



Save Summer's Goodness by Canning Fruits at Home

Ripe, juicy cherries, peaches, pears and other fruits are some of the most delicious foods available. Canning fruits can bring a colorful touch of summer to family meals all year round. Fruit can be safely and healthily canned in either a sweet syrup, or in water or fruit juice. Fruit canned in syrup holds its shape, color and flavor, even after canning. Canning fruit in water or fruit juice helps reduce the sugar content of the canned fruit.

Properly canned peaches, pears and plums are usually superior in quality to the same fruits when frozen. But other fruits, especially soft berries, look and taste better if you freeze them.

To avoid spoilage, all fruits must be heat processed after jars are properly filled and capped. Most recipes for canned fruit call for processing in a boiling water canner. This yields a safe, high quality product.

For the best quality canned fruit, use tree-ripened, undamaged fruits. Choose fruit ripe enough to eat. Under-ripe fruit will lack flavor and sweetness. Do not can overripe, bruised, moldy or damaged fruit, because an unsafe product may result.

The cut surfaces of some fruits such as apples, apricots, peaches and pears darken quickly when exposed to air. You can prevent darkening by:

- dipping in a solution of vitamin C — 1500 mg per quart of water,
- sprinkling with a commercial ascorbic acid mixture as the package directs, or
- dipping in a solution of bottled lemon juice — 3 tablespoons per quart of water.

Fruit can be canned in a sugar-based syrup, fruit juice, water or unsweetened fruit juice. Sugar helps canned fruit hold its shape, color and flavor. For that reason, sugar syrups are called for in most canning instructions. One to 1-1/2 cups of syrup per quart are needed to cover the fruit. To make sugar syrup, mix sugar with water or fruit juice. Use a syrup suited to the fruit's natural sweetness and your taste. Fruit canned in lighter syrup will have fewer calories and be more economical.

Guidelines for syrup*

<u>Syrup</u>	<u>water or juice</u>	<u>sugar</u>	<u>yield of syrup</u>
Light	4 cups	1 cup	4-1/2 cups
Medium	4 cups	2 cups	5 cups
Heavy	4 cups	3 cups	5-1/2 cups

**Note: For additional guidelines for preparing sugar syrup and syrup using juice see Canning Fruits Safely (B0430).*

Fruits may be packed raw or hot into clean, hot jars. For raw pack, tightly pack fruit into jars and cover with boiling hot syrup, juice or water. For hot pack, heat fruit first in syrup, water or juice, then loosely pack hot into jars with hot liquid. Some fruits may also be pressure canned.

A complete guide to Canning Fruits Safely (B0430) is available from UW-Extension. The publication is part of The Wisconsin Safe Food Preservation Series by Barbara Ingham. The series also includes: Canning Vegetables Safely (B1159), Freezing Fruits and Vegetables (B3278), Homemade Pickles and Relishes (B2267), Making Jams, Jellies and Fruit Preserves (B2909), Tomatoes Tart and Tasty (B2605), Canning Salsa Safely (B3570), and Canning Meat, Wild Game, Poultry and Fish Safely (B3345). The publications are available from the Outagamie County UW-Extension office or from Cooperative Extension Publications (877-947-7827) and online at <http://learningstore.uwex.edu>. There is a fee for publications; some are printable online free of charge.

Recipes for Canning Fruits

Applesauce; hot pack

Select apples that are sweet, juicy and crisp. For a tart flavor, add 1 to 2 pounds of tart apples to each 3 pounds of sweeter fruit. Wash, peel and core apples. To prevent browning, slice apples into an antioxidant solution. Drain slices and place in an 8- to 10-quart kettle. Add 1/2 cup water. Heat quickly until tender 5 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent burning. Press through a sieve or food mill, or skip this step if you want chunk-style sauce. Sauce may be packed without sugar. If desired, add 1/8 cup sugar per quart of sauce. Add more to preferred taste. Reheat sauce to boiling. Pack hot sauce into clean, hot jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove bubbles and wipe jar rims clean. Adjust lids and process in a boiling water canner: Pints: 20 minutes, Quarts: 25 minutes.

Or pressure can, 10 minutes at 6 pounds pressure (psi) in a dial gauge canner or 10 minutes at 10 pounds pressure in a weighted gauge canner.

Cherries, sweet or tart; hot or raw pack

Sort, stem and wash the cherries. Remove pits if desired. If pitted, place cherries in an antioxidant solution to prevent stem-end darkening. If canned unpitted, prick skins on opposite sides with a clean needle to prevent splitting. Cherries can be canned in water or sugar syrup.

Hot pack: Drain cherries. In a large saucepan, add 1/2-cup water, juice or syrup for each quart (4 cups) of drained fruit. To prevent browning, add 1/4-teaspoon ascorbic acid to each quart jar. Bring fruit mixture to a boil, stirring to prevent sticking. Fill clean, hot jars with hot cherries and cooking liquid, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove bubbles and wipe jar rims clean. Adjust lids and process in a boiling water canner: Pints: 20 minutes, Quarts: 25 minutes.

Raw pack: Pack fruit into clean, hot jars, shaking jars to get a full pack. To prevent browning, add 1/4-teaspoon ascorbic acid to each quart jar. Cover with boiling apple juice or white grape juice, water or syrup, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove bubbles and wipe jar rims clean. Adjust lids and process in a boiling water canner: Pints or quarts: 30 minutes.

Note: Cherries that are hot-packed may also be pressure canned. Hot pack, and pressure can, 10 minutes at 6 pounds pressure (psi) in a dial gauge canner or 10 minutes at 10 pounds pressure in a weighted gauge canner.

Peaches or nectarines, halved or sliced; hot pack

Wash fruit and dip in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds until skins loosen. Dip quickly into cold water and slip skins off. Cut in half and remove pits, slice if desired. To prevent browning, keep peeled fruit in an antioxidant solution. Drain before heating. Prepare and boil a very light, light or medium syrup. Or pack peaches in water, apple juice or white grape juice.

Place prepared peaches in a large saucepan and heat in syrup, water or juice. Very juicy peaches may be heated with sugar and no added liquid. Bring to a full boil. Fill clean, hot jars with hot fruit and liquid, leaving 1/2-headspace. Remove bubbles and wipe jar rims clean. Adjust lids and process in a boiling water canner: Pints: 25 minutes, Quarts: 30 minutes.

Or, pressure can, 10 minutes at 6 pounds pressure (psi) in a dial gauge canner or 10 minutes at 10 pounds pressure in a weighted gauge canner.

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