



For Orchard-Fresh Fruit all Year Round—Try Canning!

Canning orchard-fresh fruit is a fun and rewarding process, providing a savory treat year round. Whether it is ripe juicy cherries, peaches or pears, canned fruit is easy to prepare, and the results are delicious and healthy too!

Selecting the Fruit

In order to prepare a safe and delicious batch of fresh canned fruit, start with high quality ingredients. For best results, use only fresh, firm and undamaged fruit. The fruit should be ripe enough to eat, and will produce a sweeter flavor if it is allowed to ripen on the plant. Often quality will be higher if you process small batches of fruit as it ripens. Under-ripe fruit will lack natural sweetness and weaken the overall flavor of the canned product.

You can speed up ripening for some fruits by putting them in a paper bag with an apple, folding down the top of the bag and allowing it to sit on a counter for a couple of days. Open up the bag and remove the ripe fruit every day. Fruits that can be ripened in a paper bag include apples, apricots, peaches, pears, plums and tomatoes.

Fruit varieties recommended for Wisconsin can be found in the following publications:

- *Apple Cultivars for Wisconsin A2105*
- *Home Fruit Cultivars for Northern Wisconsin A2488*
- *Home Fruit Cultivars for Southern Wisconsin A2582*

Available on-line at this address: <http://www1.uwex.edu/ces/pubs/>

Preparing the Fruit

Wash fruit just before canning. Most fruit should be scrubbed individually under running water. Delicate fruits such as berries can be rinsed and drained using a colander.

Preventing Browning

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

- Dipping in a solution of vitamin C—prepared by crushing three 500 mg vitamin C tablets and dissolving in 1 quart of water,
- Sprinkling with a commercial ascorbic acid mixture such as FruitFresh®, or
- Dipping in a solution of bottled lemon juice—3 tablespoons per quart of water.

Sweetening Fruit

Sweetening with sugar syrup helps canned fruit hold its shape, color and flavor. Use 1 to 1-½ cups of syrup per quart to cover the fruit.

Proportions of sugar and liquid for various syrups are listed below. Canning fruit in a light syrup will help keep the fruit from floating and the product will have fewer calories.

Syrup	Water or Juice	Sugar	Yield of Syrup	Calories per Cup
Very light	4 cups	½ cup	4 cups	77
Light	4 cups	1 cup	4 ½ cups	154
Medium	4 cups	2 cups	5 cups	308
Heavy	4 cups	3 cups	5 ½ cups	420
Very Heavy	4 cups	4 cups	6 ½ cups	563

Most fruits can also be successfully canned in unsweetened fruit juice or water, rather than the traditional sugar syrup. Apple juice, white grape juice, pineapple juice or blends of these three juices are all good choices for canning many fruits. Add lemon juice to fruit juice syrups to prevent browning.

Note: In general, non-nutritive sweeteners are not recommended for canning. Sugar substitutes containing aspartame (brand names Equal® and Nutrasweet®) lose their sweetening power on heating, and should not be used for canning. Saccharine-based sweeteners, such as Sweet'N Low®, become bitter on prolonged heating. Sucarlose®- also labeled Splenda®- is a relatively new non-nutritive sweetener made from sugar. This stable sweetener will not produce an aftertaste on heating, and may be used in canning fruits. Follow the manufacturer's directions.

Water Bath

Fruit is canned using a water bath canner. Fruit may be packed raw into jars or preheated and packed hot. Fruit is less likely to float if it is packed hot. Be sure to follow a tested recipe, such as those found in the Wisconsin Safe Food Preservation Series publication **Canning Fruits Safely**.

Delicious Home-Canned Peaches

Peaches are a popular fruit for home canning. They can be halved or sliced into a jar or even prepared in a peach pie filling. The following recipes will show how to can both peaches and peach pie filling.

Peaches—Halved or Sliced

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 home canning jars with hot fruit and liquid, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove bubbles, wipe jar rims clean. Adjust lids. Process in a boiling water canner: **25 minutes for pints, 30 minutes for quarts.**

Peach Pie Filling

Ingredients	Yield	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Peaches, sliced fresh	3 ½ cups (4 medium)	6 quarts
Sugar	1 cup	7 cups
Clearjel®	¼ cup + 1 tbsp.	2 cups + 3 tbsp
Cold water	¾ cup	5 ¼ cups
Bottled lemon juice	¼ cup	1 ¾ cups
Cinnamon (optional)	1/8 tsp.	1 tsp.
Almond extract (optional)	1/8 tsp	1 tsp.

Select ripe, but firm, fresh peaches. Wash and peel fruit and remove skins as instructed for canned peaches (above). In a large kettle, combine water, sugar, Clearjel®, and, if desired, cinnamon and almond extract. Stir and cook over medium-high heat until

mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add bottled lemon juice and boil sauce 1 minute more, stirring constantly. Drain peach slices. Fold in drained peach slices and continue to heat mixture for 3 minutes. Fill clean, hot jars without delay, leaving 1-inch headspace. Remove bubbles, wipe jar rim clean, adjust lid and process in a boiling water canner: **35 minutes for pints or quarts.**

Resources:

USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning

http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/publications_usda.html

Canning Fruits Safely. B0430 Wisconsin Safe Food Preservation Series by Barbara H.

Ingham. Available on-line: <http://www1.uwex.edu/ces/pubs/>

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