

Making Jelly Without Added Pectin ¹

United States Department of Agriculture, Extension Service²

Use only firm fruits naturally high in pectin. Select a mixture of about 3/4 ripe and 1/4 under-ripe fruit. Do not use commercially canned or frozen fruit juices. Their pectin content is too low. Wash all fruits thoroughly before cooking. Crush soft fruits or berries; cut firmer fruits into small pieces. Using the peels and cores adds pectin to the juice during cooking. Add water to fruits that require it, as listed in the [table of ingredients](#) below. Put fruit and water in large saucepan and bring to a boil. Then simmer according to the times below until fruit is soft, while stirring to prevent scorching. One pound of fruit should yield at least 1 cup of clear juice. [Table 1](#) recommends process times for jelly without pectin made in a boiling water canner.

Extracting Juices and Making Jelly

When fruit is tender, strain through a colander, then strain through a double layer of cheesecloth or a jelly bag. Allow juice to drip through, using a stand or colander to hold the bag. Pressing or squeezing the bag or cloth will cause cloudy jelly.

Using no more than 6 to 8 cups of extracted fruit juice at a time, measure fruit juice, sugar, and lemon juice according

to the ingredients in the [table](#) and heat to boiling. [Table 2](#) provides instructions and proportions for extracting juice from jelly fruits. Stir until the sugar is dissolved. Boil over high heat to the jelling point. To test jelly for doneness, use one of the following methods.

Temperature test: Use a jelly or candy thermometer and boil until mixture reaches the following temperatures at the altitudes in [Table 3](#).

Sheet or spoon test: Dip a cool metal spoon into the boiling jelly mixture. Raise the spoon about 12 inches above the pan (out of steam). Turn the spoon so the liquid runs off the side. The jelly is done when the syrup forms two drops that flow together and sheet or hang off the edge of the spoon.

Remove from heat and quickly skim off foam. Fill sterile jars with jelly. For more information see “Jars and Lids,” (FCS 8255). Use a measuring cup or ladle the jelly through a wide-mouthed funnel, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process.

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Table 1. Recommended process time for jelly without added pectin in a boiling water canner.

		Process Time at Altitudes of		
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Half-pints or pints	5 min	10	15

*After the process is complete, turn off the heat and remove the canner lid. Wait five minutes before removing jars.

Table 2. To extract juice.

Fruit	Cups of Water to be Added per Pound of Fruit	Minutes to Simmer Fruit before Extracting Juice	Ingredients Added to Each Cup of Strained Juice		Yield from 4 Cups of Juice (Half-pints)
			Sugar (Cups)	Lemon Juice (Tsp)	
Apples	1	20 to 25	3/4	1-1/2 (opt)	4 to 5
Blackberries	None or 1/4	5 to 10	3/4 to 1	None	7 to 8
Crab Apples	1	20 to 25	1	None	4 to 5
Grapes	None or 1/4	5 to 10	3/4 to 1	None	8 to 9
Plums	1/2	15 to 20	3/4	None	8 to 9

Table 3. Temperature test.

SeaLevel	1,000 ft	2,000 ft	3,000 ft	4,000 ft	5,000 ft	6,000 ft	7,000 ft	8,000 ft
220° F	218° F	216° F	214° F	212° F	211° F	209° F	207° F	205° F