



Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe

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Plum conserve

Ingredients:

- 4 pounds plums (8 cups cut)
- 2 lemons, juice and thinly sliced rind
- 6 cups sugar
- 1 pound raisins
- 1 cup chopped walnuts

Directions:

1. Wash plums; cut in half.
2. Remove pits, coarsely chop and measure fruit.
3. Combine all ingredients except nuts.
4. Bring the mixture to a boil. Cook until thick.
5. Add nuts during the last 5 minutes of cooking.
6. Pour conserve into hot, sterilized half-pint or pint jars to a quarter-inch of top, and seal with two-piece canning lids.
7. Process half-pint jars in a boiling water bath or steam canner for five minutes at 0 to 1,000 feet of sea level, or for six minutes at 1,000 to 2,000 feet of sea level.

Source: William Schafer and Isabel D. Wolf, University of Minnesota, <http://www.extension.umn.edu/food/food-safety/preserving/fruits/plum-conserve/>



It isn't too late to make sweet spreads for the holidays

If you like to gift your friends and family with sweet spreads but just didn't have time last summer, it isn't too late. There are many sweet spreads that can be made with fresh fruits from the supermarket. A conserve is one such spread.

Conserves are similar to jams in that the whole fruit is included in the recipe. The difference between jams and conserves is that conserves also have other ingredients such as lemon or orange rind, dried fruit, nuts and coconut. They can be used as a spread on biscuits, hearty breads or waffles. They can also add interest and flavor served as a condiment for meat or with a cheese tray.



There are conserve recipes that can be made without added pectin, and others that have added pectin.

The recipes without added pectin rely on the fruit's naturally occurring pectin. For best results, use three parts ripe fruit to one part of just underripe fruit. There is more pectin in the underripe fruit. It helps to thicken the mixture.

If you gift the plum conserve from the recipe we have provided, your friends and family will have visions of a different type of sugared plums dancing in their heads this holiday season.

Fruit syrups make great holiday gifts

Warm syrup, yum! We all would agree that waffles and pancakes just wouldn't be same without a tasty syrup, right? Not only do fruit syrups add flavor, texture and color to many dishes and meals, home-preserved syrups make perfect holiday gifts. During the upcoming months of cold and dreary days, brighten someone's day with apple-cinnamon syrup.

Apple-cinnamon syrup

Makes: 6 pints

Ingredients:

- 6 cups apple juice
- 3 cinnamon sticks, broken up
- 5 cups sugar
- 4 cups water
- 3 cups corn syrup
- ¼ cup lemon juice



Directions:

1. Combine apple juice and cinnamon sticks in a large saucepan.
2. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
3. Reduce heat and boil gently for 5 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.
4. Combine the sugar and water in a large saucepan and cook until the syrup reaches 230 degrees F.*
5. Add apple juice-cinnamon stick mixture and corn syrup to the sugar and water combination. Return to boil and boil for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
6. Remove from heat and discard cinnamon sticks. Stir in lemon juice.
7. Ladle the hot syrup into hot jars, leaving a quarter-inch of headspace. Wipe rims. Adjust screw bands to fingertip-tight.
8. Process in a boiling water canner or steam canner for 10 minutes (adjusting for altitude if necessary). Remove canner lid. Wait 5 minutes, then remove jars, cool and store.

Source: Judi Kingry and Lauren Devine, Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving(2006).

* At sea level, a mixture of sugar and water becomes syrup at 230 degrees F. This stage occurs just before the soft-ball stage when making candy. If you don't have a candy thermometer, you'll know your syrup is ready when a small amount dropped into cold water forms a thread, but not a ball. To adjust for altitude using a candy thermometer, establish the boiling point of water at your altitude. Subtract this temperature from the boiling point at sea level (212 degrees F). Subtract the difference from 230 degrees F, then cook until syrup reaches that temperature.

Freezing apples

Apples are a wonderful part of this season. More information on selecting and generally preserving apples is available in an [article](#) in the September/October edition of this newsletter. Freezing is a great option if you have more apples than you can keep whole and you have enough freezer space. Frozen apples work (and taste!) great when quickly making apple dessert or other treats long after apple season.

Apples can be frozen in a syrup pack, sugar pack or dry pack, which is the easiest and healthiest method. For dry pack, you simply wash, peel and core the apples and slice into twelfths or sixteenths, depending on the apple size. Pack the apples into [appropriate freezer containers](#) and press fruit down, leaving a half-inch of headspace. Seal and freeze. You can also pre-treat the apples with ascorbic acid to prevent darkening. Treated apple slices can also be frozen first on a tray and then packed into containers as soon as they are frozen. More information on freezing apples is available from the National Center for Home Food Preservation: <http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze/apple.html>



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