

New (and Not So New) Canning Tools

Lid Lifter/Lid Wand: The canning lid lifter/lid wand is a magnet attached to a short plastic stick and is a useful tool for lifting metal lids from hot water. Lid wand brands include Back to Basics, Ball, Harold, Norpro, Presto, RSVP and Victorio. For several years lid wands have been available on-line and in-store from vendors that sell canning supplies (including kitchen supply stores, hardware stores, department stores and big box stores).

Ergonomic Jar Lifter: Jar lifters are and have been available on-line and at stores selling canning supplies in multiple brands (Back to Basics, Ball, Fox Run, Harold, Mirro, Norpro, Presto, Progressive International and Victorio). Jarden Home Brands recently made a new ergonomically designed lifter available. According to the manufacturer, "the Ball® Brand Secure-Grip Jar Lifter is designed for lifting jars with confidence and with minimal effort. Handles are ergonomically designed for comfort. The spring hinge improves strength and pops open automatically. Molded grip increases contact surface."

Collapsible Canning Funnel: Canning funnels are helpful in filling jars; they are available in multiple brands, in wide mouth or regular mouth sizes, and in aluminum, plastic, silicon or stainless steel. Collapsible canning funnels that fit both wide mouth and regular mouth jars and collapse for easier storage are available from Jarden Home Brands (Bernardin and Ball) and from Progressive International.

Sure, Tight Band Tool: Several brands of canning jar wrenches are available and can be used to loosen jar lids. Because they can easily over-tighten jar lids, jar wrenches are not recommended for tightening jar lids prior to heat processing. This past year, Ball made the Sure Tight Band Tool available. As described on the website (www.freshpreserving.com), "the Sure Tight™ Band Tool secures jar bands with just the right amount of torque. Getting a good seal starts with securing the band to the correct force. This tool takes the guess work out of securing the band to 'fingertip tight'".

Jam & Jelly Maker: Clemson Extension has identified two appliances that simplify the jam and jelly making process. Tefal makes an electric jam maker that appears to be available only in Europe. Jarden Home Brands (freshpreserving.com) makes the Ball® FreshTECH Automatic Jam & Jelly Maker that is available in the USA. Both jam/jelly makers automatically stir jam or jelly while it cooks and eliminate the need to guess when it is done. Cooked jams and jellies can be enjoyed immediately, frozen for up to a year or preserved by a water bath canning process. The Ball® FreshTECH Automatic Jam & Jelly Maker lists for \$99.99 on freshpreserving.com and is available at Amazon, WalMart and other kitchen supply stores. It has two settings: one for jam (21 minutes) and one for jelly (25 minutes). It makes only small batches (about 4 half pints). All Jam & Jelly Maker recipes (regular, reduced sugar and no sugar) use regular pectin; as of today, 32 recipes for jams or jellies from apples, blackberries, cherries, grapes, peaches, pears, peppers, plums, pomegranates, raspberries, and strawberries were posted on the website. The Ball

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Jam & Jelly Maker was used to make peach jam and strawberry jam; the products were excellent with good color and good texture.

Electric Water Bath Canner: Weck makes an electric water bath canner that can be ordered online through kitchenkrafts.com; I have not yet located another source. The website states, "With an electric water bath canner you're not limited to your kitchen for canning. You don't need a stovetop! Although attractive enough for your kitchen counter, now you can move this sometimes-messy operation to your porch or garage." The canner uses household current, can be adjusted to temperatures ranging from 80°F to boiling and is large enough to process 7 quart jars. I have not used this canner, but it may be an alternative for folks who have smooth top ranges.

Sources:

- <http://www.kitchenkrafts.com>
- Freshpreserving.com
- Multiple websites for stores that sell canning supplies