

Canning: Jam {RECIPE: FRAGRANT BLUEBERRY JAM}

* General Canning Tips

Before you turn on the heat, be sure to do the following:

- Read the recipe through.
- Gather all necessary equipment.
- Check that you have the right amount of each ingredient on hand.









Give all your equipment a once-over:

- Examine the canning jars for nicks, cracks, uneven rims, or sharp edges that may prevent sealing or cause breakage.
- Check that the lids have no dents and that the sealing compound is even and complete. Check that the bands fit properly.
- Finally, have your jars, lids, and bands already sanitized before you start, and prepare only enough for one canner load at a time.


Ingredients


- **Blueberries** (3 cups, ABOUT 1 POUND)
- **Granulated Sugar** (2 cups)
- **Finely Grated Apple Peel** (1 tablespoon)
- **Bottled Lemon Juice** (4 teaspoons)

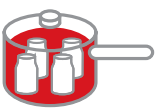
Special Equipment

-  Jar lifter
-  Boiling water canner or 15- to 20-quart pot with a tightfitting lid
-  Wide-mouth canning jars (number and size determined in the recipes)
-  Canning rack that fits inside the boiling water canner or 15- to 20-quart pot
-  Bands for wide-mouth jars
-  Deep-frying/candy thermometer
-  Lids with sealing compound for wide-mouth jars
-  Thin, flexible rubber spatula

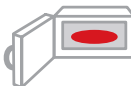




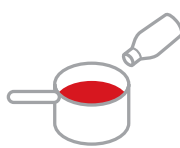



A Sanitizing

-  1. Wash the jars, lids, and bands in hot, soapy water. Rinse them well. Dry the lids and bands, and set them aside.


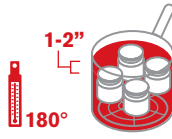
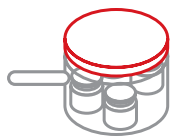




-  2. Place the jars in a boiling water canner or a 15- to 20-quart pot fitted with a canning rack and a lid. Fill the pot with water and bring it to a boil over medium-high heat. Boil for 10 minutes, then turn off the heat.

-  3. Keep the jars in the hot water until you're ready to use them, removing one at a time as needed.

B Preparing

-  1. Place a plate in the freezer to chill for testing the jam.
-  2. Place the blueberries in a large, heavy-bottomed saucepan and crush them with the back of a wooden spoon until some of the berries are broken up and they start to release their juice.
-  3. Add the sugar and apple peel to the crushed berries and stir to combine. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium-high heat. Boil vigorously, stirring frequently, until the jam reaches its setting point, about 15 minutes. (Bubbles will rise to surface of the pan; if they get too high, just stir the jam until they decrease.)
-  4. Once the jam reaches 228°F, start checking if it is properly set.
-  5. To test if the jam is ready, put a spoonful on the chilled plate, and place it in the freezer until the jam reaches room temperature, about 1 minute. Draw your finger through the jam. If it immediately runs back together, it is not ready.
-  6. Once the jam is ready, remove it from the heat and stir in the lemon juice.
-  7. Remove the jars from the hot water with a jar lifter, letting the excess water drip off. Bring the water in the canner back to a simmer (about 180°F) for processing the packed jars.
-  8. Fill the sterilized jars with jam, leaving a 1/4-inch headspace. (If you have a half-full jar, place it in the refrigerator and eat the jam within 5 days.)
-  9. To remove any air bubbles, slide a clean rubber spatula down the side of each jar and press inward on the jam while rotating the jar; repeat 2 to 3 times for each jar.

C Processing

-  1. Wipe the rim and threads of each jar with a clean, damp towel. Place the lids on the jars, checking that the sealing compound is centered. Fit the jars with bands and tighten just until resistance is met.
-  2. Check that the water in the pot or boiling water canner is at a simmer (about 180°F), and set the jars in the canning rack. (The jars must be covered by 1 to 2 inches of water. Add additional boiling water as necessary.)
-  3. Cover the pot with a tightfitting lid and bring the water to a rolling boil over medium-high heat. Process the jars at a gentle but steady boil for the time indicated in each recipe. (Begin calculating the processing time once the water is at a rolling boil. Check occasionally that the water remains at a steady boil.)
-  4. Once the jars are processed, remove them with a jar lifter and set them upright, 1 to 2 inches apart, on a dry towel.
-  5. Do not retighten the bands; let the jars cool at least 12 hours.
-  6. After the jars have cooled, check for a seal by pressing the center of each lid. If the center is concave and does not flex, remove the band and try to lift off the lid with your fingertips (don't pull too hard). If you cannot lift the lid, there is a good vacuum seal. If the lid pops off, your jar did not properly seal. Eat the preserves within the time indicated in the recipe.
-  7. To store properly processed jars, wipe each lid and jar with a clean, damp cloth (the bands don't need to stay on for storage); label the jars; and store them in a cool, dry, dark place. Unopened jars can be kept up to a year when stored properly. Once opened, keep them in the refrigerator and use them within the time indicated in each recipe.