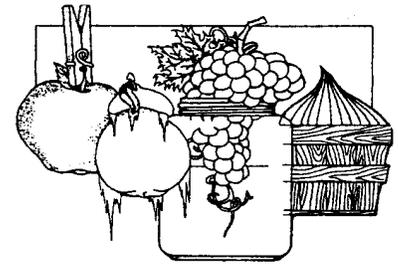


Quality for Keeps



Information for those who produce and preserve food

Perfectly Preserved Pears Every Time



Pears are juicy and plentiful during fall months, and tasty eaten out-of-hand. Extra pears are excellent canned, frozen, dried, pickled, or as sweet spread products.

Best varieties of pears for canning include Bartlett, Bosc, Anjou, and Comice. Keiffer is acceptable. Seckel pears are suitable for pickled and spiced products.

Quantity. A bushel weighs 50 pounds and yields 16 to 25 quarts. Use about 17½ pounds pears for a 7-quart canner load, or about 11 pounds for a 9-pint canner load. Plan to use 2½ pounds per quart. An average of 1½ pounds of pears makes 1 pint of frozen pears.

Quality. Pears are harvested before they are ready to eat. Unless refrigerated, they will ripen within 7 to 14 days. For best quality, sort pears often and preserve them as they ripen to an ideal maturity for eating fresh. Pears are best if canned by the hot pack method. Raw packed pears are of poor-quality.

Canning. Choose ripe, mature fruit of ideal quality for eating fresh or cooking. Pears may be packed in either a light or medium syrup, or pack in unsweetened apple or white grape juice.

Wash and peel pears Cut lengthwise in halves and remove core. A melon baller, or metal measuring spoon works well for coring pears.

To prevent darkening, hold pears in a mixture of water and ascorbic acid. Mix together 1 teaspoon of crystalline ascorbic acid, or six 500-milligram vitamin C tablets in 1 gallon of water.

Syrup pack. For a light syrup, in a large pot, combine 2¼ cups of sugar with 9 cups of water and bring to a boil to dissolve; for a medium syrup use 3¾ cups of sugar and 8¼ cups of water and heat until dissolved. Yields enough syrup for 9 quarts canned pears.

Place drained fruit in boiling syrup, juice, or water and boil for 5 minutes. Pack pears hot into jars (raw packs make poor quality pears). Fill clean jars with hot fruit and cooking liquid, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe sealing edge of jars with a clean, damp paper towel. Add lids and tighten screw bands. Process in a boiling water bath canner.

Process pints for 20 minutes, and quarts for 25 minutes in a boiling water canner at 0 to 1,000

feet in altitude. At 1,000 to 3,000 feet in altitude, process pints for 25 minutes and quarts for 30 minutes, in a boiling water canner.

Freezing. Select full-flavored pears that are crisp and firm, not mealy in texture. Wash, peel and core. Slice medium pears into twelve sections, large ones into sixteen.

Heat pears in boiling, 40% syrup, for one to two minutes, depending on size of pieces. Drain and cool. Pack pears into containers and cover with 40% syrup. For a better product, add ¾ teaspoon crystalline ascorbic acid to each quart of syrup. Leave headspace, seal and freeze.

For a medium syrup, heat together 3 cups of sugar in 4 cups water until dissolved. For a light (30 percent syrup) use heat 2 cups of sugar with 4 cups of water until dissolved. Cool before using.

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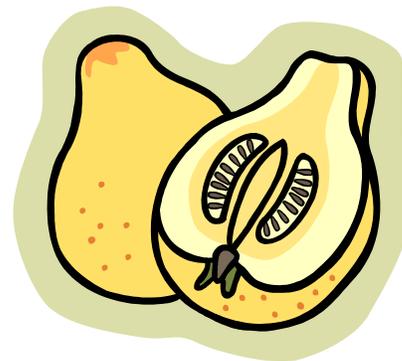
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Drying Pears. Select ripe, firm fruit. Bartlett variety is recommended. Wash fruit well. Pare, if desired. Cut in half lengthwise and core. Cut in quarters or eighths or slice 1/8- to 1/4-inch thick. Dip in ascorbic acid or other anti-darkening/ antimicrobial solution for 10 minutes. Remove and drain. Arrange in single layer on trays with pit side up. Dry in electric dehydrator until springy and suede-like with no pockets of moisture.

When dry, allow fruit to “condition” for four to 10 days before packaging for storage. See *GH1563 Drying Foods at Home* <http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=GH1563> for storage and pasteurization directions.

Source: Let's Preserve Pears. The Pennsylvania State University 2004 GH1502, Quality for Keeps: Freezing Fruits, University of Missouri Extension. 1998 GH 1455 Fruitful Canning. University of Missouri Extension. 2001



Smooth Cooktops Create Problems When Canning

Several questions have occurred concerning the safety of canning on smooth cooktops. The National Center for Home Food Preservation recommends owners of smooth cooktops contact the manufacture before attempting to can on any smooth cooktop.

Some manufactures recommend that smooth cooktops not be used for canning at all. Other manufacturers say it is okay to can on them, but put stipulations on the diameter of the canner compared to the diameter of the burner.

First, the cooktop can be damaged by the excessive heat that reflects back down on the surface. This is more likely to occur if the canners used are larger in diameter than is intended for the burner being used. This damage includes discoloration of white tops, actual burner damage, cracking of the glass tops, and/or fusion of the metal to the glass top.

Even if a manufacturer says a burner/cooktop can be used for canning, the cooktop can be scratched if the filled aluminum

canner is slid or pulled across the cooktop.

Second, many of these cooktops have automatic cut-offs on their burners when heat gets excessive. If that option is built-in, and the burner under a canner shuts off during the process time, **then the product will be under-processed and cannot be salvaged as a canned food.**



If food is not processed at the correct temperature or correct amount of time, microorganisms may survive.

Third, many canners do not have flat enough bottoms to work well on a smooth cooktop and still

be able to maintain a full boil over the tops of the jars.

One option is to create a canner out of a flat-bottomed stockpot with a bottom rack inserted. The pot must be large enough to allow water to boil freely around the jars, and cover the jars with 2 inches of water.

Before making a decision as to whether or not to can on a smooth cooktop, contact the manufacturer. The manufacture should be able to make recommendations about canning, and may offer up-to-date alternatives or suggestions for suitable equipment for canning.

Clearly state the size of the boiling water or pressure canner being used, how long it must be heated at high heat, how long the hot canner may stay on the burner until it cools after the process time, and that the canner is made from aluminum (if it is).

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation. University of Georgia. 2006 <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/nchfp/factsheets/smoothtops.html>

Use Splenda® wisely in home-canned food

Splenda® does not have the ability to preserve food like sugar. In large concentrations, (think jelly), sugar has the ability to control bacteria and help preserve food. Splenda does not have the same effect of helping making food safe when canned.

Canning Fruits. It is safe to use Splenda® to sweeten the water used to cover fruits when canning. However, expect the texture and color of canned fruit to be different. Fruit canned in a heavy syrup results in a firm, plump product. In contrast, fruit canned with Splenda® will be softer and less firm, with a slightly different taste. Process according to current recommended processing times for fruit.

Use about half as much Splenda® as sugar. For example, a

medium syrup uses 2-¼ cups sugar dissolved in 5-¼ cups water. Use 1 to 1-¼ cups Splenda® per 5-¼ cups water.

Preserves and Pickled Fruits.

Do not use Splenda® in fruit preserves or pickled fruit where sugar is needed to preserve the fruit for safety.

Splenda® cannot be used in traditional Southern preserves. These are whole or uniform pieces of fruit in a very thick sugar syrup, usually made with figs, peaches or pears. Since these preserves do not use pectin gel products, they depend on sugar to make the product safe. Without that heavy amount of sugar, these products become fruit pieces canned in water and should be canned according to directions for canned fruit with longer processing times.

Jams and Jellies, or Fruit Spreads. Splenda®, or other sugar substitutes, may be used to make jam or jelly only if a no-sugar needed pectin is used. **Do not substitute Splenda® for sugar in recipes calling for “regular” liquid and powdered pectins.**

Do not use Splenda® in long-boil, or no-pectin-added, jams and jellies intended for room temperature storage as a canned product. Sugar must be used in these product to keep them safe.

For safety, freeze or refrigerate any jams or jellies created using Splenda®, unless a low-methoxyl pectin is used, and directions are followed exactly.

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation, June 2009.

Brand names are mentioned for educational purposes only and do not imply endorsement.

Store and ripen green tomatoes

Store mature green tomatoes at 55 to 70° F. Make sure the storage area is away from direct sunlight and not too humid. Excessive humidity can cause tomatoes to rot.

Suitable storage areas include garages, cellars, porches, or pantries. Place in single layers on shelves or within shallow containers and boxes.

If at all possible, green tomatoes should be harvested before the first frost. Green tomatoes hit by a light frost should ripen if wrapped in newspaper. However, if they are hit by a heavy frost, they will not ripen

and should be used as soon as possible in the green state.

One way to ripen green tomatoes once they are removed from the vine is to wrap them individually in newspaper (wrapping the tomatoes helps to prevent rotting and provides the proper atmosphere for ripening to occur).

You may also ripen tomatoes in well-ventilated, open cardboard boxes at room temperature checking them every few days to eliminate those that may have spoiled. Line the box with newspaper and place a layer of tomatoes on top. Although a second layer can be

added, do this only when necessary, as tomatoes are prone to bruising.

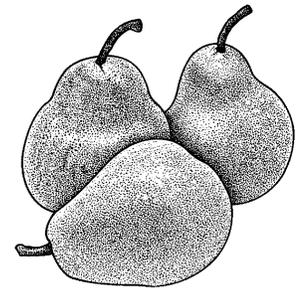
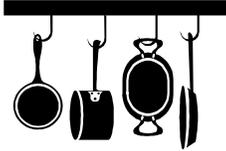
The cooler the temperature, the longer the ripening process will take. Mature green tomatoes will ripen in 14 days at 70 degrees F and 28 days at 55 degrees

Once fruit is fully ripe, it can be stored at 45 to 50 degrees F with a relative humidity of 90 – 95%. Do not refrigerate. Ripening enzymes are destroyed by cold temperatures whether in the garden or in a refrigerator.

Source: Michigan State University Extension, Preserving Food Safely—01600822, 08/03/99

THE RECIPE BOX

Southern pear preserves



- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 2-1/2 cups water
- 6 medium cored, pared, hard, ripe pears, cut in halves or quarters (about 2lbs.)
- 1-1/2 cups sugar
- 1 thinly sliced lemon

Yield: About 5 half-pint jars .

Combine 1-½ cups sugar and water; cook rapidly for 2 minutes. Add pears and boil gently for 15 minutes. Add remaining sugar and lemon stirring until sugar dissolves. Cook rapidly until fruit is clear, about 25 minutes. Cover and let stand 12 to 24 hours in refrigerator.

Sterilize canning jars. Heat fruit and syrup to boiling. Pack fruit into hot jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Cook syrup 3 to 5 minutes, or longer if too thin. Pour hot syrup over fruit, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids. Process in a Boiling Water Canner.

At 0 to 1,000 feet in altitude, process pints or half-pints for 5 minutes in a boiling water canner. At 1,000 to 6,000 feet in altitude, process pints and half-pints for 10 minutes in a boiling water canner.

Note: Small pears may be preserved whole with stem intact; peel pears and wash stem well. For best flavor, Kiefer pear preserves should be stored in a cool, dry place from 3 to 5 weeks after processing before using. A piece of preserved ginger may be added to each jar.

Source: "So Easy to Preserve", 5th ed. 2006. Bulletin 989, Cooperative Extension Service, The University of Georgia

Quality for Keeps, published monthly, April through October, is made available to residents of East Central and Southeast Missouri by their Extension Councils. Contact your county Extension office to subscribe or visit our website <http://missouri.extension.edu/franklin>. Questions may be directed to:

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