

Canning Acidic Foods: Fruits

Besides the convenience and eating enjoyment of having home-canned foods on hand, there is a sense of personal satisfaction every time you open and serve a jar of fruit, fruit juice or fruit products.

Selection of Fruits

The quality of home-canned products is equal to the quality of the raw product you use. Select fruit evenly ripe, with a desirable color and flavor.

Fruit for canning should be fully ripened but firm. Unripened fruit is not as sweet as fully ripened fruit, and the natural flavor has not developed. Discard mushy, overripe and diseased fruit. Canning fresh fruit as soon as possible after gathering will help to hold all of the good flavor and nutritional value.

Fruits such as cherries, plums and berries should be carefully picked over and any overripe, bruised or spoiled ones discarded. They must be thoroughly washed to remove all traces of dust. Strawberries should be washed again after hulls are removed. Do not allow small fruits to stand in water.

Large fruits, such as apples, nectarines and pears, should be thoroughly washed before they are peeled.

Fresh apricots and peaches peel easier if dipped in boiling water for a short time to loosen the skin. Water should be at a rolling boil. Fruit should be placed in boiling water for a minute, then placed in cool water. Skins will split, making it easier to peel.

Fruit has a tendency to oxidize when exposed to air, which causes darkening of the fruit. It must be treated as soon as it is cut to preserve the natural color. To prevent darkening of fruit, use one of these solutions:

- 1 teaspoon, or 3,000 mg, powdered ascorbic acid in 1 gallon of water
- 2 tablespoons of salt and 2 tablespoons vinegar

in 1 gallon of cold water

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup lemon juice in 1 gallon water
- Commercial anti-darkening solutions are mixes of citric and ascorbic acids. Read label for powder/water amounts.



Dip fruit in the solution as soon as it is cut. It can stay in the solution while you are preparing the jars for the boiling water canner.

Hot Pack or Raw Pack

The hot-pack method requires a short precooking period. The boiling hot product is packed into clean jars, hot liquid is added, then it is processed immediately. The hot-pack method removes air from the tissues of the fruit, helps keep the fruit from floating, and increases the vacuum in sealed jars. After longer storage, both color and flavor of hot-packed foods tend to be better. Hot packing is recommended for apples, peaches, pears and pineapple.

The raw pack method is packing the raw fruit into the hot jar, then adding boiling liquid. Filled jars are then processed in a boiling water canner.

Canning Liquids

Water, fruit juice or syrup serve as liquids when canning fruit. All fruits may be canned successfully without sugar. Sugar helps to retain color and adds sweetness but is not necessary to prevent spoilage. However, fruits canned without sugar will have a less firm texture. Home-canned fruits can be adjusted to the sweetness your family prefers with the liquid chosen.

Other sweeteners: Light corn syrup or honey may be used in place of sugar. Honey can overpower the fruit's flavor. Sucralose, commonly known as Splen-

da, may be used as it is heat stable. Other sugar substitutes may be added after the fruit jar is opened.

Boiling Water Canning

A boiling water canner may be purchased, or it can be made from a large pot deep enough to permit water to cover jars 1 to 2 inches over the top with space above for boiling water to remain in the canner. The canner must have a rack to hold the jars at least ½ inch above the bottom of the canner. The rack must allow water to circulate under the jars. The canner should have a cover that keeps water at a good rolling boil during processing.

1. Before the preparation of the food begins, center the canner on the heat source. Heat the water in the canner while the fruit is being prepared. Water should be preheated to 140°F for raw pack or 180°F for hot pack.
2. Clean the jars; place in canner to preheat. Clean the lids and screwbands; set aside.
3. Prepare fruit according to directions for raw- or hot-pack canning as given. Prepare only enough jars of food at one time to fill the canner. Work rapidly so as little time as possible will elapse between precooking or packing the food and getting it into the canner.
4. Place fruit pieces, then liquid, into jars; release air bubbles. Check for correct headspace. Clean the rim of the jar with a damp towel. Center a flat lid on top, then add metal screw band to fingertip-tight.
5. Place filled, lidded jars on the rack in the canner. Place apart to allow water to circulate around entire jar. Hot water should be 1 or more inches above top of jars. If water does not cover jars at least 1 inch over the top, add boiling water to this depth. Place the cover on canner.
6. Start counting processing time as soon as the water in the canner reaches a good rolling boil. Keep the water boiling during the entire processing time. If the water level goes down, add sufficient boiling water to keep it at the required height.
7. Process the required length of time. If the water stops boiling at any time during processing, bring water back to boil. Start timing from the

Syrups for Canning

Type of Syrup	To One Quart Water, Add	Yield of Syrup
Very light	1 cup sugar	4 ½ cups
Light	2 cups sugar	4 ¾ cups
Medium	3 cups sugar	5 cups
Heavy	4 ¾ cups sugar	6 cups

Medium with corn syrup: Use 1 ½ cups sugar, 1 cup corn syrup to 3 cups water.

Medium with honey: Use 1 cup sugar, 1 cup honey to 4 cups water.

Syrup instructions: Boil sugar and water together 5 minutes.

*The liquid may be water or juice extracted from fruit. To extract juice, crush ripe, sound fruit. Place in pot, simmer. Strain.

beginning when boiling restarts. See tables on pages 3 and 4.

8. When processing time is done, remove jars from the canner in upright position. Do not tighten screw bands again. Set jars 1 inch apart on a rack or thick towel at room temperature for 12 to 24 hours. Do not set hot jars in a draft or on a cold, wet surface. Do not cover them.
9. When jars are cool, test for seal and remove screw bands. Wash and dry bands. Bands are unnecessary once jars are sealed. Wipe jars and lids. Label and store in a cool, dry, dark area.
10. If a jar did not seal, it must be reprocessed within 24 hours of the initial processing, stored in the refrigerator and used within regular storage time, or frozen for longer storage.

References

USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning. Online version: nchfp.uga.edu/resources/category/usda-guide. Print version: <https://www.extension.purdue.edu/usdacanning>

National Center for Home Food Preservation. University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service: www.uga.edu/nchfp.

Using Alaska's Wild Berries & Other Wild Edibles, University of Alaska Fairbanks Cooperative Extension Service, www.uaf.edu/ces.

Canning Fruit in Jars

		Process Time (min.), Boiling Water Canner				
		0–1000 feet			1001–3000 ft*	
Fruit	Preparation	Pack Method	Pint	Quart	Pint	Quart
To begin	Choose mature healthy fruit. Wash fruit, drain. Choose liquid of your choice. Follow instructions below to prepare. Choose hot pack or raw pack method as offered. Place filling then liquid in jar with ½" headspace.					
Apples	Peel, core. Slice into antidarkening solution. Drain, place 5 pounds in 1 pint boiling liquid. Boil 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. With slotted spoon, bring fruit out of boiling liquid and place in hot jars. Pour hot liquid on top of fruit.	Hot	20	20	25	25
Apricots, Nectarines, Peaches (except white flesh peaches)	Skin on or remove: Dip fruit in boiling water 30–60 seconds, then quickly in cold water; slip off skins. Cut in half, remove pits; halve or slice. Put in antidarkening solution. Drain.					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put in liquid, bring to boil. With slotted spoon, bring fruit out of boiling liquid and place in hot jars. Pour hot liquid on top of fruit to ½" headspace. Place raw into hot jars. Cover with boiling liquid. 	Hot	20	25	25	30
Berries (all except strawberries and cranberries)	Remove caps and stems. Put ½ cup boiling liquid in each hot jar for both hot and cold methods before adding berries					
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Heat berries in boiling water for 30 seconds. With slotted spoon, bring fruit out of boiling liquid and place in hot jars. Add hot liquid on top of fruit to ½" headspace. Put raw berries in jars, add hot liquid to ½" headspace. 	Hot	15	15	20	20
Cranberries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash, remove stems. Drop into boiling heavy syrup. Boil 3 minutes. Place berries into hot jars; cover with boiling liquid leaving ½" headspace. 		15	15		
Cherries, sweet or sour	Stem, wash, remove pits; put in antidarkening solution. Drain.					
	In large saucepan put ½ cup liquid for each quart of cherries. Bring to boil. Place cherries in hot jars, add cooking liquid.	Hot	15	20	20	25
	Add ½ cup hot liquid to each jar. Fill hot jars with raw cherries. Add more hot liquid to ½" headspace.	Raw	25	25	30	30
Figs, firm, ripe uncracked	Cover figs with water; boil 2 minutes. Drain. Gently boil figs in light syrup 5 minutes. To increase acidity, to each hot jar add 2 tablespoons bottled lemon juice OR ½ teaspoon citric acid per quart; 1 tablespoon bottled lemon juice OR ¼ teaspoon citric acid per pint. Fill hot jars with hot figs and cooking liquid to ½" headspace.	Hot	45	50	50	55
Fruit Juice	Peel, remove stems, seeds or pits. Crush fruit. Add 1 cup hot water for each quart of fruit. Heat to simmer, stir to prevent sticking. Strain through cloth bag. If desired, add 1 cup sugar to 1 gallon juice. Reheat to simmer (185°F). Pour hot juice into hot, sterilized jars** to ½" headspace. If using a steam juicer to prepare juice, pour simmering juice directly into hot sterilized jars** to ½" headspace.	Hot	5	5	10	10
Fruit Puree	Remove stems, seeds or pits. Measure fruit into large saucepan. Crush slightly. Add 1 cup hot water for each quart of fruit. Cook slowly until fruit is soft, stirring frequently. Press through sieve or food mill. Reheat pulp to boil or until sugar (if added) dissolves. Fill in hot jars to ¼" headspace. Caution: Do not use bananas, Asian pears, figs, tomatoes, melons, papaya, mango or coconut for home-canned puree.	Hot	15	15	20	20

		Process Time (min.), Boiling Water Canner				
		0–1000 feet			1001–3000 ft*	
Fruit	Preparation	Pack Method	Pint	Quart	Pint	Quart
Pears:	Peel, cut lengthwise in half, remove core. Put in antidarkening solution. Drain. Put pears in boiling liquid; boil 5 minutes. With slotted spoon put pears in hot jars, add hot liquid to ½" headspace. For Asian pears, add 2 tablespoons lemon juice per quart; 1 tablespoon per pint	Hot	20	25	25	30
Pineapple	Peel, remove eyes and tough fiber. Slice or cube. Place in boiling liquid; simmer 10 minutes. With slotted spoon put fruit in hot jars. Pour hot liquid on fruit to ½" headspace.	Hot	15	20	20	25
Plums	Remove stem. Prick skins in two sides of plums. If Freestone variety, halve, remove pits.					
	• Add to hot liquid; boil 2 minutes; remove from heat. Cover saucepan; let stand 20 minutes. Fill hot jars with hot plums, cover with cooking liquid, to ½" headspace.	Hot	20	25	25	30
	• Fill hot jars with raw plums, packing firmly. Add hot liquid to ½" headspace.	Raw	25	30	30	35
Rhubarb	Choose young, tender, well-colored stalks. Trim off leaves. Wash; cut into ½" pieces. Add ½ cup sugar to each quart rhubarb; let stand to draw out juice. Bring to boil. Fill hot jars to ½" headspace.	Hot	15	15	20	20

*Altitude adjustment: If you live at a higher altitude, check with Cooperative Extension Service.

**To sterilize, place clean jars in water. Bring to boil; boil for 10 minutes.

Note: Some fruits may be canned in a pressure canner. Go to www.uga.edu/nchfp for instructions.

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