WATERBATH CANNER

Be sure to clean the standard canning jars well before putting food into them. Wash jars in soapy water and rinse.

Examine glass jars and lids before using to be certain they are in good condition. Do not use any jars with cracked or chipped places. Follow manufacturer's directions about jar lids.

Heat the jar in the waterbath canner if you are going to fill it with hot food. For cold food, let inverted jar cool some before filling.

Fill jar with food to within ½ inch of top. Remove air bubbles with a table knife by sliding the knife down the side of the jar to the bottom. Do this for the other 3 sides. Be sure liquid covers the food.

Wipe top of jar with clean, damp cloth to remove any food or liquid that may be there.

Place tops on jars. Follow manufacturer’s direction for sealing the top. Place jars on the rack in waterbath. The water may be warm if food is cold. If food is hot, the water should be near boiling or boiling. Don’t let jars on the rack touch each other. Place lid on the canner. Be sure jars are covered with from 1 to 2 inches of water.

Start counting processing time when the water returns to a boil. Keep the water boiling the entire time. Process for the length of time given in Alabama Extension Circular HE-01, "Food Preservation in Alabama." When time is up, remove jars from the waterbath. Cool by setting the jars upright, far apart, and out of a draft. Do not cover. Store 24 hours later in a cool (about 70°F if possible), dry, dark place.