

Preserving Peaches

CANNING PEACHES

(Halved or Sliced)

Quantity: An average of 17½ pounds is needed per canner load of 7 quarts; an average of 11 pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints. A bushel weighs 48 pounds and yields 16 to 24 quarts — an average of 2½ pounds per quart.

Quality: Choose ripe, mature fruit of ideal quality for eating fresh or cooking.

Method: Dip fruit in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds until skins loosen. Dip quickly in cold water and slip off skins. Cut in half, remove pits and slice if desired. To prevent darkening, keep peeled fruit in ascorbic acid solution. Prepare and boil a very light, light or medium syrup (refer to Table 2) or pack peaches in water, apple juice or white grape juice. Raw packs make poor-quality peaches.

Hot Pack: In a large saucepan place drained fruit in syrup, water or juice and bring to boil. Fill jars with hot fruit and cooking liquid, leaving ½-inch headspace. Place halves in layers, cut side down.

Raw Pack: Fill jars with raw fruit, cut side down, and add hot water, juice or syrup, leaving ½-inch headspace.

Adjust lids and process. Processing directions for canning peaches in a boiling-water canner are given in Table 1.

PEACH YIELDS

1 bushel = 50 pounds

Approximate number of quart jars or containers needed = 19 to 25

Approximate pounds needed for 1 quart jar or container = 2 to 2½

PEACH JAM

Ingredients:

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

Method: Sterilize canning jars. Combine peaches and water; cook gently 10 minutes. Add sugar; slowly bring to boiling, stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves. Cook rapidly until thick, about 15 minutes; stir frequently to prevent sticking. Pour hot jam into hot jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids. Process 5 minutes in a boiling water bath. Recipe makes about eight half-pint jars.

Note: For Spiced Peach Jam, tie the following ingredients in cheesecloth and add to the jam during cooking: 1 teaspoon whole cloves, ½ teaspoon whole allspice, and a stick of cinnamon (3-inch piece). Remove the spice bag before pouring jam into hot jars. See Table 1 for processing recommendations.

PEACH HONEY

Ingredients:

8 cups peach juice (from peelings)
4 cups sugar

Method: Save all washed, sound pieces and peelings from fruit used for preserves and pickles. Cover with water and cook slowly in a covered saucepot until soft. Then put in a cheesecloth bag and press to remove all juice. Drip the juice through a jelly bag and measure. Place in a saucepan and heat. When it boils vigorously, add sugar at the rate of half as much sugar as juice. Boil rapidly until the consistency of honey. Pour into hot jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids. See Table 1 for processing.

PEACH MARMALADE

Ingredients:

3 pounds peaches
3 oranges
1½ pints water
6¾ cups sugar

To Prepare Fruit: Wash, peel and slice peaches into very thin strips or pieces. Peel oranges and thinly slice peel. Separate seeds and membrane from orange pulp. Cut pulp into pieces.

To Make Marmalade: Sterilize canning jars. Boil sugar and water until dissolved and then add the fruit. Cook rapidly, stirring frequently until jelling point is reached. The finished product shows the fruit appearing in small pieces throughout the mixture, and is smooth in consistency. Pour hot marmalade into jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids. See Table 1 for processing time. Yields about seven half-pints.

PEACH PICKLES

Ingredients:

8 pounds peeled peaches
2 tablespoons whole cloves, crushed
1 tablespoon ginger
6¾ cups sugar
1 quart vinegar
4 sticks cinnamon (2 inches long)

Method: Wash and peel peaches with a sharp knife, and drop into a cold solution of ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid and 2 quarts water. Dissolve sugar in vinegar in saucepot and put on range to heat. Boil 5 minutes and skim. Add spices (tied loosely in cheesecloth). Drain peaches. Drop drained peaches into boiling syrup and cook until they can be pierced with a fork, but are not yet soft. Remove from range and allow peaches to set in syrup overnight to plump. Bring to a boil and pack into hot jars, leaving ½-inch headspace. Cover with syrup, maintaining the ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust lids. Process 20 minutes in boiling water bath. Yields about six pint jars.

PEACH CONSERVES

Ingredients:

1 unpeeled chopped orange
7 cups chopped, peeled, firm, ripe peaches
5 cups sugar
½ teaspoon ground ginger
½ cup blanched, slivered almonds

Method: Sterilize canning jars. Add orange to peaches; cook gently for about 15 to 20 minutes. Add sugar and ginger. Bring slowly to boiling, stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves. Cook rapidly until thick, about 15 minutes. As mixture thickens, stir occasionally to prevent sticking. Add nuts the last 5 minutes of cooking. Pour hot conserve into hot jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids. Process 5 minutes in a boiling water bath. Makes about 8 half-pint jars.

OSCAR RELISH

Ingredients:

8 cups chopped fresh peaches (about 12 large)
8 cups chopped ripe tomatoes (about 12)
2 cups diced sweet green peppers (2 large)
1 tablespoon red hot pepper, ground (1 pepper)
2 cups ground onions (about 6)
4 cups light brown sugar (firmly packed)
2 cups cider vinegar
½ tablespoon salt
½ box (4 tablespoons) pickling spices

Method: Peel and pit peaches. Chop into small pieces. Peel and chop tomatoes into ½-inch pieces. Remove stem and seed from pepper and dice into ¼-inch pieces. Peel onions and grind in food chopper. Grind red hot peppers. Tie spices in cheesecloth bag. Combine with all other ingredients in 10-quart saucepan. Cook and stir about 1½ to 2 hours, until mixture reaches desired thickness. Pack into hot jars, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Adjust lids. Process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath. Makes six pint jars.

FREEZING PEACHES

Syrup Pack: Select well-ripened fruit and handle carefully to avoid bruising. Sort, wash, and peel. Prepare 40 percent heavy syrup according to Table 2. For a better quality product, add ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid per quart of syrup. Put peaches directly into cold syrup on container, starting with ½ cup of syrup to a pint container. Press fruit down and add syrup to cover, leaving headspace as recommended in Table 3. Place a small piece of crumpled water-resistant paper on top to hold fruit down. Seal and freeze.

Sugar Pack: To each quart (1½ pounds) of prepared fruit add ⅔ cups sugar. Add ¼ teaspoon ascorbic acid dissolved in 3 tablespoons cold water to prevent darkening. Stir gently until sugar is dissolved or let stand for 15 minutes. Pack into containers, leaving headspace as recommended in Table 2. Seal and freeze.

PREVENTING FRUIT FROM TURNING DARK

Hold prepared fruit in one of the following:

- One teaspoon or 3000 mg ascorbic acid (Vitamin C) and 1 gallon water
- Commercial ascorbic acid mixture mixed according to label directions.

Drain fruit well when ready to pack.

For information on drying peaches, request HGIC 3084, *Drying Fruits*.

Sources:

1. Cooperative Extension Service, the University of Georgia, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. (1993) *So Easy to Preserve* Bulletin 989. Third Edition Athens: Susan Reynolds, Paulette Williams. Revised by Judy Harrison.
2. USDA Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 539. *Complete Guide to Home Canning*. Reviewed 1994.

TABLE 1. RECOMMENDED PROCESS TIMES FOR VARIOUS PRESERVED PEACH PRODUCTS IN A BOILING-WATER CANNER

			PROCESS TIMES (MIN) AT ALTITUDES OF:			
Peach Product	Style of Pack	Jar Size	0-1000 ft.	1001-3000 ft.	3001-6000 ft.	Above 6000 ft.
Canned Peaches	Hot	Pints	20	25	30	35
		Quarts	25	30	35	40
Canned Peaches	Raw	Pints	25	30	35	40
		Quarts	30	35	40	45
Peach Jam, Jelly, Marmalade or Honey	Hot	Half-Pints or Pints	5	10	10	15

TABLE 2. SYRUPS FOR USE IN PRESERVING FRUITS

Type of Syrup	Percent Syrup*	Cups of Sugar**	Cups of Water	Yield of Syrup in Cups
Very Light	10%	½	4	4½
Light	20%	1	4	4¾
Medium	30%	1¾	4	5
Heavy	40%	2¾	4	5⅓
Very Heavy	50%	4	4	6

*Approximate.

**In general, up to one-fourth of the sugar may be replaced by corn syrup or mild-flavored honey. A larger proportion of corn syrup may be used if a very bland, light-colored type is selected.

TABLE 3. HEAD SPACE (INCHES) TO ALLOW BETWEEN PACKED FOOD AND CLOSURE				
Type of Pack	Container with Wide Top Opening		Container with Narrow Top Opening	
	Pint	Quart	Pint	Quart
Liquid Pack*	½	1	¾***	1½
Dry Pack**	½	½	½	½
*Fruit packed in juice, sugar, syrup or water; crushed or pureed fruit, or fruit juice.				
**Fruit or vegetable packed without added sugar or liquid.				
***Head space for juice should be 1½ inches.				

For more information on home canning, contact your local Extension agent.

This information has been reviewed and adapted for use in South Carolina by E.H. Hoyle, Extension Food Safety Specialist, Clemson University.

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