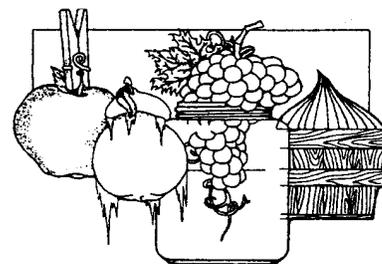


Quality for Keeps



Information for those who produce and preserve food

Everything is peaches 'n cream

"An apple is an excellent thing -- until you have tried a peach." George du Maurier (1834-1896)

Choose local peaches for sweetest taste when eating 'em fresh, preserving peaches, or cooking.

Like most fruits or vegetables peaches are best used soon after harvest. The juiciest peach is a local peach, since peaches do not get sweeter once harvested. When shipped peaches are picked before they are fully ripe, they will soften, but not get as sweet. The best use for under-ripe peaches is salsa.

For all other uses buy soft fruit with a pleasant smell, and no dark, bruised, or mushy places. If the peaches are ripe, and they will not be eaten or used within a day, store them in the refrigerator for up to five days.

To peel peaches, dip in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds, then place in ice or ice water to easily remove the peel. Once peeled or cut peaches tend to darken.

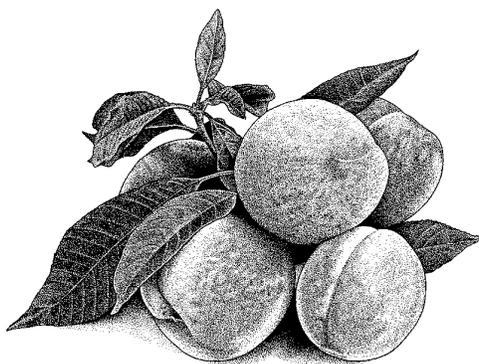
Keep peaches from darkening by using a commercial ascorbic acid mixture, use as directed on the package, or dissolve 3,000 mg of ascorbic acid (vitamin C) in a gallon of water. Hold the fruit in the liquid until ready to use. Drain just before use.

Always follow a tested recipe when preserving foods.

Canned peaches do better if they are hot packed in a very light syrup, light syrup, medium syrup, water, apple juice, or white grape juice.

Brandied peaches make a unique canned product. Peach brandy is added before processing.

Prepare spiced peaches using small whole peaches, cinnamon, allspice and cloves, then pour syrup made with honey over the prepared peaches.



Peaches make excellent sweet spreads. *Peach jelly* should be clear and firm, but not tough. *Peach jam* is a less firm product made with crushed fruit. *Peach preserves* consist of pieces of fruit held in a thickened syrup. *Marmalade* is a jelly with slivers of peaches distributed throughout the gel. *Conserves* are similar to preserves, but they may contain

bits of other fruits, nuts, or coconut. *Peach butter*, with or without spices, is the pulp cooked with sugar, until it is the proper consistency. *Peach honey* is made with juice extracted from the cooked peelings, then boiled with sugar, until it is the consistency of honey.

Peach pickles are made by using sugar, spices and vinegar. *Chutney* is a tangy pickled product, containing raisins, onions, garlic, and spices for seasoning. *Salsa* combines under-ripe peaches with vinegar, sugar, onion, pepper, garlic, and zesty spices.

Peach pie filling can be canned or frozen. Frozen peach pie filling can be thickened with flour, but canned pie filling must be thickened with ClearJel[®], which is not available in most stores. Order on-line well in advance.

Other frozen peach products include sweetened and sugar-free jams, puree, peaches in syrup, or peaches in sugar.

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Preserved peaches—always a treat never the pits

Canning. Choose ripe, mature fruit of ideal quality. Allow peaches to ripen one or more days between harvest and canning for best results.

For each 7-quart canner load, use an average of 17-1/2 pounds of fresh peaches. For each 9-pint canner load, use an average of 11 pounds of fresh peaches.

Procedure. Dip fruit in boiling water for 30 seconds to 60 seconds until skins loosen. Dip quickly in cold water and slip off skins. Cut in half and remove pits. Slice if desired.

Hold in a mixture of water and ascorbic acid. Prepare desired syrup.

Syrup. To make enough medium syrup for 9 pints of canned peaches, combine 5-1/4 cups of water with 2-1/4 cups sugar, and bring to a boil to dissolve the sugar.

Hot pack. Drain fruit. Place drained fruit and prepared syrup, water, or juice in a large saucepan and bring to boil. Fill jars with hot fruit and cooking liquid; leave 1/2-inch headspace. Place halves in layers, cut side down.

Adjust lids and process in a boiling-water canner.

Processing. Process pints for 20 minutes at 0-1,000 feet of altitude, or for 25 minutes at 1,001-3,000 feet of altitude.

Process quarts for 25 minutes at 0-1,000 feet of altitude, or for 30 minutes at 1,001-3,000 feet of altitude.

Source: GH1455, Quality for Keeps: Food Preservation — Fruitful Canning <http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=GH1455>

Freezing. Select well-ripened fruit; handle carefully, to avoid bruising. Sort, wash and peel. Note: peeling without a boiling water dip gives a better product. Slice or halve if desired.

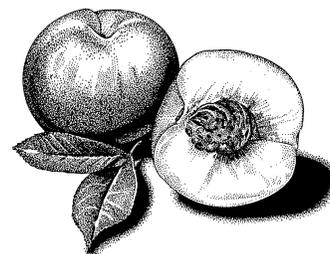
Syrup pack. Use 40% syrup. For a better quality product, add 1/2 teaspoon crystalline ascorbic acid for each quart of syrup. Slice fruit directly into syrup, starting with 1/2 cup syrup to a pint container. Press fruit down and add syrup to cover, leave 1/2-inch headspace for pints, 1-inch for quarts. Seal and freeze.

Sugar pack. Before combining peaches with sugar, pre-treat with 1/4 teaspoon crystalline ascorbic acid and 1/4 cup cold water.

Dissolve crystalline ascorbic acid in cold water and sprinkle over 1 quart (1-1/3 pounds) of fruit. Mix 2/3 cup sugar with each quart of fruit. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Pack into containers, leave 1/2-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

Unsweetened pack. Place peaches or nectarines into containers and cover with cold water or juice, containing 1 teaspoon crystalline ascorbic acid for each quart, leave 1/2-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

Source: GH1502, Quality for Keeps: Freezing Fruits <http://extension.missouri.edu/publications/DisplayPub.aspx?P=GH1502>



Local peach varieties come to market now

Firm varieties of peaches are best for canning. Most peaches grown today are freestone (woody pit falls out easily when fruit is cut in half). In contrast, the fruit of clingstone must be cut off the fruit's pit. Early varieties tend to be clingstone, while later peaches tend to be freestone.

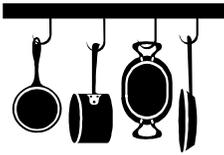
- **Red Haven.** The standard of all peaches, nearly fuzzless, pits tend to split, outstanding flavor fresh or frozen, good canner.
- **Loring.** Good flavor, soft fruit, freestone, satisfactory canner.
- **Jim Dandee.** Dark yellow, freestone and fairly firm, good flavor.
- **Elberta.** Excellent for eating and canning. Large yellow fruit with mostly red skin. Firm rich flavor.
- **Cresthaven.** High quality, firm, yellow, good flavor.
- **Encore.** Late season peach, firm flesh, freestone.
- **Belle of Georgia.** Old favorite, white flesh, soft fruit, freestone.
- **Summer Pearl.** White fleshed, good flavor, firm for a white peach, freestone.
- **Harken.** Firm, attractive fruit, excellent quality, generally freestone.
- **Redskin.** Early peach, freestone

Source: Katie Kammler, Agronomy/Plant Sciences Specialist, University of Missouri Extension, Ste. Genevieve County

Suitable preservation options for fruits

Fruit	Canning	Drying	Freezing
Apples	Canned (sliced, quartered, or halved), apple butter, juice, pie filling, sauce, chutney, jelly, preserves, relish, spiced rings, peach-apple salsa	Slices, fruit leather	Sugar pack, syrup pack, baked, sauce, pie filling, steamed apples
Apricots	Canned (halved), apricot butter, chutney, jam, juice, nectar, puree	Halves, fruit leather	Sugar pack, syrup pack,
Bananas		slices	mashed
Berries	Canned, jam, jelly, juice, preserves, syrup, blueberry pie filling	Fruit leather, whole blueberries	Sugar-free pack, puree
Cherries	Canned (with or without pits), brandied, jams, preserves, pie filling, syrup	Halves, chopped, whole, fruit leather	Sugar pack, syrup pack, pie filling
Grapes	Canned (ripe or unripe), grape butter, jam, jelly, juice, conserve, marmalade, spiced red, syrup	Whole seedless	Syrup pack, puree, juice, jelly,
Melons	Watermelon rind pickles, watermelon rind preserves, cantaloupe pickles,		Syrup pack, unsweetened pack
Nectarines	Canned (halved)	Halved, sliced, quartered	Sugar pack, syrup pack,
Peaches	Canned (halved), Brandied, chutney, pickles, conserve with rum, juice, nectar, puree, pie filling, jelly, jam, preserves, marmalade, conserve, peach butter, peach honey, honey spiced, salsa	Halved, sliced, quartered	Sugar pack, syrup pack puree, jam
Pears	Canned (quartered or halved), Brandied, chutney, pickles, relish, spiced, preserves, marmalade, conserve, pear butter, pear honey, puree, chayote and pear relish	Halved, sliced, quartered	Syrup pack
Persimmons		Sliced	Puree
Plums	Canned (whole), chutney, jelly, jam, preserves, conserve, spiced	Whole, halved	Syrup pack, plum sauce
Rhubarb	Canned (1 inch pieces), strawberry-rhubarb jelly,	Pieces	Sugar-free pack, syrup pack
Strawberries	Jam, preserves, strawberry honey, syrup	Fruit leather, sliced	Sugar pack, syrup pack, sliced or crushed, two berry jam

THE RECIPE BOX



Peach Salsa

- 6 cups diced, hard, under-ripe, yellow peaches
- 1-1/2 cups diced red bell pepper
- 1/2 cup finely chopped yellow onion
- 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped garlic
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped ginger
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1-1/4 cups cider vinegar (5%)
- 1/2 cup water

Yield: About 6 half-pint jars

Procedure: Wash and rinse half-pint canning jars; keep hot until ready to use. Prepare lids according to manufacturer's directions. Wash all produce well. Peel and chop peaches into 1/2-inch cubes. Dice bell pepper into 1/2-inch pieces. Finely chop yellow onions. Combine all ingredients in an 8-quart Dutch oven or stockpot. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Reduce to simmering, and simmer 5 minutes.

Fill hot solids into clean, hot half-pint jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Cover with hot liquid, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened, clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids, process in a boiling water canner.

In a boiling water canner: hot packed, half pints at 0-1,000 ft. altitude, process for 10 minutes, 1,001-6,000 ft. altitude process 15 minutes, above 6,000 ft. 20 minutes.

Let cool, undisturbed, for 12 to 24 hours, check seals.

Source: "So Easy to Preserve", 5th edition, University of GA.

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