

Our fans are asking for low sugar recipes. We can accommodate! We like requests.

But first, a little information on low sugar recipes, especially low sugar jams and jellies. You should understand there is always a compromise. Sugar is a preservative. It ties up water molecules and helps prevent mold and other bacteria from growing in the food. When you choose to use less sugar there are things you need to take into consideration.

### **Quick Facts...**

- All fruits can safely be canned or frozen without sugar.
- Sweet relish and pickle recipes do not adapt as well to sugar-free canning as do plain fruits.
- Use recipes from reliable sources. Process all pickles by the boiling-water method using timetables adjusted for altitude.
- Jams and jellies can be made without added sugar (using a recipe from a reliable source) but will resemble more of a fruited gelatin dessert than a true jam or jelly.
- Salt is not necessary for safe processing of canned or frozen fruits and vegetables. It is necessary for the preservation of most pickles and cured or smoked foods.

### **The compromises we make with low sugar recipes are:**

- A shorter shelf life
  - Where full sugar recipes last a year and well beyond, low sugar recipes last 6 months to a year.
  - They last a week or two in the refrigerator, where a full sugar recipe will last months.
- Flavor, color, texture and nutritional value will start to diminish much sooner than a full sugar recipe.

Because the shelf life is significantly less you should plan to make only what your family can eat before the product goes bad. The above rules apply to all home preserved products with less sugar, too.

### **A few more Do's n Don'ts for low sugar jams and jellies:**

- Use low sugar recipes from safe sources such as Ball or the National Center for Home Food Preservation <http://nchfp.uga.edu/>
- If using pectin, use a low/no sugar pectin. These are available in most stores where canning supplies are sold.
- Do not simply reduce the amount of sugar in a given full sugar recipe. Chances are your jam/jelly will not gel and you will end up with sauce instead.
- To prevent spoilage, process jars of low-sugar jams and jellies longer in a boiling water-bath canner than regular jams or jellies. Carefully follow recipes and processing times provided with each modified pectin product. Altering the proportion of acids and fruits may result in spoilage.

**One more tip:** remember to adjust for elevation, if needed. Not everybody lives at the same altitude. At sea level, water boils at 212° F. All recipes are developed using sea level as the criteria for processing times. At higher altitudes water will boil at a lower temperature. Adjustments have to be made to insure safe canning. If you are at a higher altitude you must adjust the processing times according to the following chart:

<b>Altitude Chart</b>	
Altitude in feet	Increase processing time
1000 - 3000	5 minutes
3001 - 6000	10 minutes
6001 - 8000	15 minutes
8001 - 10000	20 minutes

On with the recipes!

This recipe won **1<sup>st</sup> prize at the El Dorado County Fair** last year.

### **LOW SUGAR PEAR JAM**

4 cups peeled, cored and finely chopped pears. (~9 medium pears)  
2 Tbsp. bottled lemon juice  
1 pkg. No Sugar Needed Pectin  
1 cup unsweetened grape juice  
¼ tsp. butter or margarine  
3 cups sugar (21 ounces)

Place chopped pears, grape juice and lemon juice in a non-reactive pot. Gradually stir in pectin. Add butter or margarine to reduce foaming. Bring mixture to a boil; then add 3 cups sugar (21 ounces) and bring back to a full rolling boil that can't be stirred down. Stir constantly for 3 minutes at full rolling boil. Remove from heat and skim off foam, if necessary. Fill hot jars, leaving ¼" headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe the rims clean. Place lids and rings on jars, tightening rings finger tight. Process for 10 minutes in a boiling water bath canner. Adjust for elevation if necessary.

Yield: 4 to 6 half pints.

Source: Ball

### **REDUCED-SUGAR FRUIT SPREADS: PEACH-PINEAPPLE SPREAD**

- 4 cups drained peach pulp (procedure as below)
- 2 cups drained unsweetened crushed pineapple
- 1/4 cup bottled lemon juice
- 2 cups sugar (optional)

This recipe may be made with any combination of peaches, nectarines, apricots, and plums.

This recipe may be made without sugar or with up to 2 cups, according to taste or preference. Non-nutritive sweeteners may be added. If aspartame (a low-calorie nutritive sweetener) is used, the sweetening power of aspartame may be lost within 3 to 4 weeks.

**Yield:** 5 to 6 half-pints

**Procedure:** Thoroughly wash 4 to 6 pounds of firm, ripe peaches. Drain well. Peel and remove pits. Grind fruit flesh with a medium or coarse blade, or crush with a fork (do not use a blender). Place ground or crushed fruit in a 2-quart saucepan. Heat slowly to release juice, stirring constantly, until fruit is tender. Place cooked fruit in a jelly bag or strainer lined with four layers of cheesecloth. Allow juice to drip about 15 minutes. Save the juice for jelly or other uses. Measure 4 cups of drained fruit pulp for making spread. Combine the 4 cups of pulp, pineapple, and lemon juice in a 4-quart saucepan. Add up to 2 cups of sugar, if desired, and mix well. Heat and boil gently for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring enough to prevent sticking. Remove from heat and skim off foam, if necessary. Fill hot jars quickly, leaving  $\frac{1}{4}$ " headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe the rims clean. Place lids and rings on jars, tightening rings finger tight. Process for 10 minutes in a boiling water bath canner. Adjust for elevation if necessary (see the Altitude Chart above).

Source: National Center for Home Food Preservation