

JAMMING WITH JAM
Fourth Presbyterian Church July 11, 2009 1-3 PM
Hallie Metzger

Welcome to “Jamming With Jam,” a beginner’s workshop about canning berries and grapes as jam. From here, you can branch out on your own to other kinds of canning projects such as pickles, chutneys, and sauces.

SAFETY FIRST

Canning is all about safety:

Safety in the kitchen and safety in the food you are preserving.

Safety in the kitchen: Canning involves boiling hot liquids. So --

- 1) Allow three hours of uninterrupted time – no multi-tasking!
- 2) Always wear a sturdy apron
- 3) Wear oven mitts when handling hot items
- 4) Keep working area -- stove, counter, sink ---clear of young children and pets.
- 5) Get all equipment out before you start. See list below.

Safety in the food: To prevent food spoilage –

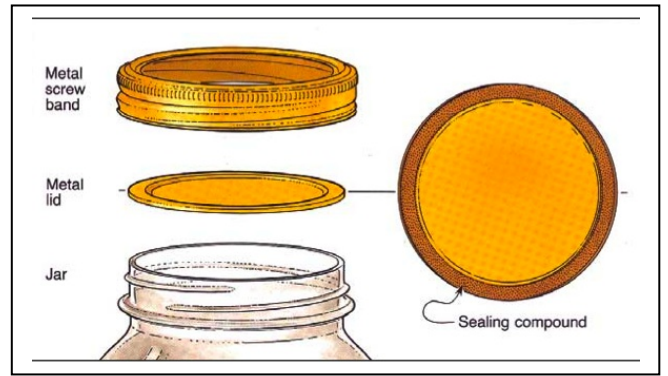
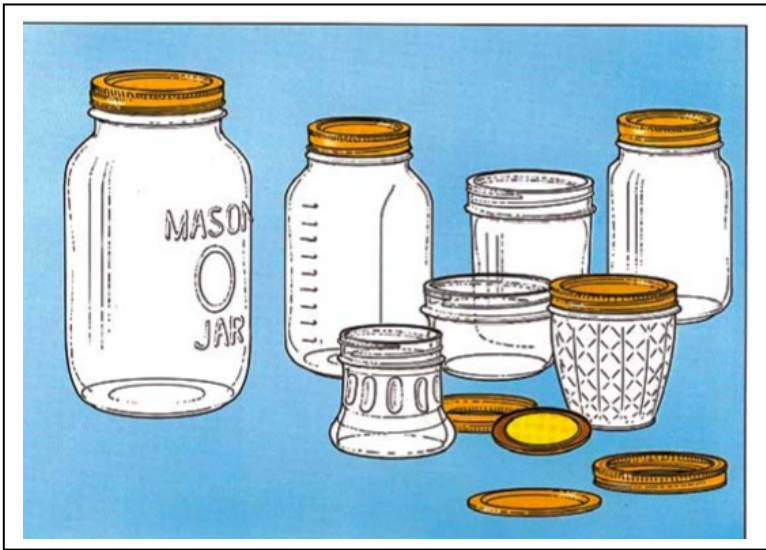
- 1) Start with fresh, healthy fruit.
- 2) Use the correct amount of sugar. Sugar preserves the fruit. Do not reduce the amount.
- 3) Sterilize all your canning jars, lids, rings, and utensils before canning. Do not touch sterile rims or lids with bare hands.
- 4) Follow procedures for processing the jars in a steam bath

EQUIPMENT

If you’re just starting out, you’ll need to invest in some equipment.

- 1) Buy at least 1 dozen half-pint canning jars with canning lids and rings – about \$10.
You can buy boxes of just lids or of rings and lids to reuse the jars.
- 2) Large pot – big enough to hold six jars at a time.
- 3) Rack for bottom of large pot
- 4) Regular tongs – to remove sterilized jars, lids and rings from boiling water
- 5) A wide mouth funnel – to fill the jars
- 6) Canning tongs - to lift filled jars from steam bath
- 7) A rack to set the sterilized jars on as you fill them and later after they have been sealed in the steam bath.
- 8) Several heat-proof measuring cups
- 9) Oven mitts, dishtowels, paper towels
- 10) A heavy cooking pot, not aluminum, 4-6 Quart size

You can get canning jars, funnels and tongs at yard sales or you may know someone who has them. **BUT:** do not buy or use canning jars with cracks or nicks in the rims. Do not use jars you’ve saved from commercial products



MAKING JAM

All you need to make basic berry jam is the uncooked fruit and sugar.

Generally, you need a cup of sugar for every cup of washed fruit for safe canning and proper jelling. Do not reduce the amount below $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of sugar for each cup of berries.

If you are diabetic or need to reduce calories, ask your doctor about an approved sugar substitute. Then call the manufacturer about using the substitute for canning.

Basic Berry Recipe *

4-6 cups fresh berries – Do not try to cook more than 6 cups of berries at a time
 $\frac{2}{3}$ to 1 Cup sugar for each cup of berries

* strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and grapes. For grapes, wash and freeze overnight before making jam. Before canning, strain the finished jam to remove grape peels and pits.

1. Sterilize the canning equipment:

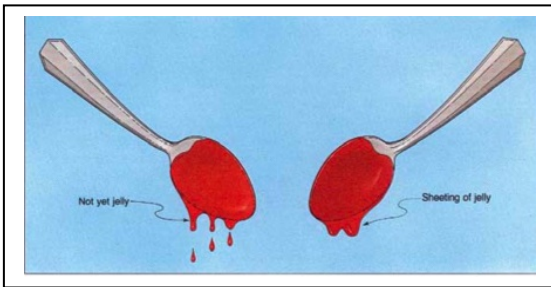
- a. Fill large pot with cold water and put on burner over high heat.
- b. Place empty canning jars into pot
- c. Separate lids and rings and put them aside to sterilize later.
- d. When the pot starts to boil, lower the heat to simmer. Set a timer for 7 minutes
- e. Begin cooking jam once you set the timer.

2. Prepare the berries

- a. While the water in the pot comes to a boil, rinse berries.
- b. Cut off stems or leaves and cut out any blemishes. If large, cut berries in half.
- c. Place the prepared berries into a cooking pot with the sugar.
- d. Mix the berries and sugar up until the sugar has absorbed a lot of berry juice and is starting to turn into a syrup.

3. Make the jam

- a. Once the water in the big pot is simmering, raise the heat under the berries to low.
- b. Keep stirring and raising the heat under the berries by degrees until all the sugar has become syrupy.
- c. The surface will start to foam. Skim the foam off periodically with a large clean metal spoon and set aside.
- d. Bring berry mixture to a boil for five minutes and stir only a few times. You'll know it is starting to jell when the bubbles on the surface get large.
- e. Now put the lids and rings into the pot with the pot with the canning jars.
- f. Dip a metal or wooden spoon in and hold it up. Watch how the syrup drips off. Aim for syrup that doesn't form droplets (left) but doesn't sheet (right)

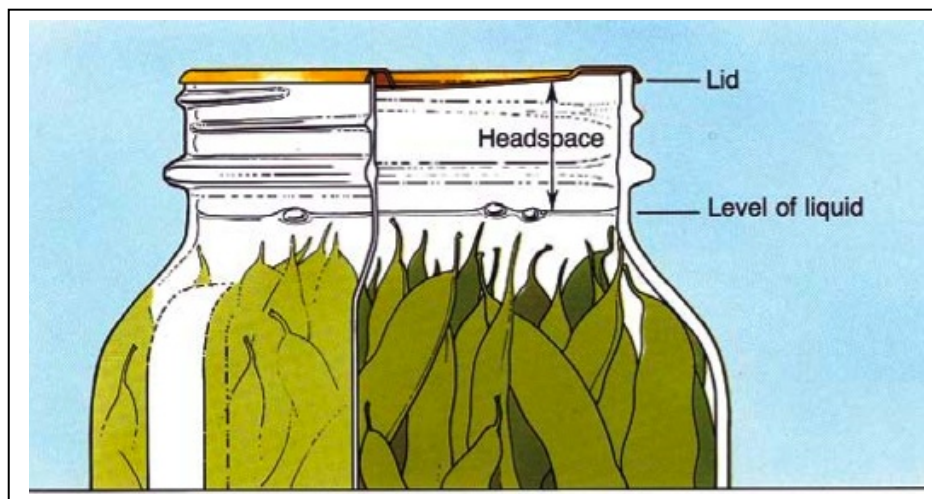


Home made jam will be softer than commercial jams stiffened with lots of additives. Don't worry about undercooking.

If overcooked, jam will get too sticky to spread. If this happens, thin the jam before you use it with water or juice.

4. Filling jars

- a. Remove the cooking pot from the heat and place in the sink.
- b. Whisk the cooked berries with a large fork to break the berries up
- c. Remove the canning jars from the big pot a few at a time
- d. Place the funnel into each and fill with clean measuring cup to just below the the place the beginning of the rim as in image below.



- e. When all the jars are filled, carefully wipe the rims clean.
- f. With small tongs, remove lids from hot water and place on top of filled jars.
- g. With small tongs, remove sealing rings and place over lids. Screw rings in place protecting your hands with a towel.
- h. Press the center of each lid. It will pop down but then pop up again.

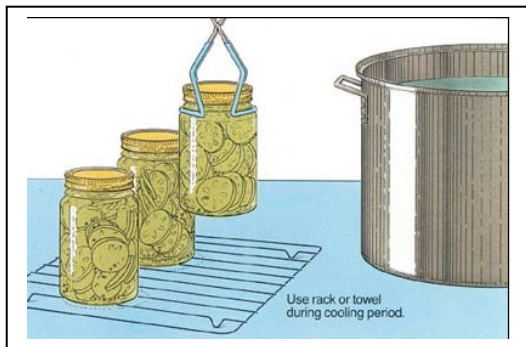
**After proper canning, all the air will be sucked out of the jar and the center will be pulled down.
The jar will be sealed and protected from spoilage.**

5. Canning in a steam bath

- a. Place rack in the bottom of the large pot.
- b. using canning tongs, arrange sealed filled jars on the rack with space between in each jar. Do not stack jars.
- c. Put the cover on the pot and bring water to a boil.
- d. Once the water is boiling, lower heat to a brisk simmer for 6 minutes.

6. Testing jars

- a. After 6 minutes, remove jars with canning tongs and place on a rack to cool.
- b. Each lid will make a popping sound as the center is pulled down. This means all the air has been pulled out of the jar and it is now sealed.



- c. If a lid hasn't popped after 5 minutes, put it back in the simmering water for another 6 minutes. If it still doesn't seal, put it into the refrigerator and eat it right away.

**If jam later appears cloudy
or if lid doesn't pop when you first open it,
throw it away at once.**

Once the jars have cooled, wipe them and put them away in the pantry. Now you have delicious home-cooked jam to enjoy during the winter or give away as gifts!!

Useful websites

<http://foodsafety.psu.edu/canningguide.html>

http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/publications_usda.html