

Low-Sugar Preserves

Summertime is the best season to enjoy local fresh fruits! Making jams and jellies is a great way to preserve these summer fruits, particularly if you want to use fruit that is "imperfect" in shape or size for eating fresh. Jams and jellies typically have a lot of *added sugars*, which means added calories. However, this *added sugar* is needed for the jam or jelly to gel and to bind the water in the fruits. Sweet spreads that are higher in sugar also have a lower risk of spoiling (and of making people sick!).

Use Tested Recipes for Canning and/or Freezing Jams and Jellies

If you want to preserve a sweet spread by *canning* it, be sure that you follow a tested recipe for food safety reasons, as well as good taste. **Do not simply reduce the amount of sugar on your own.** If you are *canning* OR *freezing* a sweet spread and leave out or reduce the sugar level, the spread may not gel and will be runny.

Tested recipes (for safety AND for good taste!) are available at National Center for Home Food Preservation web site. Tested recipes are also found at the K-State Rapid Response Center web site www.rrc.ksu.edu or call the Butler County Extension Office at 316.321.9660. Here's a tested and tasty sweet spread recipe that offers reduced-sugar options when canning:

Reduced-Sugar Peach-Pineapple Spread -- Yield: 5 to 6 half-pint jars

Ingredients:

- 4 cups drained peach pulp (procedure below)
- 2 cups unsweetened crushed pineapple, drained
- ¼ cup bottled lemon juice • 2 cups sugar (optional)

Notes: This recipe may be made with any combination of peaches, nectarines, apricots and plums. It may be made without sugar or with up to 2 cups of sugar, according to taste or preference. Nonnutritive sweeteners may be added. If aspartame (a low-calorie nutritive sweetener) is used, sweetening power of aspartame may be lost within three to four weeks.



Procedure for preparing pulp: 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.

Instructions for spread: 1. Combine the 4 cups of pulp, pineapple and lemon juice in a 4-quart saucepan. 2. Add up to 2 cups of sugar, if desired, and mix well. 3. Heat and boil gently for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring enough to prevent sticking. 4. Fill jars quickly, leaving ¼-inch headspace. 5. Adjust lids and process as recommended in table below.

Recommended process time for Peach-Pineapple Spread in a boiling-water canner, using the hot pack method.

Process time at altitudes of:

Jar size	0–1,000 feet	1,001–3,000 feet	3,001–6,000 feet
Half pint	15 min	20	20
Pint	20	25	30