



Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe

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Golden Pepper Jelly

3 large, fleshy yellow bell peppers
1 to 4 serrano peppers
1-1/2 cups white distilled vinegar (5%)
7 cups sugar
1 package (3-ounce) liquid pectin

Yield: About 7 half-pint jars

Wash all peppers thoroughly. Remove stems and seeds from all the peppers. Do not remove the inner white membrane from the hot peppers, since it holds the remaining spicy chemical, capsaicin. Place sweet and hot peppers in a blender or food processor. Add enough vinegar to allow pureeing of the peppers, then puree. Combine the pepper-vinegar puree and remaining vinegar in a 6- or 8-quart saucepan. Heat to a boil. Boil for 20 minutes to extract flavors and color. Remove from heat and strain through a jelly bag into a bowl. Add the strained pepper-vinegar juice back to the saucepan. Stir in sugar until dissolved and return to a boil. Add the pectin. Increase to a full rolling boil and boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Quickly skim off any foam. Fill sterile jars with the mixture, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Wipe rims of jars with a damp, clean paper towel. Adjust lids. Process hot half-pint jars in a boiling water bath canner for five minutes at an altitude of 0 to 1,000 feet; ten minutes for up to 6,000 feet above sea level.

Caution: Wear plastic or rubber gloves and do not touch your face while handling or cutting hot peppers. If you do not wear gloves, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face or eyes.

Holiday Gifts From Your Kitchen

Homemade gifts often are some of the most cherished during the holidays. If you regret not having tasty spreads already prepared for your loved ones, regret no more! You can still proudly give that beautiful jar of homemade jelly at your holiday gathering.

The provided pepper jelly recipe calls for yellow peppers, which results in a golden color. For holiday colors, you can use red or green, sweet or hot peppers in the same amounts called for in the recipe.

If prepared with exact measurements of ingredients and cooking times, this recipe makes a jelly with a mildly firm set. When you are using added pectin, you can make a softer jelly by using ¼ to ½ cup more of the juice. If you would like a firmer product, use ¼ to ½ cup less juice.

There may be a temptation to double the recipe to make lots of gifts at once. That is not recommended, because doubled batches don't always gel properly.

Happy gift giving!

Reference:

http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_07/golden_pepper_jelly.html




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Preserving Venison

Venison is easy to home preserve! If this is your first time canning, it is recommended that you read the basics of using of a pressure canner. All meats, including poultry and fish, **MUST BE** pressure canned for safety. Choose high-quality chilled meat. Remove excess fat. Soak strong-flavored wild meats for 1 hour in brine water containing 1 tablespoon of salt per quart. Rinse. Remove large bones. Cut away any bruised areas and gristle. Slice across the grain into strips about 1-inch-thick. Then cut into 1- to 2-inch chunks. You may pack the venison cubes in one of two methods:

****Hot pack** – Precook meat until rare by roasting, stewing or browning in a small amount of fat. Add 1 teaspoons of salt per quart to the jar, if desired. Fill jars with pieces and add boiling broth, meat drippings, water or tomato juice, which works especially well with wild game. Leave a 1-inch headspace.

Raw pack – Add 2 teaspoons of salt per quart to the jar, if desired. Fill jars with raw meat pieces, leaving 1-inch headspace. Do not add liquid; the meat will produce its own juice.

Adjust lids and process following the recommendations in [Table 1](#) or [Table 2](#) according to the canning method used.

Table 1. Recommended processing time for strips, cubes or chunks of meat in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of

Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time (minutes)	0-2,000 ft.	2,001-4,000 ft.	4,001-6,000 ft.	6,001-8,000 ft.
Hot and Raw	Pints	75	11 lb.	12 lb.	13 lb.	14 lb.
	Quarts	90	11	12	13	14

Table 2. Recommended processing time for strips, cubes or chunks of meat in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.

Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of

Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time	0-1,000 ft.	Above 1,000 ft.
Hot and Raw	Pints	75	10 lb.	15 lb.
	Quarts	90	10	15

****** The hot pack method is preferred for best liquid coverage and quality during storage. The natural amount of fat and juices in wild game are usually not enough to cover most of the meat in raw packs.

Reference: <http://extension.missouri.edu/p/GH1490>

Freezing Pumpkin and Squash

For many people, eating pumpkin or winter squash dishes is one of the best parts about this time of year. In addition to canning pumpkin, as discussed in this newsletter's September/October edition, you also can freeze pumpkin or winter squash to easily preserve this beautiful produce. Either frozen product can make pumpkin pies and other recipes. You may need to drain the pumpkin/squash after thawing, as it will be more watery than canned pumpkin. Secretly add it to dishes like macaroni and cheese to boost the recipes' vitamin contents, or just enjoy it plain!



To freeze either pumpkin or winter squash, choose a mature pumpkin/squash with a hard rind. Wash the rind. Cut the produce into cooking-size sections and remove seeds. Cook until soft in a pan of boiling water, in steam or use a pressure cooker. Remove pulp from the rind and mash. To cool, place pan containing pumpkin/squash in cold water and stir occasionally. Package in freezer-safe containers, leaving ½-inch headspace. Seal and freeze. Use the frozen product within 8 to 12 months.

Source: *The University of Georgia*: <http://nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze.html>

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