

Making Jams and Jellies can be Easy

If you have fresh fruit such as strawberries, blackberries or peaches, fruit spreads are wonderful way to use them up. It might seem intimidating, but with the right recipes and tips, making jams and jellies is fun and simple.

Most jelly, jam, preserves, conserves and marmalades are preserved by using sugar. Their individual characteristics depend on the kind of fruits used and the way it is prepared, the proportions of different ingredients in the mixture and the method of cooking.

Jellies are usually made by cooking fruit juice with sugar. Some can be made without cooking using special uncooked jelly recipes. A good product is clear and firm enough to hold its shape when turned out of the container, but quivers when the container is moved. Jelly should have a flavorful, fresh, fruity taste.

Jams are thick, sweet spreads made by cooking crushed or chopped fruits with sugar. Jams tend to hold their shape but are generally less firm than jelly.

Preserves are small, whole fruit or uniform size pieces in a clear, slightly gelled syrup. The fruit should be tender and plump.

Conserves are jam like products that may be made with a combination of fruits. They also contain nuts, raisins or coconut.

Marmalades are soft fruit jellies containing small pieces of fruit or peel evenly suspended in the transparent jelly. They often contain fruit juice.

Other fruit products preserved include butters, honeys and syrups. Butters are sweet spreads made by cooking fruit pulp with sugar to a thick consistency. Spices are often added. Honeys and syrups are made by cooking fruit juice of pulp with sugar to the consistence of honey or syrup.

Jams and jellies can be made different ways. One of the easies is to make freezers jam that you can try at home. Most freezer jams do not have to be cooked and do not have to be processed in the water bath canner.

Peach Freezer Jam

2 cups Peaches, finely chopped

2 cups sugar

¼ tsp. ground nutmeg

1 (3 oz.) pouch liquid fruit pectin

2 tbsp. lemon juice

Combine peaches, sugar and nutmeg. Let stand 10 minutes until juices run. Add pectin and lemon juice. Let stand 3 minutes, stirring frequently. Ladle into clean ½ pint glass jars or freezer storage bags. Let stand for several hours at room temperature or until jam is set. Store up to 3 weeks in refrigerator or up to 1 year in freezer.

Source: Utah State University Cooperative Extension – Freezer Jams

For more recipes for jams and jellies visit the Parker County Extension website at www.parker.agrilife.org or the National Center for Home Food Preservation www.nchfp.uga.edu .