



LET'S PRESERVE

REDUCED-SUGAR JELLY, JAM, SPREADS

WP 384-99

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 description

Making jellied products with little or no added sugar requires special recipes—they cannot be made by simply leaving the sugar out of regular jelly recipes. There are four basic methods of making jams and jellies with less sugar:

1. **Special Modified Pectins**—Two types of modified pectin are available for home use. One gels with one-third less sugar; the label will say “light” or “less sugar.” The other is low-methoxyl pectin that requires a source of calcium to gel. To prevent spoilage, these products must be processed longer in boiling-water canners. Follow the directions on the package.
2. **Regular Pectin With Special Recipes**—These special recipes have been formulated so that no added sugar is needed. However, each package of regular pectin does contain some sugar. Artificial sweetener is often added.
3. **Recipes Using Gelatin**—Some recipes use unflavored gelatin as the thickener for the jelly or jam. Artificial sweetener is often added.
4. **Long-Boil Methods**—Boiling fruit pulp for extended periods of time will make a product thicken and resemble a jam, preserve, or fruit butter. Artificial sweetener may be added.

General canning procedures

Recipes, processing times, and storage recommendations for reduced-sugar jams and jellies must be followed carefully. The proportion of acid and fruit should not be altered, as spoilage may result.

Prepare products as described. All products should be filled hot into sterile half-pint canning jars, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch headspace. To sterilize empty jars, put them open-side-up on a rack in a boiling-water canner. Fill the canner and jars with hot (not boiling) water to 1 inch above top of jars. Boil jars 14 minutes. Remove and drain hot sterilized jars one at a time and fill with food. Food residue should be removed from the jar sealing edge with a clean, damp paper towel. New two-piece canning lids prepared according to

manufacturer's directions should be added. After screw bands are tightened, jars should be processed in a boiling-water canner.

To process in a boiling water canner, fill canner halfway with water and preheat 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 add cover. When water boils vigorously, lower heat to maintain a gentle boil, and process jars of the product for the time given.

The following recipes use gelatin, regular fruit pectin, or long boiling to make jellies and jams. To make jelly and jam from the special modified pectins, follow the directions found in their packages.

Liquid Sweetener and Sugar Equivalents

Liquid Sweetener	Equivalent to Sugar
1/2 tsp.	1/4 cup
2 tsp.	1/3 cup
3 tsp. (1 Tbsp.)	1/2 cup

Grape jelly with gelatin

2 Tbsp. unflavored gelatin powder
1 bottle (24 ounces) unsweetened grape juice
2 Tbsp. bottled lemon juice
2 Tbsp. liquid artificial sweetener (Saccharin is acceptable)
Yield—3 half-pints

Preparation:

In a saucepan, soften the gelatin in the grape and lemon juices. Bring to a full rolling boil to dissolve gelatin. Boil 1 minute and remove from heat. Stir in sweetener. Fill quickly into hot sterile half-pint jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Adjust lids. Do not process or freeze—store in refrigerator and use within 4 weeks.

Apple jelly with gelatin

2 Tbsp. unflavored gelatin powder
1 quart bottled unsweetened apple juice
2 Tbsp. bottled lemon juice
2 Tbsp. liquid Saccharin sweetener
Food coloring, if desired
Yield—4 half-pints

Preparation:

In saucepan, soften gelatin in apple and lemon juices. To dissolve gelatin, bring to a full rolling boil and boil 2 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in sweetener and food coloring, if desired. Pour into sterile half-pint jars,

leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch headspace. Adjust lids. Do not process or freeze—store in refrigerator and use within 4 weeks.

Variation: For spiced apple jelly, add two 3-inch sticks of cinnamon and four whole cloves to mixture before boiling. Remove both spices before adding the sweetener and food coloring.

Peach jam with pectin

4 cups peeled peaches
3 to 4 tsp. liquid artificial sweetener
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ascorbic acid
 $1\frac{3}{4}$ -ounce package powdered fruit pectin

Yield—3 half-pint jars (1 Tablespoon=10 calories)

Preparation:

Crush peaches in saucepan. Stir in sweetener, fruit pectin, lemon juice, and ascorbic acid. Bring to a boil; boil 1 minute. Remove from heat. Continue to stir 2 minutes. Pour into freezer containers, cover, and freeze. Thaw for use; then keep refrigerated and use within 4 weeks.

Strawberry jam with pectin

1 quart cleaned strawberries
3 to 4 tsp. liquid artificial sweetener
1 package powdered fruit pectin
1 Tbsp. lemon juice
Red food coloring as desired

Yield—2 to 3 half-pint jars (1 Tablespoon=5 calories)

Preparation:

Crush strawberries in $1\frac{1}{2}$ -quart saucepan. Stir in artificial sweetener, food coloring, powdered fruit pectin, and lemon juice. Bring to a boil and boil 1 minute. Remove from heat. Continue to stir 2 minutes. Pour into freezer containers, cover, and freeze. Thaw for use; then keep refrigerated and use within 4 weeks.

Apple butter

Cored and sliced ripe apples—enough to fill a 6-quart pot
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
5 drops cinnamon oil
Sweetener to equal 2 cups sugar
Yield—10 half-pint jars (1 Tablespoon=10 calories)

Peach-pineapple spread

Preparation:

Sterilize canning jars. Heat apples and water, covered, over medium heat for 6 to 8 hours, stirring frequently. Press through a sieve. Reheat and add salt, cinnamon oil, and sweetener. Cook to desired thickness. Pour into hot sterilized jars. Seal, cool, and store in refrigerator and use within 4 weeks.

4 cups drained peach pulp
2 cups drained, unsweetened crushed pineapple
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup bottled lemon juice
Yield—5 to 6 half-pints

Preparation:

Thoroughly wash 4 to 6 pounds of firm, ripe peaches. Drain well. Peel and remove pits. Grind fruit flesh with a medium or coarse blade, or crush with a fork. Do not use a blender. Place ground or crushed fruit in a 2-quart saucepan. Heat slowly to release juice, stirring constantly, until fruit is tender. Place cooked fruit in a jelly bag or strainer lined with four layers of cheesecloth. Allow juice to drip about 15 minutes. Save the juice for jelly or other uses. Measure 4 cups of drained fruit pulp for making spread. Combine the 4 cups of pulp, pineapple, and lemon juice in a 4-quart saucepan. Add up to 2 cups of sugar, if desired, and mix well. Heat and boil gently for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring often. Fill quickly into jars, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch headspace. Adjust lids and process the jars as described below.

Variation: The above recipe may also be made with any combination of peaches, nectarines, apricots, and plums. It may also be made without sugar or with as little as 2 cups sugar. Nonnutritive sweeteners may be added; however, the sweetening power of aspartame may be lost within 3-4 weeks.

When preparing the Peach-Pineapple Spread, it is recommended that you use the hot style of packing and a boiling-water canner. For half-pint jars, process the spread for 10 minutes and for pint jars, process for 15 minutes.

Adapted from *Let's Preserve Reduced Sugar and Fruit Spreads*, 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.

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