

# General Judging Guidelines for Food Preservation

## **ENTRANT ELIGIBILITY**

1. Eligible entries must be preserved in the same brand of jar and lid: Ball® Jar sealed with a Ball® Lid & Band specially designed for home canning, or Kerr™ Jar sealed with a Kerr™ Lid & Band specially designed for home canning.
2. Entries in the Soft Spread category must be prepared using Ball® Pectin: Classic, Low or No-Sugar, or Liquid. Proof of pectin purchase (receipt or product UPC) is required for qualification purposes only.
3. Entries must be labeled with product name, date of preparation, processing method, and processing time.
4. All preserved foods must be prepared within a 1-year period prior to the judging date.
5. The following publications are recognized as authorities in safe food preservation. Judges may use them to validate quality criteria of entries. Information in these references may differ slightly; each book is correct and safe.
  - "Ball Blue Book® Guide to Preserving," copyright 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 2017
  - "Ball® Complete Book of Home Preserving," copyright 2006
  - "The All New Ball® Book of Canning and Preserving," copyright 2016
  - "Ball® Canning Back to Basics," copyright 2017
  - "USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning," Bulletin No. 539, reprint 2009
  - "So Easy to Preserve," copyright 2006

***Safety is of the utmost importance. Any entry not in compliance with judging guidelines or exhibiting spoilage will be disqualified. Quality criteria based on visual judging only. Judges will refrain from tasting preserved food as part of the Ball® Fresh Preserving Award program.***

## **FILLED JAR**

- Headspace must correspond to instructions on the reference guides listed. The top of the finished recipe or liquid covering produce must provide adequate headspace as stated in approved guidelines.
- Air Bubbles must be kept to a minimum. (Gas bubbles denote spoilage and can be identified by movement of bubbles to the surface of the product while the jar is stationary. Products indicating presence of gas bubbles will be disqualified.)
- Bands should remain on the jars while in transit to the fair event. Remove bands carefully to determine if the headspace is correct. Replace bands for product display.
- Avoid decorative jars, padded lids, or fabric covers.

## **HEAT PROCESS**

- Methods used to heat process food must comply with current preserving guidelines as stated in the approved reference guides. The boiling water process for high-acid food and pressure process for low-acid food are the only recommended methods to preserve food in jars for shelf storage.
- Time for correctly heat processing food varies depending on each specific recipe

or food type. Processing time must be in agreement with approved reference guides.

### **PRODUCT APPEARANCE**

- Produce should be free from blemishes, disease and spoilage. Recipes prepared with stems, pits and peels intact are acceptable if the recipe is in keeping with approved guidelines.
- Liquid must be clear and free from cloudiness and small particles unless the inherent characteristics of ingredients effect product clarity.
- Color of the finished product should be as close as possible to its natural characteristics or that for cooked product.
- Texture is affected by heat processing; however, the finished product should not easily break down or appear over-cooked.
- Ingredients should retain their shape and size based on the type and preparation method. Ingredients should be cut in uniform pieces and packed evenly in the jar, allowing adequate room for liquid to circulate throughout the jar during processing.