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Shelf Lives

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Why preserve foods? To give them longer shelf lives for travel, but also to confer brand-new economic value, health benefits, and even enhanced taste.

Whether it's preserving cassavas in the gardens of the Brazilian Amazon, organizing resupply for space missions, keeping Paris in fish during the 14th century, or even saving mothers' precious colostrum for their premature newborns, all these situations entail negotiations above and beyond meeting "basic needs." By revealing the mechanisms of preservation, this book interrogates the complex ties between power and technology. Analyzing a range of human food preservation situations begs the question: to what extent is abundance in consumer societies itself an issue of preservation?
