

Dilemma.

There is so much produce out there and it is all so wonderful and there is so much we can do with it and should I make jam, pickles, dehydrate it, pressure can it and should I spice it or enjoy the pure taste of the fruit or vegetable and, and, and...

Ok, decision made. Berry season is in full swing. If we are not growing berries in our gardens we have many local berry farms. We can buy them at the farmers market, local produce stands or, even more fun, take the family on a day trip to a local u-pick berry farm.

Let's go for a flavorful but uncomplicated berry jam. Raspberry-blueberry. Yeah. I'm already dreamin' about this on a scone or in a Trifle.

Read the whole recipe before you get started. Make sure you have enough berries and all the ingredients. Also, note the type of pectin used. In this recipe we are using liquid pectin. It can be found most places that sell powdered pectin.

Pectin's are not created equal. Liquid pectin is added at the end of the process where powdered pectin is added at the beginning of the process. You cannot substitute powdered pectin for liquid pectin. The amount and type of pectin in a recipe is carefully formulated for the amount of acid in the fruit vs the amount of sugar used. Always read the recipe and the directions on the box of pectin to insure a proper gel is achieved.

A little bit of advice on making jams with mixed fruit. The point is to taste the fruit!! If you have 2 different fruits then you want to balance the taste so you can taste both flavors in your jam not overwhelm one fruit with another. Otherwise, it is just a waste of time and fruit.

Raspberry and Blueberry Jam

from the Complete Book of Small-Batch Preserving

3 cups fresh or frozen unsweetened raspberries
2 cups fresh or frozen unsweetened blueberries
1 large orange
6 ½ cups of sugar
2 Tbls. Lemon juice
1 pouch liquid fruit pectin

Mash the raspberries and blueberries in a large stainless steel or enamel saucepan. Do not use an aluminum pan. This jam is acidic and the acid reacts with the aluminum and may turn your product an ugly gray color!

Remove the zest from the orange with a vegetable peeler, peeling in wide strips. Cut into fine strips, across the width, with scissors or a sharp knife. Or use a zester. Add to saucepan. Remove and discard remaining white rind (also called pith). Finely chop orange in food processor with on/off motion to measure ½ cup. Add orange pulp, sugar and lemon juice to saucepan.

Bring fruit to a boil over high heat and boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and stir in the pectin.

Ladle into hot jars and process for 10 minutes in a boiling water bath canner.

Makes 7 cups or 7 half pint jars.

Variations:

Raspberry-Cranberry Jam

Replace blueberries with 2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries, finely chopped.

Raspberry-Plum Jam

Replace blueberries with 2 cups finely chopped plums. A small amount of finely chopped fresh mint makes a nice addition.