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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 1944.

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QUESTION BOX

When repair pressure canner?  
Why used containers for berries  
How make chile con carne?

ANSWERS FROM home-economists of U. S. Department of Agriculture, and War Food officials.

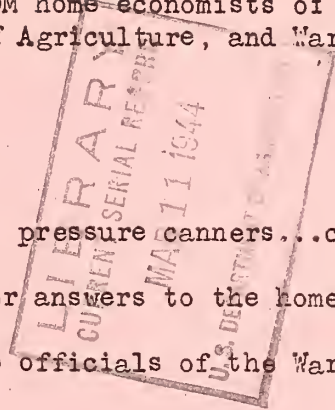
The mail today brings us questions about pressure canners...containers for berries...and chile con carne. We'll turn for answers to the home economists of the U.S, Department of Agriculture, and to officials of the War Food Administration.

First of all let's read a letter from a homemaker whose pressure canner needs some repair work done on it. She writes, "Ordinarily I would send it back to the factory, but now I'd like to know if that is the right thing to do this year, because of war conditions."

Yes, you can still send your pressure canner back to the factory for repairs, but it's a good idea to do it right away. At the National Food Preservation conference recently held in Chicago, manufacturers of pressure canners said that they will be able to handle repair jobs on canners faster before production of 1944 canners gets into full swing. So send your canner in for repair work before March 1, if possible,

The manufacturers stated that repair parts will be available for all standard makes of pressure canners.

If your canner needs only to have the gage checked or adjusted, have this done locally if possible. A gage is a delicate precision instrument---avoid shipping it if you can. One of your local dealers may be able to test your gage, and some county home demonstration agents and home management supervisors have master gages or other devices for gage testing.





However, if you can't get your gage tested locally, wrap it very carefully and send it to the manufacturer. And when you get it back, use plumber's paste on the threads when you screw the gage back into the canner. You can buy plumber's paste at a plumbing supply shop or hardware store,

Before you send a gage to the manufacturer because it seems inaccurate, check the safety valve to be sure it's working right. Many a gage registers inaccurately because the safety valve of the canner is clogged stiff with grease or food. You can remedy this with a thorough cleaning: remove the pet cock and valve, and soak them in vinegar a short time. If particles remain, draw a string or a narrow strip of cloth through the opening.

By checking your canner early, and seeing that needed repairs are made, you'll be all ready for the canning season when the first spring vegetables appear in the markets or in your garden.

By the way--getting back to the National conference on food preservation--the conference went on record to recommend steam pressure canning for all the low-acid vegetables--that is, all vegetables except tomatoes and vegetables pickled before canning. The War Production board has authorized the manufacture of 400,000 canners this year, but to help meet the needs for home-preserved foods, pressure canners old and new will have work to do. That's why it's advisable to make sure immediately that your canner's in good working order,

Well, let's go on to our next letter now. This writer says, "My store has had early strawberries in what looked to me like used containers. When I asked the grocer about this, he told me the war made it necessary to use second-hand containers. Is this true?"

Yes, the War Food Administration recently announced that new wooden containers for shipping fruits and vegetables would be scarce in 1944, and for this reason War Food officials are asking homemakers to regard these second-hand containers



as necessary wartime packages. The shortage of new containers is so great, that many fruits, vegetables and other food items in 1944 will be delivered either in used containers, or in no containers at all. Since you don't buy many fruits and vegetables in the containers they're shipped in, you may not often notice this shortage. However, such containers as baskets for berries, or open-mesh bags for citrus fruits and potatoes, are likely to be second-hand.

Now for our last letter in today's mail. This homemaker says, "I'd like to know how to make chili con carne. Are the ingredients hard to get?"

Down in Mexico, where chile con carne comes from, hot chilis are used for seasoning. But even without chilis or other hard -to-get ingredients you can make a delicious chili con carne that's not too hot, nor too mild, either, for American taste. And it's a hearty, warming dish for chill winter days.

Here's how the home economists make chili con carne to serve six persons. Soak one and a half cups of dry beans in cold water overnight, or five to six hours. The Mexican cook uses big red beans called frijoles (free-ho-lees) but in this country favorites for chili are red kidney beans or California pinks. After soaking the beans, simmer them in the soaking water about 45 minutes, or until they begin to soften. In another pan, fry until crisp one-fourth to one-half cup diced salt pork. Then brown half a cup chopped onion in the pork fat...add half a pound ground lean meat...and cook this slowly for five minutes with the onion. Now combine the beans, meat, onion, and salt pork with three cups cooked tomatoes...salt and pepper...two to four teaspoons chili powder (depending on how "hot" you like your food)...and a bit of garlic. Simmer until the meat is tender and the flavors are well blended.

Chili con carne goes light on your meat points. And what with the good protein content, B vitamins, iron and other food value of the beans, plus vitamin C from the tomatoes, it gives your family a hearty luncheon or supper dish.

The food distribution officials tell us we'll be getting about nine pounds of dried beans apiece during 1944, and that will give us beans for a good many meals this year. You'll find many suggestions to help vary your bean cookery in the leaflet called "Dried Beans and Peas in Wartime Meals." Write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C., for a free copy.

