

## Food Preservation in Controlling Food Scarcity Under Economic Meltdown in Nigeria

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### Abstract

Nigeria is a developing country that has its development of the nation rests on availability of food commodities throughout the year, there is therefore the need for food preservation as all food is liable. In time, to deterioration and decay the rate at which this happens depends upon the type of food and conditions under which it is kept. The aim in preserving is to preserve food stuffs at their most nutritious state so that they may be used when food is not available in the farm or market. This paper, therefore is concerned with how to do this effectively.

### Introduction

Economic meltdown can be defined as a situation when the economy is in a bad shape, inflation is high, so in unemployment, property values drop, company go under, causing recession or depression.

Economic meltdown is characterized by

- Reduction in the people.
- Reduction in food supply to the market.
- Loss of job, unemployment.
- Increase in poverty level.
- Foreign reserve reduction due to exchange rate of foreign currencies to the naira.
- Reduction in deposits and saving in Bank.

There is more concentration on the implication of the economic meltdown on food scarcity if foods are not preserved to meet market demand.

Since no food would keep definitely in its natural form, because as a living cell, they are subjected to micro-organism and bacteria which cause decay and spoilage and they help in process of ripening, therefore the idea of preservation was introduced to avoid wastage of foodstuffs when they are in season, and also to retain their nutrients, taste and colour. These living organisms need water, air, warmth and suitable condition for their survival. In the absence of these conditions they will not survive. So these foodstuffs are changed from their natural states to another permanent stage to spoilage by these micro-organisms.

In the olden days, our parents have been preserving their food in different ways such as salting, smoking and so on but the nutritive value and colour are altered due to over-smoking. Therefore, our foodstuffs throughout the year.

## Objectives of Study

1. The objective of this paper is to retain as far as possible the original value of foods.
2. To maintain their nutritive value as much as possible.

## Causes of Food Decay

- Microorganisms such as bacteria and mold are the most common causes of food spoilage.
- Insects, mites and rodents are also common causes of food spoilage and they may also serve as carriers in transmitting diseases.
- Metabolic change within the food itself is another cause of food spoilage in most raw foods. For example, meat and fruits contain enzymes that will cause the breakdown of tissues unless they are inactivated.
- Oxidation, causes fats to become rancid and produced off-colors and off-flavors in other foods.
- Contamination is also responsible for food decay.

## Aims of Preservation

All the organisms causing decay to food need warmth and moisture if they are to multiply. If they are deprived of these essentials they will not grow. Heat will destroy them, and coldness retards their growth.

1. To destroy the organisms by heat, or to maintain conditions which will render them inactive-cold
2. To prevent any fresh organisms reaching the food by sealing it immediately after treatment.
3. To render the organisms inactive by removing and prevent warmth.

## Method of Food Preservation

1. By Deep freezing: To exclude air and warmth which favours microorganisms as they will not survive in very cold temperature e.g meat and fish.
2. By Refrigeration: This condition will retard micro-organisms and bacteria growth, e.g fruit drinks and fruits meat etc.
3. By Dehydration: This is done by drying under the sun or dry by heat to remove water, and become dry to prevent bacterial and micro-organisms growth, since they can survive without moisture e.g Plantain, vegetables etc.
4. By Adding Chemical: Salt sugar, vinegar, bacteria cannot survive in high concentration of salt and sugar.
5. By Bottling and Canning: No micro-organisms can survive in canned food. If they are canned immediately after preparation because air is already excluded e.g. sardine, and tomatoes.
6. By Smoking: It is done by putting the foodstuff on fire and covering until water is removed and foods become dry and tough e.g meat and fish.

## Importance of Food Preservation

1. Food preservation adds variety to the food. For example, in the absence of fresh beans during the rainy season, canned or dehydrated beans may be made use of.
2. Food preservation increased the shelf life of food. Pineapples, oranges and other fruits and vegetables may be preserved by different method for long periods of time.
3. Food preservation increases the food supply.
4. Food preservation decrease the wastage of food. Excess foods which would have otherwise been wasted when processed and preserved add to the existing supplies, thus also decreasing the wastage of food.
5. Food preservation decreases dietary inadequacies. Variety in diet is brought about with the help of preserved foods. For examples some Africa countries do not grow any vegetables due to arid soil conditions; this shortcoming is overcome through the importation of fresh and preserved fruit and vegetables.

## Recommendations

1. Foodstuffs should be preserved in the correct form or place immediately it is bought.
2. Dried food must be dried and kept in dry place, either by smoking dehydration, heating or canning to exclude air, warmth and water.

## Conclusion

Preservation is a very important aspect in food preservation or meal planning so as to balance our food consumption throughout the year.

It's a useful exercise especially when foods are in season or left over food so as to avoid wastage.

The aforementioned methods are more than the refined imported foods that their nutrient values are very low.

The food personally preserved will be more hygienic because some are not done under a good hygienic condition or environment e.g Igbemo rice is more nutritious than imported polished rice that we use take. Not because it is personally preserved but because it does not undergo chemical process like the canned fish known as geisha that was very popular in the 1980s.

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