Peach Basics

Getting Ready to Preserve Peaches
- Choose ripe, mature fruit of ideal quality for eating fresh or cooking.
- Dip fruit in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds until skins loosen. Dip quickly in cold water and slip skins off.
- Cut in half, remove pits and slice, if desired.
- To prevent darkening, keep peeled fruit in ascorbic acid solution of 1 teaspoon or 3000 milligrams ascorbic acid or vitamin C per gallon of water, or use a commercial ascorbic acid mixture according to directions on package. Drain when ready to process.

Peach Yields: 1 bushel = 50 pounds (approximate pounds needed for 1-quart jar = 2 to 2½).

Canning Peaches (Halved or Sliced)
Prepare and boil syrup, using ½ cup (very light), 1 cup (light) or 1¼ cup (medium) sugar per quart of water, depending on desired sweetness. Or pack peaches in water, apple juice or white grape juice.

Hot Pack:
- Place drained fruit in a large saucepan with 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
- Adjust lids and process in a boiling-water canner: 20 minutes for pints, 25 minutes for quarts at altitudes up to 1,000 feet.

Freezing Peaches

Syrup Pack:
- Sort, wash and peel well-ripened fruit, handling carefully to avoid bruising.
- Prepare 40 percent heavy syrup by dissolving 2¾ cups sugar in 1 gallon of warm water. Chill syrup before using.
- Add 2 teaspoons ascorbic acid per gallon of cold syrup to prevent browning of peaches.
- Put peaches in freezer containers and add just enough syrup to cover (¼ to ½ cup syrup per pint). Allow ½-inch headspace for pints or 1-inch headspace for quarts.
- Place a small piece of crumpled water-resistant paper on top to hold fruit down.
- Seal, label, and freeze

Sugar Pack:
- Dissolve ¼ teaspoon ascorbic acid in 3 tablespoons cold water and add to each quart of peaches to retard darkening.
- Add ¾ cup sugar to each quart (1½ pounds) of prepared fruit.
- Stir gently until sugar is dissolved or let stand 15 minutes. Place into containers.
- Seal, label and freeze

Peach Jam
(About 8 half-pint jars)

Sterilize canning jars. Combine 2 quarts crushed, peeled peaches and ½ cup water; cook gently for 10 minutes. Add 6 cups 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 sterilized canning jars, leaving ¼–inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids. Process 5 minutes in a boiling water bath canner at altitudes up to 1,000 feet.

Sources: