
Steps in Processing Jams and Jellies

Follow These Steps in Making Jam or Jelly at Home:

1. Wash Mason canning jars (half-pint or pint size) in hot water with detergent and rinse well by hand, or wash in a dishwasher. If your recipe calls for presterilized jars, presterilize the clean jars by submerging them 10 minutes in boiling water. The easiest way is to stand the empty jars upright on a rack in a boiling water canner filled with clean water. There should be enough water to fill the jars and still come to a level 1 to 2 inches above the tops of the jars. Bring the water to a boil and boil for 10 minutes. Jars can remain in the hot water until they are ready to be filled. If you are not pre-sterilizing jars, keep the clean jars warm until time to fill them.
2. Prepare two-piece canning lids according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
3. Prepare jam or jelly according to recipe directions. Boil for the recommended time in the recipe and then quickly skim off foam (if needed or desired).
4. Remove presterilized jars from the hot water one at a time, tilting them to quickly empty them into the canner. To make sure they are completely drained, they may be turned upside down on a clean towel on the countertop. Fill presterilized or warm jars quickly with the hot jelly or jam mixture, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Wipe the sealing surface of the jars with a clean paper towel, dampened with hot water, to remove any jelly, jam or sugar crystals. Adjust lids.

Work quickly to insure that the filled jars stay as hot as possible until all are filled and ready to load into the canner for processing. However, remember the jam or jelly mixture is very hot and take precautions not to burn yourself.

5. Load the filled jars, fitted with lids, into the canner one at a time, using a jar lifter. Keep the jar upright at all times. Tilting the jar could cause the hot jelly or jam mixture to spill into the sealing area of the lid, which should remain clean and undisturbed. The water in the canner can be close to boiling when the jars are added, if you have made sure the filled product has remained very hot until the canner load is ready.
6. The water level in the canner should be 1 to 2 inches above the tops of the filled jars. Turn the heat under the canner to its highest setting, cover the canner with its lid and heat until the water boils vigorously. Process the jars for the recommended number of minutes after the water boils. The water in the canner must remain boiling during the entire process time, so keep the heat source on high and a tight lid on the canner.
7. When the jars have been processed in boiling water for the recommended time, turn off the heat and remove the canner lid. Wait 5 minutes. Remove jars from canner; use a jar lifter and keep jars upright. Remove jars from canner after the process time is up; use a jar lifter and keep jars upright. Carefully place them directly onto a towel or cake cooling rack, leaving at least one inch of space between the jars during cooling. Avoid placing the jars on a cold surface or in a cold draft.
8. Cool jars upright for 12 to 24 hours while vacuum seal is drawn and jam or jelly sets up. Let the jars sit undisturbed while they cool. Do *not* tighten ring bands on the lids or push down on the center of the flat metal lid until the jar is completely cooled.
9. Remove ring bands from sealed jars. Put any unsealed jars in the refrigerator and use first.
10. Wash jars and lids to remove all residues. Label and store in a cool, dry place out of direct light.

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