



Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe

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Freezer Berry Jam

Yield: about 5 or 6 half-pint jars

2 cups crushed strawberries or blackberries
(about 1 quart berries)
4 cups sugar
1 package powdered pectin
1 cup water
Yield: about 5 or 6 half-pint jars

Sort and remove caps and stems from fully ripe berries, wash and drain. Crush berries and place in a large mixing bowl. Add sugar, mix well, and let stand for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Dissolve pectin in water and boil for 1 minute. Add pectin solution to berry-and-sugar mixture; stir for 2 minutes.

Pour jam into sterilized freezer containers or canning jars, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch headspace at the top. Close covers on containers and let stand at room temperature for 24 hours.

Store uncooked jams in refrigerator or freezer. They can be held up to 3 weeks in the refrigerator or up to a year in a freezer. Once a container is opened, jam should be stored in the refrigerator and used within a few days. If kept at room temperature this freezer jam recipe will mold or ferment in a short time.

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation
http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_07/uncooked_berry_jam_powder.html



Freezing Produce

Freezing is a fairly quick and easy way to preserve summer's bounty, as long as you have enough space in your freezer and have good containers for freezing. Some foods do not freeze well, but the National Center for Home Food Preservation has helpful instructions for freezing many other products, such as freezer jam, fruits, and vegetables. Many fruits can be frozen with very little preparation but most vegetables must be blanched before freezing for optimum quality. Blanching is simply heating the product in boiling water or steam for a short time, which stops enzyme actions which can cause loss of flavor, color and texture. It also cleanses the surface of dirt and organisms, helps retard loss of vitamins, and wilts or softens vegetables which makes them easier to pack. It is crucial to follow recommended blanching times for each type of vegetable for optimum quality.



For most vegetables, boiling water blanching is the best method, but steam blanching is recommended for a few vegetables such as mushrooms. Use a large pot with a lid and either a blanching basket or wire basket for best results. You will need one gallon of water per pound of prepared vegetables. Put the prepared vegetables into the blanching basket and lower into vigorously boiling water. Place a lid on the blancher. The water should return to boiling within 1 minute or you have too much produce for the amount of water. Start counting blanching time as soon as the water returns to a boil. Keep the heat on high for the entire blanching period. Recommended blanching times for different vegetables range from 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes for green peas to 11 minutes for large ears of sweet corn. A list of blanching times can be found at: <http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze/blanching.html>.

As soon as the blanching time is completed, vegetables should be cooled quickly and thoroughly to stop the cooking process. Immediately put the basket of vegetables into a large quantity of cold water (60°F or below). Change the water frequently or use cold running water or ice water. Drain vegetables thoroughly after cooling and pack into freezer containers (either rigid containers or flexible bags) with $\frac{1}{2}$ inch headspace. Seal the container and freeze, at or below 0°F. For best quality, enjoy your frozen fruits or vegetables within 8-12 months.

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation

Successful Sweet Spreads

Many people look forward to having fresh fruit so they can prepare their own sweet spreads. Blueberries and blackberries are still plentiful in this part of the Midwest. Soon it will be time for raspberries and peaches. The time is always ripe for making jam and jelly but to be successful, you need to know some basic principles.

Four things are necessary in correct proportions for a successful gel: fruit, sugar, acid, and pectin.

Fruit: It is critically important to start with good quality just ripened fruit because it provides the fresh flavor of your sweet spread.

Sugar: Cane sugar works best for making sweet spreads. You may not always get a good gel with beet sugar.

Acid: Some fruits have enough acid to assure a good gel. If the recipe calls for lemon juice, use purchased lemon juice and not fresh lemon. That is because we know the acidity of purchased lemon juice which will assure proper acidity for a good gel.

Pectin: You must use the type of pectin called for in the recipe.— Gel and powdered pectins are not interchangeable.

Final tips:

- You can't double a jelly recipe. It may not gel properly
- You can prevent a good gel by putting the jelly in a jar larger than the recipe calls for
- It is possible to make reduced sugar and no sugar sweet spreads but you must follow a recipe designed for this purpose
- Jams and jellies must be processed in a boiling water or steam canner to assure food safety (if they will be stored at room temperature)

Link to guides for sweet spreads:

Missouri: <http://extension.missouri.edu/explorepdf/hesguide/foodnut/gh1461.pdf>

Kansas: <http://www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/jam-jelly.html>

Local Contact Information:

Food Preservation Videos from K-State Research & Extension

Food preservation season is here! To help consumers learn how to can foods safely, K-State Research & Extension (KSRE) created several new videos to help anyone learn about canning and the science behind the methods.

Thanks to a grant funding from the Kansas Health Foundation, 17 short videos were made featuring Karen Blakeslee, Extension Associate for K-State Research & Extension in Food Science. They were recorded and produced by KSRE News Media Services. They include the following topics:

- Recommended recipes and choosing the right recipe
- Canning salsa
- Water bath canning
- Science behind home canning
- Canning meat
- Pressure canning
- Maintenance of canners



All videos are on the KSRE YouTube channel. You can find all of them and more information on home food preservation at: <http://www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/videos.html>

Brand names appearing in these videos are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned. A special thanks to HyVee in Manhattan, KS for the use of their kitchen in the production of these videos.

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