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Let's Preserve: Fruit and Fruit Products

Julie A. Albrecht, Extension Food and Nutrition Specialist

Home canned fruits can be a delightful addition to family meals through the year. Canning fruits also may be an economical way to preserve quality foods at home.

Fruits can be safely preserved at home using a boiling-water canner. Pressure canners also are acceptable. This publication includes processing times for both procedures.

Refer to the publication *Let's Preserve: Canning Basics (EC90-434)* for procedures for using a boiling-water and for information on canner or pressure canner selecting, preparing and filling jars.

Determine Your Altitude

At sea level, water boils at 212°F. As elevation increases, water boils at lower temperatures and foods take longer to cook. To insure safely canned foods above sea level, lengthen the processing time for boiling-water canning methods. If you choose to pressure can fruit, increase the pressure for your altitude.

The map on page 8 indicates Nebraska altitudes. Find your altitude and check the tables for the correct processing time or pressure.

Canning Fruits With Sugar

Sugar or syrup added to canned fruit helps to retain flavor, color, and shape, but does not prevent spoilage. The chart on page 2 provides five syrups with different sugar contents. The quantities of water and sugar are enough to make syrup for a canner load of pints or quarts.

Procedure: Heat water and sugar together. Bring to a boil and pour over raw fruits in jars. For hot packs, bring water and sugar to boil, add fruit, reheat to boil, and fill jars immediately.

Other sweeteners: Light corn syrups or mild-flavored honey may be used to replace up to half the table sugar called for in syrups. Do not use honey with fruits which may be fed to babies.

Canning Fruits Without Sugar

Fruits can be preserved without adding sugar. Select fully ripe but firm fruits for high quality products.

Prepare as described in this publication but use water or regular unsweetened fruit juices instead of sugar syrup.

Juice made from the fruit you are canning is best. Blends of unsweetened apple, pineapple and white grape juice are excellent replacements for syrups.

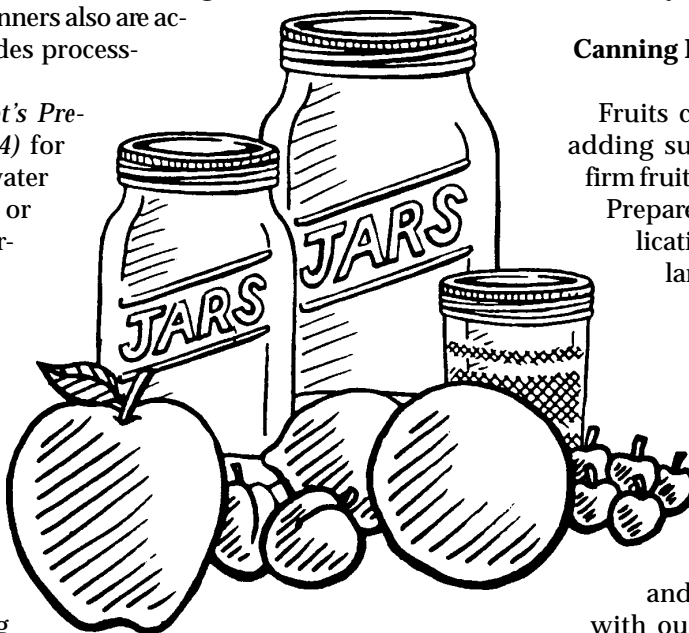
Also, the color, flavor and texture of fruits canned with out sugar may be different than expected. Many fruits typically packed in heavy syrup are excellent packed in lighter syrups if you want to reduce calories but are hesitant to try canning without sugar.

Add sugar substitutes, if desired, when serving.

Maintain Color in Fruits

During preparation, some fruits can turn an undesirable color. To maintain the natural color of these fruits, avoid exposure to air for long periods of time. While preparing fruits, place peeled, halved, quartered, sliced or diced apples, apricots, nectarines, peaches and pears in water containing ascorbic acid. Ascorbic acid may be obtained in pure form, as vitamin C tablets or as commercially prepared mixes (for example, Fruit Fresh™).

Add 3 grams (1 teaspoon pure ascorbic acid or 6 500-milligram vitamin C tablets crushed) to one gallon cold water.



Preparing and Using Syrups

Syrup Type	Approx. % Sugar	Measures of Water and Sugar		Measures of Water and Sugar		Fruits commonly packed in this syrup
		Cups Water	Cups Sugar	Cups Water	Cups Sugar	
Very Light	10	6-1/2	3/4	10-1/2	1-1/4	Approximates natural sugar level in most fruits and adds the fewest calories.
Light	20	5-3/4	1-1/2	9	2-1/4	Very sweet fruit. Try a small amount the first time to see if your family likes it.
Medium	30	5-1/4	2-1/4	8-1/4	3-3/4	Sweet apples sweet cherries, berries, grapes.
Heavy	40	5	3-1/4	7-3/4	5-1/4	Tart apples, apricots, sour cherries, gooseberries, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums.
Very Heavy	50	4-1/4	4-1/4	6-1/2	6-3/4	Very sour fruit. Try a small amount the first time to see if your family likes it.

For commercial mixes, follow package directions.
Canning

Canning Fruits For Baby Foods

Fruits can be prepared chunk-style or pureed following directions in this publication. Sugar or syrup can be replaced with water or unsweetened fruit juices. Do not use honey with fruits canned for baby food. Hot-pack fruit into half pint or pint jars and process in a boiling water canner for 20 minutes when below an altitude of 1,000 feet or for 25 minutes when at altitudes 1,001-6,000 feet.

Zucchini-Pineapple

4 quarts cubed or shredded zucchini
46 oz canned unsweetened pineapple juice
1-1/2 cups bottled lemon juice
3 cups sugar

Procedure: Peel zucchini and either cut into 1/2 inch cubes or shred. Mix zucchini with other ingredients in a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Simmer 20 minutes. Fill half-pint or pint jars with hot mixture and liquid; leave 1/2 inch headspace.

For altitudes under 1,000 feet, process 15 minutes in boiling water canner. For altitudes of 1,001-6,000 feet, process 20 minutes.

Reference

Complete Guide to Home Canning. Agriculture Information Bulletin 539, U.S. Government Printing Office. 1988.

Recommended Process Times for Acid Fruits in a Boiling-Water Canner

Process Time at Altitudes of Amount needed for:		Preparation	Hot Pack	Style Raw Pack	Jar of Pack	Jar	
9 Pints	7 Quarts					Quality	Size
Apple Slices							
12-1/4	19 lbs	Select juicy, crisp, and preferably a mixture of sweet and tart apples.	Fill jars with slices and liquid or sauce; leave 1/2" headspace.	Hot	Pints or Quarts	20 min 25 in	30 min
Applesauce							
		Prepare apples as described above. Place drained apples in large saucepan. Add 1/2 cup water, heat quickly until tender (520 minutes); stir occasionally to prevent burning. Press through a sieve or food mill. Add 1/8 cup sugar per quart, if desired. Reheat sauce to boiling.				Applesauce	
Hot	Pints	15 min	20 min	20 min	20 min		
Quarts		20 min	25 min	30 min	30 min		
Apricots,							
10 lbs	16 lbs	Select firm, ripe, mature fruit of ideal quality for eating fresh.	Bring fruit and water, juice or syrup to a boil. Fill jars with fruit and liquid; leave 1/2" headspace.	Hot	Pints	20 min	25 min
11 lbs	17-1/2 lbs				Quarts	25 min	30 min
11 lbs	17 1/2 lbs				Pints	25 min	30 min
Peaches							
			Place halves in layers, cut side down.		Raw	25 min	30 min
					Quarts	30 min	35 min
Berries or Berry Syrup							
8 lbs	12 lbs	Choose ripe, sweet berries with uniform color.	For blueberries, currants, elderberries, gooseberries and huckleberries. Heat berries in boiling water 30 seconds; drain. Fill jars with berries, and liquid; leave 1/2" headspace.	Hot	Pints or Quarts	15 min	20 min
		For Syrup: Heat 6-1/2 cups berries to boiling. Simmer until soft (5-10 minutes). Strain hot through a colander; cool enough to handle. Strain through two layers of cheesecloth or jellybag. Discard pulp. Combine 5 cups juice with 6-3/4 cups sugar in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil and simmer 1 minute.			Raw	15 min	20 min
					Quarts	20 min	25 min
Berry Syrup							
						Berry Syrup	
Hot	Half	10 min	15 min	15 min	15 min		
	Pints				or		
	Pints				Pints		

Process Time at Altitudes of		Amount needed for:		Preparation	Hot Pack	Style Raw Pack	Jar of Pack	0 - 1001 - 3001 - 1000 ft 3000 ft 6000 ft
Fruit	9 Pints	7 Quarts	Quality	Preparation	Hot Pack	Style Raw Pack	Jar of Pack	0 - 1001 - 3001 - 1000 ft 3000 ft 6000 ft
Cherries	11 lbs	17-1/2 lbs	Select bright, uniformly colored, mature cherries.	Stem and wash cherries. Remove pits, if desired. If canned unpitted, prick skins with a clean needle to prevent splitting.	Add 1/2 cup water; juice or syrup for each quart of cherries; bring to a boil. Fill jars with cherries and liquid; leave 1/2" headspace.	Fill jars with cherries; shake down gently. Add hot water; juice, or syrup; leave 1/2" headspace.	Hot	Pints 15 min 20 min 20 min
Fruit Cocktail	For six pints, use 3 lbs peaches 3 lbs pears 1-1/2 lbs green grapes (slightly under ripe) 10 oz jar maraschino cherries 3 cups sugar 4 cups water			Procedure: Stem and wash grapes. Place in water containing ascorbic acid. Prepare peaches and pears as directed for canning, except cut into 1/2" cubes. Place in water with grapes. Combine sugar and water in saucepan and bring to boil.		Add 1/2 cup syrup to each jar. Add a few cherries and fill with drained mixed fruit. Add syrup; leave 1/2" headspace.	Raw	Half-pints 20 min 25 min 30 min or Pints
Fruit Purees				Procedure: Stern, wash, drain, peel, and remove pits of desired fruit. Add 1 cup hot water for each quart of fruit. Cook slowly; stir often. Press through sieve or food mill. If desired, add sugar to taste. Reheat mixture to boiling or until sugar dissolves.	Fill jars with fruit puree; leave 1/4" headspace.		Hot	Pints 20 min 25 min 30 min or Quarts
Grapefruit or Oranges	13 lbs	15 lbs	Select firm, mature, sweet flavor of orange sections is best if canned with equal parts of grapefruit.	Wash, peel fruit and remove white tissue to prevent bitter taste. Section fruit. If syrup is used, prepare a very-light, light, or medium syrup.	Fill jars with sections. Add hot water; juice or syrup; leave 1/2" headspace.		Raw	Pints 15 min 20 min 20 min or Quarts

Fruit	Process Time at Altitudes of		Preparation	Hot Pack	Style Raw Pack	Jar of Pack	Jar of Pack		
	9 Pints	7 Quarts					Quality	0 - 1001 - 3001 -	1000 ft 3000 ft 6000 ft
Grapes, Whole	9 lbs	14 lbs	Select sweet, well-colored, firm, mature grapes.	Stem, wash and drain grapes.	Blanch grapes in boiling water for 30 seconds; drain. Fill jars with grapes. Add hot syrup; leave 1" headspace.	Hot	Fill jars with grapes; add hot, syrup; leave 1" headspace.	Hot	Pints 10 min 15 min 15 min or Quarts
Juice	16 lbs	24 1/2 lbs		For juice: Place grapes in saucepan and add boiling water to cover grapes. Heat and simmer until skin is soft. Strain through two layers of cheesecloth or jellybag. Refrigerate juice for 24-48 hours. Without mixing, pour off clear liquid and save; discard sediment. For clear juice, strain through a coffee filter. Add juice to saucepan and sweeten to taste. Heat and stir until sugar is dissolved. Continue heating to boiling.	Fill jars with juice; leave 1/4" headspace.	Hot		Hot	Juice Pints 5 min 10 min 10 min or Quarts
Pears	11 lbs	17-1/2 lbs	Chose ripe, mature fruit.	Wash and peel pears. Cut lengthwise in halves and remove core with a melon baller or metal measuring spoon. Place in water containing ascorbic acid.	Boil drained pears 5 minutes in water or syrup. Fill jars with pears and liquid; leave 1/2" headspace.	Hot		Hot	Pints 20 min 25 min 30 min Quarts 25 min 30 min 35 min
Plums	9 lbs	14 lbs	Select deep-colored, mature fruit.	Stem and wash plums. To an whole, prick skins on two sides with fork to prevent splitting. Freestone varieties may be halved and pitted.	Add plums to hot syrup; boil 2 minutes. Cover and let stand 20-30 minutes. Fill jars with plums and liquid; leave 1/2" headspace.	Hot and Raw	Fill jars with plums, pack firmly. Add hot water or syrup; leave 1/2" headspace.	Hot and Raw	Pints 20 min 25 min 30 min Quarts 25 min 30 min 35 min

Fruit	Process Time at Altitudes of		Quality	Preparation	Hot Pack	Raw Pack	Style of Pack	Jar Size			
	9 Pints	7 Quarts						0 - 1000 ft	1001 - 3001 - 6000 ft		
Rhubarb Stewed	7 lbs	10-1 1/2 lbs	Select young, tender well-colored stalks from spring or late fall crop.	Trim off leaves. Wash stalks and cut into 1/2-1" pieces. Add 1/2 cup sugar for each quart of fruit. let stand until juice appears. Heat gently to boiling.	Fill jars with rhubarb and liquid; leave 1/2" headspace.		Hot	Pints or Quarts	15 min	20 min	20 min

Recommended Process Times for Acid Fruits in a Pressure Canner

Type of Fruit	Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time (Min)	Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of				
				Dial-Gauge			Weighted-Gauge	
				0-2,000 ft	2,001-4,000 ft	4,001-6,000 ft	0-1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Applesauce	Hot	Pints	8	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	5 lb	10 lb
	Hot	Quarts	10	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	5 lb	10 lb
Apples, sliced	Hot	Pints or Quarts	8	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	5 lb	10 lb
Apricots, Nectarines and Peaches	Hot and Raw	Pints or Quarts	10	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	5 lb	10 lb
Berries, whole	Hot	Pints or Quarts	8	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	5 lb	10 lb
	Raw	Pints or Quarts	8	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	5 lb	10 lb
Cherries, sour or sweet	Hot	Pints	8	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	5 lb	10 lb
	Hot	Quarts	10	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	5 lb	10 lb
Grapefruit and Orange Sections	Raw	Pints	10	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	5 lb	10 lb
	Raw	Quarts	10	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	5 lb	10 lb
Fruit Purees	Hot	Pints or Quarts	8	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	5 lb	10 lb
Pears	Hot	Pints or Quarts	10	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	5 lb	10 lb
Plums	Hot and Raw	Pints or Quarts	10	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	5 lb	10 lb
Rhubarb	Hot	Pints or Quarts	8	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	5 lb	10 lb

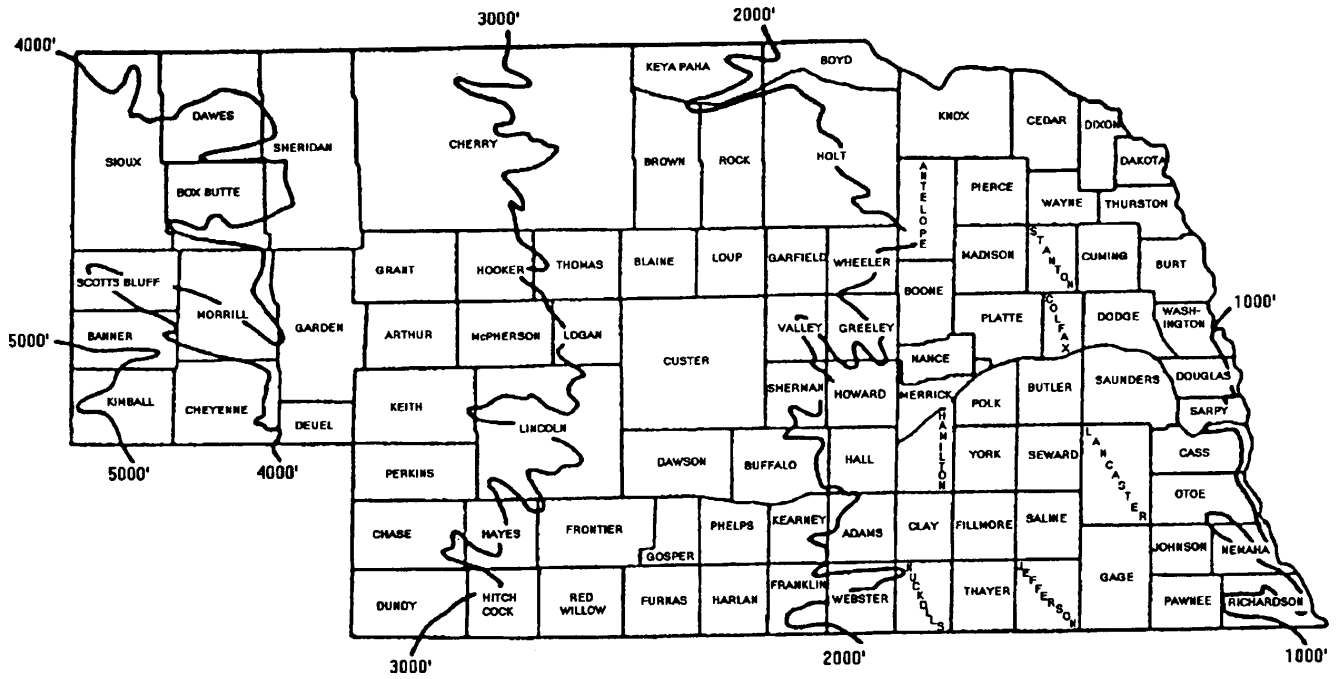
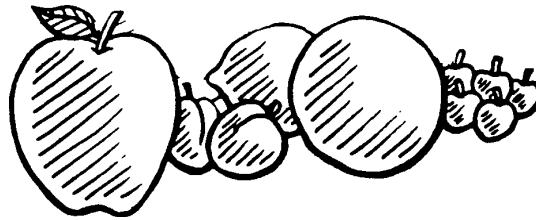


Figure 1. Altitude ranges in Nebraska.

Map was prepared by Les Howard, cartographer, UNL Geography Department



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