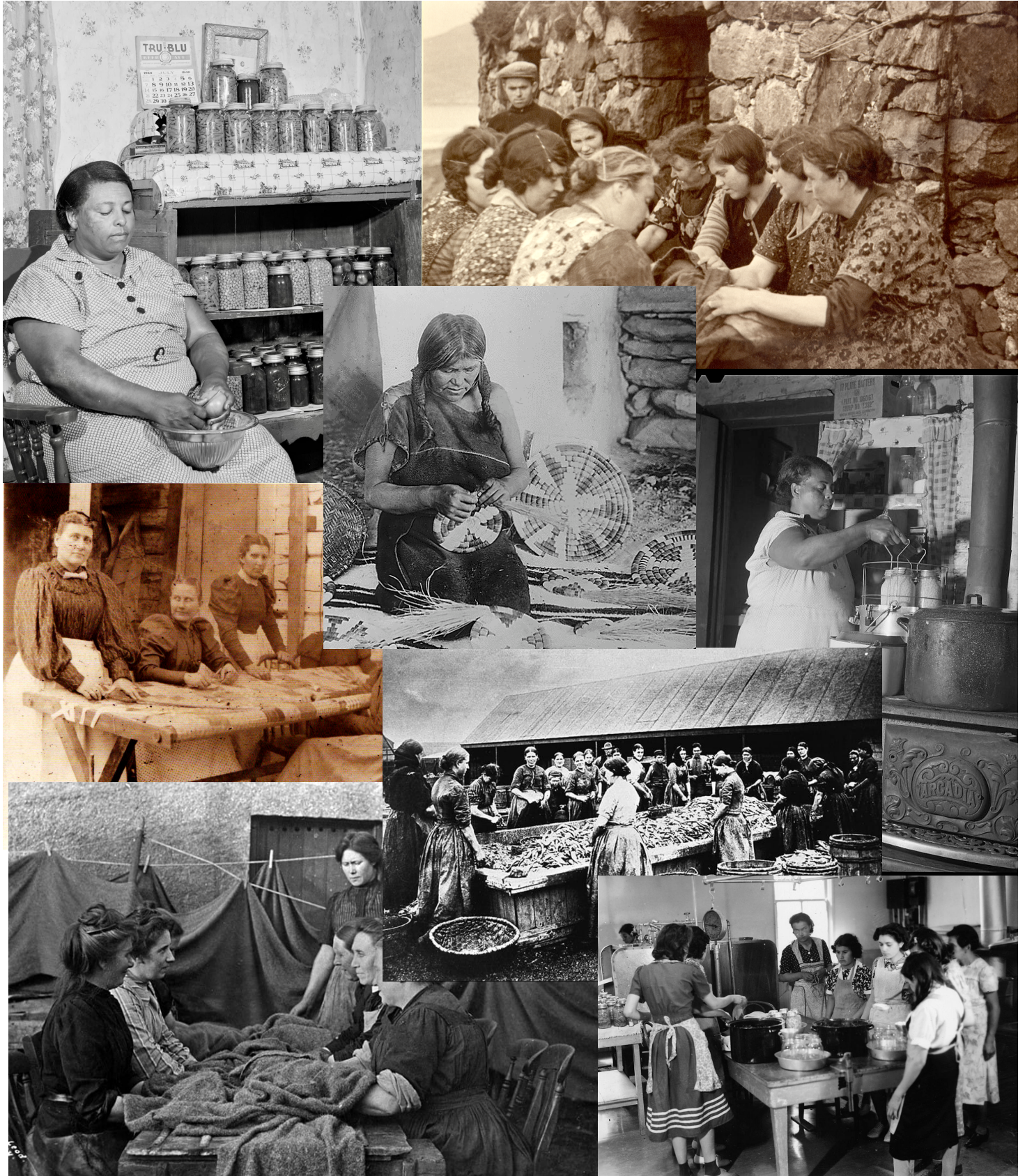


A WORKING BEE MENU

FOR CANNING, CLEANING, QUILTING, WEAVING, BAKING AND OTHER BUSY GATHERING DAYS
BY ANDREA HUEHNERHOFF



EAT HEARTILY

YOU HAVE A LONG DAY AHEAD!

A busy working day is not the time to gulp down a bowl of cold cereal - you need real, hearty, stick-to-your-ribs food with lots of protein to go for a long day of hard work!

A long working day with friends is the perfect time to show off of your culinary skills and crack open some of your goodies for a crowd of delighted and admiring women! We all love having our hard work celebrated, and sometimes our kids don't tell us just how subtly piquant and tangy our apricot jam is (their appreciation comes in the form of making it all disappear!), so it can be a happy day to have share some of your dishes with an appreciative audience - and everybody wins when everybody brings their best work to the table!

The best foods for working days take NO preparation in the moment - when all hands are on deck and the peaches are softening on the hot porch, it's hard to stop to prepare a meal in the midst of the storm.

Hot casseroles that can be made ahead and thrown in the oven are ideal. Sliced bread and its many amiable companions (butters, jams, lard, cheese), muffins of all kinds, doughnuts (obviously), dispensers of cold lemonade or apple cider, some hot coffee ... these are just a few of our favorites.

The key to a working day is to remember that it is part of your *real life*. This means you typically have kids to feed with you, so the meals have to be sufficient for a crowd! If you came to a friends' house to work and you'll be getting back home in the evening, you may have to stick something in the crock pot before you go because odds are good you won't get home in time to start dinner. In a perfect world, we would all live close enough that we could have our husbands and families gather for a grand meal at the end of a work-day as legend has it families did at the end of quilting bees in the 1800s; but the truth is often we live quite far apart from our friends, and this isn't logistically possible.

With this in mind, we must plan ahead, and plan for the work to take a long time and go over schedule, and plan to be tired when we get home.

Divide the menu between the women coming to work, so everyone can bring something of their own choosing to the table (I dislike being told WHAT to bring to an event because I like working out of my natural pantry, not having to shop to a specific list!). The recipes in this booklet are some of our work-day favorites that are easy to prepare ahead of time - even if it's just you and your kids having a spring cleaning bee, you can have all the food ready in advance so that your meals are handled!

How to estimate time needed for a canning or kitchen project: Carefully think through each step in your mind - how long they'll take, if you'll have to stop to nurse baby, etc. Get your *best* and most accurate time estimate, write it down - and then triple it. That is how long your project will actually take.

Don't ask me why this always works, but it just does.

Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

Titus 2:3 - 5

BREAKFAST

CANNING DAY BREAKFAST CASSEROLE SAUSAGE BALLS

Canning Day Breakfast Casserole

This is our favorite breakfast casserole and one I always make for busy days of butchering or canning. You can mix it the night before and let it sit in the fridge until morning - this is the best way to do it! When you wake up, if you want to pop it straight into the cold oven and then turn the heat on, just add an extra 5 to 10 minutes to the baking time. The recipe was inspired by a dish in Waking Up Down South: Southern Breakfast Traditions by Patricia B Mitchell. This is a wonderful little booklet that is just about impossible to find copies of now.

7 slices leftover bread
8 ounces shredded cheese
One bag or about 4 cups hash browns or shredded potatoes
8 eggs, more may be needed
3 cups whole milk
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon pepper
1 teaspoon ground mustard
1 pound bacon, thinly sliced and then cut into pieces
Butter

Butter a 9x13" pan, Tear up the bread and scatter it in the pan; pour the hashbrowns or shredded potatoes on top. Sprinkle on cheese. Beat together eggs, milk and seasonings, pour over bread mixture. Lay all the bacon pieces on top. Bake immediately or put in the refrigerator overnight. Bake uncovered at 350F for 50 minutes to one hour.

Sausage Balls

This recipe also came from Waking Up Down South and it is a family favorite! They can be mixed up the night before, and baked first thing in the morning.

1 pound uncooked bulk sausage (turkey or pork or whatever you like)
2 cups biscuit mix or pancake mix
1 cup cheese, shredded

Mix all ingredients together and roll into meatballs. (Makes about 26 meatballs at 40g each, uncooked.) Bake on a rimmed, lined baking sheet at 350F for 15 minutes.

LUNCH

SUMMER PUNCH, QUICK LEMONADE, WORKING DAY NOODLES & CHICKEN

Summer Punch

1 cup lemon juice
1/4 cup lime juice
1/2 cup rapadura or sucanat
1/2 cup whey or two whey ice cubes (I freeze our whey in ice cube trays and store in jars or bags for convenient use later! This comes in handy for all sorts of quick-assemble fermented drinks, and you don't have to try to time making them around having whey on hand)
1/4 teaspoon grated nutmeg - we grate it in fresh and don't measure
Additional clean water

Mix all ingredients except the additional water in a glass 1/2 gallon jar. Mix in warm or room temperature water to help dissolve the sugar, and then finish filling the jar all the way to the top. Cap it and let ferment, burping daily if needed, for about three days. After fermenting, we like to refrigerate and serve cold.

Lazy Lemonade

Pour a gallon of organic store-bought lemonade into a 2-gallon water dispenser; add heaps of ice cubes and 2 cups of lemon juice and enough water to fill the dispenser - taste and make sure it is lemony enough!

Working Day Noodles and Chicken

Make this the day before, and on canning day, pop it in a warm oven in a covered casserole dish about 30 minutes before you want to eat. The inspiration for this recipe came from Joanna Gaines' Magnolia Vol I cookbook. We never quite have all the ingredients for "book" recipes, but we make versions of our own with what we have that everybody loves!

1 pound pasta
4 tablespoons butter
A small-diced onion
A few garlic cloves, smashed and diced
1 cup cream
1/2 cup milk
1/2 cup broth
8 ounces cream cheese (use your homemade cream cheese!)
2-1/2 cups shredded cheese
Shredded or diced cooked chicken meat, at least 2 cups but the more the better
Salt and pepper to taste

Cook pasta in salted, oiled water. Set it aside. Melt butter in a large Dutch oven pot and throw in onions and garlic, toast till fragrant. (If you have mushrooms, peppers, fresh green beans, zucchini, squash, etc, you could add that in here.) Add in cream, milk, broth, cream cheese, and half the cheese. Add salt and pepper to taste. Stir until melted and soft; add in chicken and pasta and toss to coat. Set in the refrigerator overnight, take out when you make breakfast so it comes to room temperature for easy fast baking.

To bake: Put the closed Dutch oven (or transfer pasta to a foil pan with a lid) in the oven at about 250F for about 30 minutes or until as warm as you want it for lunch.

SUPPER

MEXICAN POTATO SALAD, FRUIT COMPOTE

Mexican Potato Salad

I am not sure if the name for this is the right one, but it's how I learned this dish from a beloved friend who grew up in Mexico, has 12 children and many grandchildren, cans thousands of jars of food and taught me a lot about canning! For the potato salad measurements, I Gained (;)) some support from Joanna Gaines' book, Magnolia Vol II. Typically we don't measure, we just mix!

1/4 teaspoon salt
1-1/2 pounds red potatoes
1-1/2 to 2 cups mayonnaise
2 tablespoons prepared mustard
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar or white vinegar
1 teaspoon garlic powder
1 teaspoon black pepper
1/2 teaspoon onion powder
Diced celery
Diced peppers
Diced homemade dilly beans if you like
Diced pickles or relish or piccalilli
Diced green onions or purple onions
Coarsely chopped hardboiled eggs
Cooked, shredded chicken

To serve:

Escabeche
Tortilla chips

Add potatoes to boiling water and cook till tender, about 15 minutes. Drain and cool, slip peels if you like, cut into 1-inch chunks. Sprinkle with apple cider vinegar and set aside.

Beat together mayonnaise, mustard, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. In your big potato salad bowl (doesn't everybody have one of those?), stir together potatoes, celery, peppers, onions, hard-boiled eggs and shredded chicken. Pour the mayo dressing over and make sure it seems saucy and wet enough (the potatoes will absorb some of the moisture).

Place in the refrigerator until the next day. Serve with jars of escabeche (home-canned whole or thick-sliced jalapenos, cauliflower, carrots and peppers), and big tortilla chips for scooping.

Note: You'll notice both lunch AND supper have chicken as the meat. This is so that **on preparation day, I can roast one chicken** and shred it to serve for both meals, and consolidate my working time.

Fruit Compote

Whisk together 1 cup of sugar and 2 tablespoons organic cornstarch in a heavy saucepan. Pour a few cups of fruit on top (whatever fruit we are canning, I just steal a few cups from the chopping bowl!).

Stir occasionally and let it simmer until thickened and hot and fruit is soft, while you do your work.

Serve hot over ice cream or corn cake.

THE NIGHTCAP

ALISON'S STRAWBERRY WINE

This recipe came from my Ancestral Kitchen Podcast co-host and kitchen muse, Alison Kay. You can find more of Alison's recipes on her blog, www.ancestralkitchen.com, or on her Instagram [@ancestral_kitchen](https://www.instagram.com/ancestral_kitchen).

Alison has a glass 5 litre container in which she ferments wines and beers. She worked this recipe out to be the right amount for this container, giving ample room to stir vigorously without making a mess!

5-litre fermenting container, preferably glass, with a loose cover (can be muslin)

1.5kg strawberries

2.5 litres non-chlorinated water

312g sugar

- Wash the strawberries well and take the stems off, checking for and discarding any bad ones or bits.
- Clean your fermentation vessel and then add the water and the sugar to it and stir together well.
- Add the strawberries, stir well and then cover with a loose lid - this can be a lid not quite screwed on, or a fabric cover secured with an elastic band.
- Stir vigorously regularly! I do this at least 6/7 times a day.
- After a few days you should notice bubbling starts! Keep stirring and watching, smelling and tasting the ferment.
- When the bubbling slows right down the ferment is ready.
- Strain the liquid and fruit through a medium sieve and bottle the liquid.
- Leave the bottles out at room temperature for the drink to lightly carbonate. Do be careful to check and burp them - if the fermentation is still active gases can build up in the bottles and potentially the bottle could explode.
- Enjoy after a long, hot day on your feet!

ENJOY YOUR WORKDAY!

WORK, FEAST, AND REST AS UNTO THE LORD!

Listen to the episode! Listen to the **Homesteading Today Podcast** anywhere you find your podcasts and check out **episode #400** to hear more about organizing a working bee with your friends. You can also find the episode on Melissa's blog at www.melissaknorris.com/400.

Melissa can be found at www.melissaknorris.com and on Instagram @melissaknorris. Find out more information about the annual homesteading conference in Idaho, where you can learn from Melissa and many other homesteading experts, as well as connect with locals in your area, at www.modernhomesteading.com.

For precise canning tables, recipes and reference charts, get Melissa's book, Everything Worth Preserving, anywhere books are sold, or here on Melissa's site: <https://melissaknorris.com/book/everything-worth-preserving/>

Andrea can be found at www.farmandhearth.com and on Instagram @farmandhearth, as well as on the podcast she co-hosts with Alison Kay, the **Ancestral Kitchen Podcast**, where they share how to prepare ancestral-style foods and farm-direct meals in a modern world kitchen. Science and history mingle in these episodes and every one of them brings practical solutions to the table to help you prepare nourishing, satisfying meals - within a reasonable budget! - every day of the week.

Andrea and Alison have written a podcast e-book together with even more delicious, accessible, table-ready meals which can be found at www.farmandhearth.com/shop.

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

Colossians 3:23-24