



## 101 Uses for Canning Jars

**OK, I lied. I haven't actually figured out 101 ways to use them yet, but glass home canning jars, also called Mason jars, are just so versatile and useful that I couldn't resist the title.**

*Cherie Langlois*

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Photo by Cherie Langlois OK, I lied. I haven't actually figured out 101 ways to use them yet, but glass home canning jars, also called Mason jars, are just so versatile and useful that I couldn't resist the title.

I adore these things, and I'll bet there are 101 uses for them out there (please contribute any ideas you have in the comments below!).

First, a bit of historical jar trivia, gleaned from [www.pickyourown.org](http://www.pickyourown.org): The glass Mason jar, with its reusable, screw-top lid, was invented in 1858 by a tin smith named John L. Mason.

Up until that time, home canners had to make due with a glass jar, flat tin lid and sealing wax. These affordable, easy-to-use jars revolutionized home canning, making the activity popular with farmers and city folk alike.

In 1882, another type of canning jar emerged—one with a clamped glass lid called the Lightning Jar, invented by Henry William Putnam (I inherited a bunch of these lovely old jars from my mother-in-law, including some made from blue glass). Eventually, Ball and Kerr jars—familiar to any home canner today—took over.

I've accumulated quite a collection of canning jars, of all different sizes, over the years, and here's what I found these jars holding in my home today:

1. Home-canned foods, of course: red and green salsa, apple butter, blueberry and blackberry jam, some herbal jellies.
2. Dried beans: I use the jars to store beans, and have also layered different colored/sized beans (and pasta) in the antique jars for kitchen decorations: Easy!
3. Home-grown mint tea; homemade hot chocolate mix; Christmas chocolates.
3. Dried herbs from my garden, store-bought bulk spices.
4. Saved garden seeds for next year's planting.
5. Rose bud/lavender/sweet woodruff potpourri.
6. Cotton balls, Q-tips.
7. Made from scratch salad dressing and pancake syrup.
8. Jewelry odds & ends; make-up brushes, mascara, etc.
9. Tacks, nails, screws, etc.
10. Candles.

One Christmas, I hired a candle-maker friend to take some of my antique jars and make candles out of them for gifts (I kept several for myself). They're beautiful!

If you need a candle-holder in a pinch—say during an unexpected power outage—simply take a wide-mouth glass canning jar (small or large) and stick a votive candle (or tea light) inside.



You may want to layer some small, pretty pebbles on the bottom of the jar first to make a steady base for the candle. For safety's sake, place a glass plate underneath the jar and, as with any candle, never leave these unattended.

Hope your New Year is off to a good start!

~Cherie

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