



K-STATE
Research and Extension

PRESERVE IT FRESH, PRESERVE IT SAFE PEACHES



When preserving fresh foods at home, follow proper techniques to prevent foodborne illness. These safety tested methods can be used for apricots and nectarines as well as peaches.

Quality

Select ripe, mature fruit of ideal quality for eating fresh. Haven series, Redskin, Sun High, and similar varieties are suitable.

Freezing

Freezer manuals offer guidelines for the maximum amount that can be frozen at one time to maintain quality — usually 2 to 3 pounds of food for each cubic foot of freezer space.

Quantity

An average of 1¼ pounds of fresh peaches makes 1 pint frozen. Select well-ripened fruit and handle carefully to avoid bruising. Sort, wash, and peel. Peel peaches by dipping them in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds. Then remove and place in cold water. Skins will slip off easily. Slice or halve if desired.

Syrup pack: Dissolve 2¾ cups of sugar in 4 cups of lukewarm water, mixing until clear, then chill before using. For a better quality product, add ½ teaspoon of crystalline ascorbic acid for each quart of syrup. Slice the fruit directly into the syrup in the container, starting with ½ cup of syrup to a pint container. Press the fruit down, add syrup to cover leaving headspace, seal, and freeze.

Sugar pack: Before combining peaches with sugar, treat with the following solution to prevent darkening: ¼ teaspoon of crystalline ascorbic acid and ¼ cup of cold water. Dissolve crystalline ascorbic acid in cold water and sprinkle over 1 quart (1½ lbs.) of fruit. Mix ⅔ cup of sugar with each quart of fruit. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Pack into containers leaving headspace, seal, and freeze.

Unsweetened pack: Pack peaches into containers. Cover with cold water, juice, or pectin syrup, adding

1 teaspoon of crystalline ascorbic acid for each quart. Leave headspace, seal, and freeze.

To make pectin syrup, combine 1 package regular powdered pectin in 1 cup water. Heat to boiling and boil for 1 minute. Add 1¾ cups cool water. Cool. Makes about 3 cups.

Unsweetened puree: Coarsely crush peaches that are peeled and pitted. Press peaches through a sieve or puree in a blender or food processor. (Heating pitted fruit for about 4 minutes in just enough water to prevent scorching makes them easier to puree.) For better quality, add ⅛ teaspoon of crystalline ascorbic acid to each quart of fruit. Pack into containers leaving headspace, seal, and freeze.

To package, fill pint- or quart-size freezer bags or rigid freezer containers. Fill bags to within 3 to 4 inches of the top, squeeze out air, seal, and label. Bags may be inserted into reusable, rigid-plastic freezer containers before freezing for added protection against punctures and leakage.

Canning

See *How-to Guide to Water Bath Canning and Steam Canning* (MF3241) and *How-to Guide to Pressure Canning* (MF3242) to learn more about these methods.

Wash jars. For standard metal lids, preheating is optional. If desired, heat in hot simmering, but not boiling, water. If using lid systems with rubber rings, follow manufacturer's instructions.

Quantity

A bushel of peaches weighs 50 pounds and yields 19 to 25 quarts. An average of 17 pounds makes a 7-quart canner load; 11 pounds makes 9 pints.

Dip peaches in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds to loosen skins. Dip quickly in cold water and slip off the skins. Cut peaches in half, remove pits, and slice if desired. To prevent darkening, place peeled fruit in a solution containing 1 teaspoon of ascorbic

acid crystals or six 500-milligram vitamin C tablets crushed in 1 gallon of water. Cover peaches with water, apple or white grape juice, or a very light, light, or medium syrup.

Sugar Syrup for Peaches

Syrup type	% sugar	For 9-pint load		For 7-quart load	
		Water (cups)	Sugar (cups)	Water (cups)	Sugar (cups)
Very light	10	6½	¾	10½	1¼
Light	20	5¾	1½	9	2¼
Medium	30	5¼	2¼	8¼	3¾

Hot pack: Place drained fruit in syrup, juice, or water into a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Fill clean jars with hot fruit and cooking liquid, leaving ½ inch of headspace.

Raw pack: Raw packs make poor quality peaches. Fill jars with raw fruit, cut side down. Add hot water, juice, or syrup, leaving ½-inch headspace.

Processing: Wipe jar rims. Apply lids and rings fingertip-tight. Process in a water bath or steam canner according to Table 1, or in a pressure canner according to Table 2. Turn off heat and remove canner lid. If pressure canning, let canner depressurize naturally, remove lid. Let jars cool 5 minutes. Remove jars from canner; do not retighten bands. Cool completely, check seals, label and store.

Peach Pie Filling

Clear Jel® is a starch modified to produce excellent sauce consistency even after the fillings are canned and baked. Instant Clear Jel® is not recommended. Other available household starches break down, causing a runny sauce consistency when used in these pie fillings. Clear Jel® is available from bulk food stores or online retailers.

Because the variety of fruit may alter the flavor of a fruit pie, make a single quart of filling first. Make a pie with it and serve. Then adjust the sugar and spices in the recipe to suit your personal preference. Do not alter the amount of lemon juice because it helps to ensure the safety and storage stability of the fillings. If the filling is too tart, add more sugar to taste.

Each canned quart of pie filling makes one 8- to 9-inch pie. The fillings may be used as toppings on desserts or pastries.

Ingredients

Ingredient	Quantities needed for:	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh sliced peaches	3½ cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	1 cup	7 cups
Clear Jel®	¼ cup + 1 tbsp.	2 cups + 3 tbsp.
Cold water	¾ cup	5¼ cups
Cinnamon (optional)	⅛ tsp.	1 tsp.
Almond extract (optional)	⅛ tsp.	1 tsp.
Bottled lemon juice	¼ cup	1¾ cups

Procedure

Peel the peaches. To loosen skins, submerge the peaches in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds, then place them in cold water for 20 seconds. Slip off skins and slice into ½-inch wide slices. Place the slices in water containing one teaspoon of ascorbic acid crystals or six 500-milligram vitamin C tablets (crushed) in one gallon of water to prevent browning. For fresh fruit, place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch 1 minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain but keep the heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot.

Combine sugar, Clear Jel®, water, and, if desired, cinnamon or almond extract in a large kettle. Stir and cook on medium high heat until the mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil the sauce one minute more, stirring constantly. Fold in drained peach slices and continue to heat for 3 minutes, then fill jars with the mixture leaving 1 inch head space.

Process in a boiling water canner or steam canner according to Table 1. Turn off heat and remove canner lid. Let jars cool 5 minutes. Remove jars from canner; do not retighten bands. Cool completely, check seals, label and store.

Peach Jam

Yield: 8 half-pint jars

- 2 quarts crushed, peeled peaches
- ½ cup water
- 6 cups sugar

Procedure

Combine peaches and water; cook gently for 10 minutes. Add sugar; slowly bring to a boil, stirring occasionally until the sugar dissolves. Cook rapidly until thick, about 15 minutes, stirring frequently to

prevent sticking. Pour hot jam into hot jars, leaving ¼ inch of head space. Wipe jar rims. Apply lid and ring fingertip-tight.

Process in a boiling-water bath or steam canner according to the directions in Table 1. Turn off heat and remove canner lid. Cool jars for 5 minutes and remove from canner. Do not retighten bands. Cool completely, check seals, label, and store.

For spiced peach jam, tie the following ingredients in a cheesecloth and add during cooking:

- 1 teaspoon whole cloves
- 1 stick cinnamon (3-inch piece)
- ½ teaspoon whole allspice

Remove spice bag before pouring jam into hot jars. Process as directed for peach jam.

Peach Butter

Yield: About 8 half-pint or 4 pint jars

- 4 to 4½ pounds peaches (about 18 medium)
- 4 cups sugar

To prepare pulp: Wash and blanch peaches. Put peaches in cold water. Peel, pit, and slice. Combine peaches and ½ cup water in a large saucepot. Simmer until soft. Puree using a food processor or food mill, being careful not to liquefy. Measure 2 quarts peach pulp.

To make butter: Combine peach pulp and sugar in a large saucepot. Cook until thick enough to round up on a spoon. As mixture thickens, stir frequently to prevent sticking. Ladle hot butter into hot jars, leaving ¼ inch of headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Apply lid and ring fingertip-tight. Process in a boiling-water canner or steam canner according to Table 1. Turn off heat and remove canner lid. Let jars cool 5 minutes. Remove jars from canner; do not retighten bands. Cool completely, check seals, label and store.

Variation: For spiced peach butter add ½ to 1 teaspoon each of ginger, nutmeg and cinnamon or any combination of these spices when adding sugar.

Peach Salsa

Option: Mangoes can be used in place of peaches

Yield: About 6 half-pint jars

- 6 cups diced hard, underripe yellow peaches
- 1½ cups diced red bell pepper
- ½ cup finely chopped yellow onion
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

- 2 teaspoons finely chopped garlic
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped ginger
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1¼ cups cider vinegar (5%)
- ½ cup water

Wash all produce well. Peel and chop peaches into ½-inch cubes. Dice bell pepper into ½-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 for 5 minutes.

Fill clean, hot half-pint jars. Cover with hot liquid, leaving ½ inch of headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a damp, clean paper towel; apply two-piece metal canning lids. Process in a boiling water canner or steam canner according to the directions in Table 1. Turn off heat and remove canner lid. Let jars cool 5 minutes. Remove jars from canner; do not retighten bands. Cool completely, check seals, label, and store.

After Processing

Remove the screw bands and check the lid seals. If the center of the lid is indented, wash, dry, label, and store the jar in a clean, cool, dark place. If the lid is unsealed, examine and replace the jar if defective, use a new lid, and reprocess as before. Wash the screw bands and store separately. Home-canned foods are best if consumed within a year.

Problems and Solutions

1. Why do peach pieces float to the top of jam?

The fruit was either not ripe enough, not crushed into small pieces, not cooked long enough, or not packed properly into the jars.

2. What causes canned peaches to float?

The fruit is lighter than the sugar syrup. Use firm, ripe fruit. Use the hot pack method to remove air from the fruit. Use a light or medium syrup instead of a heavy syrup. Pack fruit as close as possible and release trapped air before applying the lid.

Table 1. Recommended processing times in a water bath canner or steam canner.

Product	Style of Pack	Jar Size	Minutes of processing at different altitudes (in feet)		
			0-1,000	1,001-3,000	3,001-6,000
Peaches	Hot	Pints	20	25	30
		Quarts	25	30	35
Peaches	Raw	Pints	25	30	35
		Quarts	30	35	40
Peach pie filling	Hot	Pints or quarts	30	35	40
Peach jam	Hot	Half-pints	5	10	10
Peach butter	Hot	Half-pints or pints	10	15	20
Peach salsa	Hot	Half-pints	10	15	15

Table 2. Recommended processing times in a pressure canner.

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time (min.)	Canner gauge pressure for different altitudes (in feet)			
			Dial gauge (lbs)		Weighted gauge (lbs)	
			0- 2,000	2,001-4,000	0-1,000	Above 1,000
Hot and raw	Pints or quarts	10	6	7	5	10

Nutritional Analysis

	Calories	Carb (g)	Fat (g)	Vitamin C (mg)*	Dietary Fiber (g)	Sodium (mg)
Frozen Peaches (½ cup)						
Syrup	230.0	59.0	0.0	52.0	1.4	0.5
Sugar	101.0	26.0	0.0	99.0	1.4	0.2
Unsweetened	37.0	9.5	0.0	380.0	1.4	0.0
Puree	146.0	37.5	0.0	54.0	1.8	0.2
Peaches (½ cup)						
Water	61.0	16.0	0.0	9.0	2.3	0.0
Apple juice	84.0	21.6	0.0	10.0	2.3	1.5
Very light syrup	78.0	20.0	0.0	9.0	2.3	0.0
Medium syrup	113.0	29.0	0.0	9.0	2.3	0.1
Peach pie filling (½ cup)	151.0	39.0	0.0	7.0	6.8	14.0
⅓ double-crust pie	362.0	58.0	14.0	7.0	7.6	231.0
Peach jam (1 tbsp.)	42.0	11.0	0.0	1.0	0.2	1.8
Peach butter (1 tbsp.)	24.8	6.4	0.0	0.8	0.2	1.0
Peach salsa (1 tbsp.)	14.5	3.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	NA

*Most of the vitamin C in frozen peaches comes from the addition of ascorbic acid.

Revised by Karen Blakeslee, M.S., Extension Associate, Food Science

Adapted from original by Karen P. Penner, Ph.D., and Jeanne Dray, April 1995

Complete Guide to Home Canning, USDA AIB No. 539, 2009, and *So Easy to Preserve*, 6th ed., The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.

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