



LET'S PRESERVE

FRUIT PIE FILLINGS

WP 379-99

These processing recommendations are for West Virginia conditions (maximum altitude, 4,000 feet). For canning directions in other locations, consult your county Extension office.

General

The following fruit fillings are excellent and safe products. Each canned quart makes one 8-inch to 9-inch pie. Fillings may be used as toppings on desserts or pastries. Clear Jel® is a starch modified to produce excellent sauce consistency even after fillings are canned and baked. Other available household starches break down, causing a runny sauce consistency when used in these pie fillings. Clear Jel® is available only through a few supply outlets and is not currently available in grocery stores. Find out about its availability prior to gathering other ingredients to make these pie fillings. If you cannot find it, ask your county Extension home economist about sources for Clear Jel®.

Because the variety of fruit may alter the flavor of the fruit pie, you should first make a single quart, make a pie with it, and serve. Then adjust the sugar and spices in the recipe to suit your personal preferences. The amount of lemon juice should not be altered, because it aids in ensuring the safety and storage stability of the fillings.

When using frozen cherries and blueberries, select unsweetened fruit. If sugar has been added, rinse it off while fruit is frozen. Collect, measure, and use juice from thawing fruit to partially replace the water specified in the recipe and only 1/4 cup Clear Jel® per quart, or 1 3/4 cups for 7 quarts.

Apple pie filling

Ingredient	Quantities of ingredients needed for	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh sliced apples (blanched)	3 1/2 cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	3/4 cup + 2 Tbsp.	5 1/2 cups
Clear Jel®	1/4 cup	1 1/2 cups
Cinnamon	1/2 tsp.	1 Tbsp.
Cold water	1/2 cup	2 1/2 cups
Apple juice, unsweetened	3/4 cup	5 cups
Bottled lemon juice	2 Tbsp.	3/4 cup
Nutmeg (optional)	1/8 tsp.	1 tsp.
Yellow food coloring (optional)	1 drop	7 drops

Blueberry pie filling

Quality:

Use firm, crisp apples. Stayman, Golden Delicious, Rome, and other varieties of similar quality are suitable. If apples lack tartness, use an additional $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of lemon juice for each 6 quarts of slices.

Procedure for preparing apple filling:

Wash, peel, and core apples. Prepare slices $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide and place in water containing 1 teaspoon of ascorbic acid crystals or six 500-mg vitamin C tablets in 1 gallon of water, to prevent browning.

For fresh fruit, place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch 1 minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain, but keep heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine sugar, Clear Jel[®], cinnamon, and nutmeg in a large kettle with water, apple juice, and food coloring. Stir and cook on medium-high heat until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil sauce 1 minute, stirring constantly. Fold in drained apple slices, immediately fill jars with mixture, leaving 1-inch headspace, and process without delay.

Ingredient	Quantities of ingredients needed for	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh or thawed blueberries	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup + 2 Tbsp.	6 cups
Clear Jel [®]	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup + 1 Tbsp.	2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups
Cold water	1 cup	7 cups
Bottled lemon juice	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup
Blue food coloring (optional)	3 drops	20 drops
Red food coloring (optional)	1 drop	7 drops

Quality:

Select sweet, very ripe but firm, deep blue fruit.

Procedure for preparing blueberry filling:

Wash and drain blueberries. For fresh fruit, place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon boiling water. Boil each batch 1 minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain but keep heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine sugar and Clear Jel[®] in a large kettle. Stir. Add water and, if desired, food coloring. Cook on medium-high heat until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil 1 minute, stirring constantly. Fold in drained berries, fill jars immediately with mixture, leaving 1-inch headspace, and process without delay.

Cherry pie filling

Ingredient	Quantities of ingredients needed for	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh or thawed sour cherries	3 ¹ / ₃ cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	1 cup	7 cups
Clear Jel®	¼ cup + 1 Tbsp.	1 ³ / ₄ cups
Cold water	1 ¹ / ₃ cups	9 ¹ / ₃ cups
Bottled lemon juice	1 Tbsp. + 1 tsp.	½ cup
Cinnamon (optional)	⅛ tsp.	1 tsp.
Almond extract (optional)	¼ tsp.	2 tsp.
Red food coloring (optional)	6 drops	¼ tsp.

Quality:

Select very ripe, firm, tart cherries.

Procedure for preparing cherry filling:

Rinse and pit cherries, and hold in cold water. To prevent stem end browning, hold pitted cherries in water containing 1 teaspoon of ascorbic acid crystals or six 500-mg vitamin C tablets in 1 gallon of water. For fresh fruit, place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon boiling water. Boil each batch 1 minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain but keep heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine sugar and Clear Jel® in a large saucepan. Add water and, if desired, cinnamon, food coloring, and almond extract. Stir mixture and cook over medium-high heat until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil 1 minute, stirring constantly. Fold in drained cherries, fill jars immediately with mixture, leaving 1-inch headspace, and process without delay.

Peach pie filling

Ingredient	Quantities of ingredients needed for	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh sliced peaches	3 ¹ / ₂ cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	1 cup	7 cups
Clear Jel®	¼ cup + 1 Tbsp.	2 cups + 3 Tbsp.
Cold water	¾ cup	5 ¹ / ₄ cups
Bottled lemon juice	¼ cup	1 ³ / ₄ cups
Cinnamon (optional)	⅛ tsp.	1 tsp.
Almond extract (optional)	⅛ tsp.	1 tsp.

Quality:

Select ripe but firm peaches. Red Haven, Redskin, Sun High, and other varieties of similar quality are suitable.

Procedure for preparing peach filling:

Peel peaches. To loosen skins submerge peaches in boiling water for 30-60 seconds, and then place in cold water for 20 seconds. Slip off skins and prepare slices $\frac{1}{3}$ inch wide. Place slices in water containing 1 teaspoon of ascorbic acid crystals or six 500-mg vitamin C tablets in 1 gallon of water to prevent browning. For fresh fruit, place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch 1 minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain but keep heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine sugar, Clear Jel[®], water, and cinnamon or almond extract in a large kettle. Stir and cook on medium high heat until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil sauce 1 minute more, stirring constantly. Fold in drained peach slices and continue to heat for 3 minutes, then fill jars with mixture, leaving 1-inch headspace, and process without delay.

Procedure for canning all fillings

Wash jars. Prepare lids according to manufacturer's instructions. Fill fruit mixtures into jars, leaving 1-inch headspace. Wipe sealing surface of jars with a clean, damp paper towel. Add lids, tighten screw bands, and process.

To process in a boiling-water canner, preheat canner half filled with water to 180 degrees F. Load sealed jars into the canner rack and lower with handles; or load one jar at a time with a jar lifter onto rack in canner. Add water if needed to a level of 1 inch above jars and cover. When water boils vigorously, lower heat to maintain a gentle boil and process for recommended time.

Process times

The following process times apply to fruit fillings canned in pint *or* quart jars using a boiling-water canner. Apple filling should be processed for 35 minutes. Blueberry, cherry, and peach should all be processed for 40 minutes.

After processing is completed, remove jars from canner with a jar lifter and place them on a towel or rack. Do not retighten screw bands. Air-cool jars 12 to 24 hours. Remove screw bands and check lid seals. A jar is sealed if the center of its lid is indented or concave. Wash, dry, label, and store sealed jars in a clean, cool, dark place. If a jar is unsealed, examine and replace it if defective, use a new lid, and reprocess as before. Wash screw bands and store separately. Fillings are best if used within 1 year and safe as long as lids remain vacuum-sealed.

Adapted from *Let's Preserve Fruit Pie Fillings*, Pennsylvania State University College of Agriculture Sciences, Cooperative Extension, and reviewed by Amy O'Dell, Graduate Assistant, and Guendoline Brown, Ph.D., Nutrition and Health Specialist, June 1999.

Reference to commercial products and services is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the WVU Extension Service is implied. Clear Jel[®] is mentioned because it is the only suitable product available to the public through distributors of specialty products.

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