

Community is My Jam: Connecting California with a Passion and Purpose for Food Preservation

Background

One in 10 households in the United States experienced food insecurity in 2021, yet the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service estimates that nearly 40% of the U.S. food supply is lost or wasted. To address this crisis in California, state Senate Bill 1383 calls for no less than 20% of wasted edible food to be recovered for human consumption by 2025 (Cal Recycle 2021). The University of California Master Food Preserver program is supporting this goal by educating California residents on how to reduce food waste and safely preserve food.

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About University of California Master Food Preserver (UC MFP) Program

UC MFP is a volunteer-driven food preservation community education program established in 1982. Its mission is to inspire Californians to eat locally grown produce and reduce food waste, which will increase food security. UC MFP volunteers are trained on research-based practices for food preservation. Using culturally relevant recipes, Californians are learning how to safely preserve food in their own homes.

Our intensive training program certifies volunteers as UC Master Food Preservers. These certified UC MFP volunteers then partner with community organizations to create and lead sessions that teach people food preservation techniques such as dehydrating, freezing, pickling, fermenting, and canning. Since 2021, we have offered hybrid (online and in-person) volunteer certification classes.

In 2023, over 300 certified UC MFP volunteers will deliver in-person and virtual training across 34 counties in California. The California counties where we have in-person program locations as of 2023 are:

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Amador Inyo
Calaveras Lassen
Colusa Madera
Del Norte Mariposa
El Dorado Merced
Fresno Modoc
Humboldt Mono

Orange
Plumas
Riverside
Sacramento
San Bernardino
San Diego
San Francisco

San Joaquin San Luis Obispo San Mateo Santa Barbara Sierra Siskiyou

Solano

Sonoma Sutter Tulare Tuolumne Yolo Yuba



Partners/Collaborators

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, UC MFP began collaborating more frequently with food banks to broaden our audience and impact. Every month, our staff and volunteers provide food bank clients with relevant recipes as well as techniques for preserving food that would otherwise spoil and end up in the landfill.

In San Luis Obispo alone, UC MFP volunteers taught more than 1,800 food bank clients how to safely and affordably preserve food. Over 98% of participants surveyed indicated that they learned useful information from participating in these lessons.

Future Goals

UC MFP is committed to growing to become more racially, ethnically and culturally representative of the counties where we work. Our goal is to be more inclusive in order to better connect with the diversity of people we serve. We also want to expand our repertoire of culturally resonant programming, and to become responsive to the priorities and appetites (pun intended!) of our communities.

You Can Join Us!

Whether you choose to attend training, become a volunteer, build organizational partnership, or make a financial contribution, there is a role for each of us to play:

- Attend a local in-person training or an online training to get acquainted with food preservation techniques.
- Become a certified UC Master Food Preserver volunteer and teach community members how to preserve food.
- Build organizational partnerships by networking with your local Program Coordinator and making introductions to your community organizations (e.g., food banks, churches, youth centers, libraries, schools, and more).
- Make a financial contribution to support programming in your region.

98%

Indicated that they learned useful information from UC MFP volunteers.



Contact Us

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