



## Fruit Butters

Fruit butters are sweet spreads made by cooking fruit pulp with sugar to a thick consistency. Their smooth, spreadable texture makes them an ideal substitute for butter on bread, toast, or muffins.

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Although apple butter may be the most well-known of the fruit butters, they may be made from any firm fruit.

### Tips for Making Fruit Butters

- Using several varieties of the fruit yields a desirable product.
- The spices used in a fruit butter gives it a distinctive flavor.
- Spices can safely be

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adjusted to suit your taste.

- Spices may be omitted if you prefer more fruit flavor.
- Some recipes call for peeling the fruit before cooking. Others just stem, core, and quarter the fruit before cooking until soft and pressing it through a colander or food mill to remove the seeds and skins.

### Variability in Results

- You can use the same recipe year after year with different results.

- The yield may vary depending upon the juice content of the fruit. Some varieties of a particular fruit are juicier than others.
- Fruit that is very juicy will require a longer cooking time to reduce to the proper consistency for a butter.
- Fruit that is slightly immature contains more natural pectin that will have a gelling effect thickening the butter more quickly.
- The shorter the cooking time, the lighter the color of the finished product. Cook butters in a wide-diameter pan.
- The greater the surface area, the more quickly moisture evaporates to create a thick fruit mixture.
- Recipes that make about four pints usually cook about 30 to 60 minutes for ideal consistency.

## Caution—Avoid Scorching

- It is very easy to scorch or burn fruit butters because of the long slow cooking.
- Simmer rather than boil fruit butter.
- Stir constantly as it thickens, especially as it reaches the point of doneness.
- Even a small amount of scorching will cause the entire mixture to taste burned.

## Test for Doneness

- Remove a spoonful of the hot butter from the pan and hold it away from steam for 2 minutes. It is done if the butter remains mounded on the spoon.
- Spoon a small quantity onto a cool plate. When the rim of the liquid does not separate around the edge of the butter, it is ready for canning.

## Process Fruit Butters in a Boiling Water Bath or Atmospheric Steam Canner

- Fruit butters that are stored in jars at room temperature need to be processed in a boiling water bath or atmospheric steam canner.
- Some recipes specify filling the heated butter into sterilized jars and processing for 5 minutes.
- Other recipes use clean jars and process the butter for 10 minutes.
- Either method works to provide a good vacuum seal and to prevent molds in the air space.

- Some products that are low in acid such as pumpkin butter **cannot** be processed safely and should be refrigerated and used within four weeks.

## Novel Uses of Fruit Butters

- Spread apricot or peach butter between layers of cake. Cutting the layers crosswise creates more layers to apply the flavorful butters.
- Create a sandwich cookie with apple or pear butter between the cookies.
- Make delicious low-fat baked goods by substituting fruit butter for some of the fat in the recipe.
- Spread over pancakes or waffles and top with cottage cheese.

## Recipe

This flavorful pear butter contains a hint of orange.

### Pear Butter (*So Easy to Preserve*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition)

#### Ingredients

- 2 quarts pear pulp (about 20 medium, fully ripe pears)
- 4 cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon grated orange rind
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup orange juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground nutmeg

Cut pears in quarters and remove cores. Cook until soft, adding only enough water to prevent sticking (about  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup.) Press through a sieve or food mill. Measure pulp.

Add remaining ingredients and cook until thick, about 15 minutes. As mixture thickens, stir frequently to prevent sticking. (Refer to doneness tests described above.) Pour hot butter into hot sterilized jars, leaving  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids. Process 5 minutes in a boiling water bath or atmospheric steam canner. (Adjust process times for high altitudes.)

Remove canner from heat and remove canner lid. Wait five minutes before removing jars. Makes about 4 half-pint jars.

A recipe for apple butter is available in Penn State Extension's [Let's Preserve Apples](#).

