

Preserve the abundance: Building confidence through bilingual canning education

AT A GLANCE

Educators addressing gaps in Spanish-language food preservation education through bilingual canning resources and community classes with support from a University of Idaho Extension grant.

The Situation

As food costs increase, people look to home food preservation methods to save money by decreasing food waste of homegrown and local produce. A recent review of home food preservation trends found that 11.5% used unsafe home food preservation methods and 38.7% did not follow tested recipes. From 2022-2024, family and consumer sciences (FCS) Extension educators conducted drying, freezing and boiling water canning programs at a community food pantry to educate clientele how to preserve foods received in bulk. With 47% of attendees Spanish speaking, the need to conduct bilingual, English/Spanish, home food preservation classes were evident. Specifically, the interest in boiling water and pressure canning was significant.

Our Response

With support from a University of Idaho Extension Innovative Project Grant, “Preserve the Abundance/Preservando La Abundancia,” community canning classes with outreach to Latino audiences was developed to meet the community-identified needs for accessible, researched based food preservation education. Spanish-language canning resources were developed, and bilingual community classes provided



Participants safely preserve salsa during the Preserve the Abundance Spanish-language community canning class.

hands-on instruction in boiling water and pressure canning through the preparation of jams and jellies, salsa and chicken. Food safety principles were emphasized throughout, and participants took home a canned product to reinforce learning and build confidence.

The program objectives included the following:

- Increase knowledge and skills in preserving food safely at home.
- Increase confidence in boiling water canning and pressure canning.
- Improve food safety practices with emphasis on using tested recipes.

Program Outcomes

The FCS Extension educators organized and taught eight canning classes across four counties including Jerome, Twin Falls, Cassia and Minidoka. A total of 92 community members participated in the boiling water and pressure canning classes. Participant feedback indicated strong intentions to apply what they learned through bilingual home food preservation classes. Overall, 82% planned to change their food preservation practices, 88% intended to preserve more food at home and 94% felt they could reduce household food waste.

Interest from the initial salsa classes led to the addition of three jams and jellies classes and two pressure canning classes. Across these classes, 83% of participants reported high or very high confidence in safely preserving food at home, 92% intended to preserve more food and 96% felt they would be able to reduce

food waste. The results demonstrate that offering home food preservation education in both English and Spanish increased participant confidence and supported intentions to preserve more food and reduce waste.

The Future

The interest in food preservation from Spanish speaking clientele validates the need for additional canning programs to serve this population.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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