

Canning Bacon Diane Myers on Wed.Oct. 30 2013

I use wide mouth quart canning jars.

It takes a little over a pound of bacon for each jar.

You'll need some parchment paper. I found it at the grocery store in the section with foil, plastic wrap, etc.

Prepare the jars and lids as you would for canning anything else --- Wash and boil the jars to sterilize.

Bring the bands and lids to a boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Keep everything in hot water until ready to use. This is from my memory, so go by the instructions in a canning book if this isn't exactly right.

Pull off about 3 or 4 feet of parchment paper. Depending on the width, I usually cut mine in half lengthwise. You're going to roll the bacon slices up in the paper and put them in the jar, so you want the paper about as wide as the jar is tall. I found that it doesn't really matter if the paper is a little too short or too long. To be honest, I think you could just stuff the bacon in the jars without the paper and it would be fine. You just wouldn't have nice slices when you're cooking it. But, I'll tell you about cooking it later.

I also found that it works better to cut the bacon to about the same length as the jar is tall so that it fits to about 1" below the rim. You can hold a stick, string, ruler, slice of bacon, or whatever you want to use as a guide for cutting your bacon. After the first few, you won't need it. You'll be able to just eyeball it. It doesn't have to be exact, but if it's too long, you'll end up wasting space stuffing ends in the jar. You'll get more bacon in each jar if they fit better.

OK, here's my method:

1. Prepare the jars and lids.
2. Get your parchment paper ready.
3. Trim bacon ends (or do this as you go, if you prefer)
4. Starting at one end of the parchment paper, lay a strip of bacon across it, roll it, add another strip, roll, and keep going. I ended up laying out strip after strip of bacon, with a little space in between, then rolling it up that way. If your paper is too short, just add another in by overlapping a little.
5. When your roll is about the same size as the jar opening, either continue wrapping the rest of the paper around, or cut it off. For my last jar, I end up adding piece after piece of leftover paper.
6. Now, just stuff your bacon roll in the jar. That's it. When they're all full, wipe the rims clean, put the lids and bands on the jars and can them.
7. Process in a pressure canner for 90 minutes at 10 pounds of pressure. Check a canning book if you are in the higher elevations.

As I'm rolling the bacon, I use up my ends. You may prefer to use them separately for bacon bits or something.

When you're ready to use the bacon, the entire roll will come out at once, but it is a little messy. I have a metal bowl ready to put the paper in. There will be liquid left in the jar. Over a skillet, I just start unrolling the bacon. Fry it up as usual. This cooks differently than fresh bacon. It does get crisp, but it rarely stays in nice long strips. It sort of crumbles as you cook. That's why I said that I don't know if it really matters about rolling it up in the paper, as you're not going to really have strips when you fry it. It does stay in larger pieces than just crumbles, though. If you don't want it crisp, it is more likely to stay in strips. Since it's

already cooked, you just need enough cooking to make sure it's safe to eat. I would think it would be fine with all the salt, but I don't eat it without lots of cooking, just to be safe. Since we don't have electricity or refrigeration, it's really nice to open a jar of bacon in the middle of the summer. This is a treat that we never had before. We sometimes used to buy canned bacon from Costco. I think it was from Hungary. Pretty good, but very salty, and expensive. But, it fried up more like regular bacon than this. I haven't seen it around in years. Just as well. This is much cheaper, but bacon isn't healthy anyway. Just a treat we enjoy once in a while.

Oh, forgot to tell you about the paper. Lots of the grease will stick to the parchment paper as you unroll it. You could just throw it away, but I put it in a metal bowl, then set it on the warming shelf of the woodburning cookstove, or on the cooler side. The grease will melt off. Then I carefully squeeze the melted grease into the bowl and pour it back into the bacon jar. I use the grease when I cook beans for extra flavor. I know. Not healthy, but it is ever so tasty!