



K-STATE  
Research and Extension

# PRESERVE IT FRESH, PRESERVE IT SAFE PEACHES



When preserving fresh foods at home, follow proper techniques to prevent foodborne illness. These safety tested methods can be used for apricots and nectarines as well as peaches.

**Always wash your hands before preparing any recipe.**

**CAUTION:** Do not use this process to can white-flesh peaches. There is evidence that some varieties of white-flesh peaches are higher in pH (i.e., lower in acid) than traditional yellow varieties. The natural pH of some white peaches can exceed 4.6, making them a low-acid food for canning purposes. At this time there is no low-acid pressure process available for white-flesh peaches nor a researched acidification procedure for safe boiling water canning. **Freezing** is the recommended method of preserving white-flesh peaches.

## Quality

Select ripe, mature fruit of ideal quality for eating fresh. Peach varieties grown in Kansas may include Cresthaven, Early Redhaven, Glohaven, Harken, Intrepid, Redhaven, Redskin, and Reliance. Learn more at <https://bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf1028.pdf>.

## Freezing

Freezer appliance manuals offer guidelines for the maximum amount that can be frozen at one time to maintain quality — usually 2 to 3 pounds of food for each cubic foot of freezer space.

## Quantity

An average of 1¼ pounds of fresh peaches makes 1 pint frozen. Select well-ripened fruit and handle carefully to avoid bruising. Sort, rinse, and peel. Peel peaches by dipping them in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds. Then remove and place in cold water. Skins will slip off easily. Slice or halve if desired.

*Syrup pack:* Dissolve 2¾ cups of sugar in 4 cups of lukewarm water, mixing until clear, then chill before

using. For a better quality product, add ½ teaspoon of crystalline ascorbic acid for each quart of syrup. Slice the fruit directly into the syrup in the container, starting with ½ cup of syrup to a pint container. Press the fruit down, add syrup to cover leaving headspace, seal, and freeze.

*Sugar pack:* Before combining peaches with sugar, treat with the following solution to prevent darkening: ¼ teaspoon of crystalline ascorbic acid and ¼ cup of cold water. Dissolve crystalline ascorbic acid in cold water and sprinkle over 1 quart (1⅓ lbs.) of fruit. Mix ⅔ cup of sugar with each quart of fruit. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Pack into containers leaving headspace, seal, and freeze.

*Unsweetened pack:* Pack peaches into containers. Cover with cold water, juice, or pectin syrup, adding 1 teaspoon of crystalline ascorbic acid for each quart. Leave headspace, seal, and freeze.

To make pectin syrup, combine 1 package regular powdered pectin in 1 cup water. Heat to boiling and boil for 1 minute. Add 1¾ cups cool water. Cool. Makes about 3 cups.

*Unsweetened puree:* Coarsely crush peaches that are peeled and pitted. Press peaches through a sieve or puree in a blender or food processor. (Heating pitted fruit for about 4 minutes in just enough water to prevent scorching makes them easier to puree.) For better quality, add ⅛ teaspoon of crystalline ascorbic acid to each quart of fruit. Pack into containers leaving headspace, seal, and freeze.

To package, fill pint- or quart-size freezer bags or rigid freezer containers. Fill bags to within 3 to 4 inches of the top, squeeze out air, seal, and label. Bags may be inserted into reusable, rigid-plastic freezer containers before freezing for added protection against punctures and leakage.

*Nutrition:* Frozen Peaches, sugar pack  
Serving size: ½ cup — 140 calories, 0 g fat, 36 g carbohydrate, 1 g protein, 2 g fiber, 0 mg sodium, 34 g sugar

## Dehydrating

For information on dehydrating fruit or fruit leathers, see <https://www.rrc.k-state.edu/preservation/drying.html> for resources.

## Canning

See *How-to Guide to Water Bath Canning and Steam Canning* (MF3241) and *How-to Guide to Pressure Canning* (MF3242) to learn more about these methods.

### Preparing Jars and Lids

For all canning recipes processed less than 10 minutes, wash and sterilize jars by placing them inside a boiling water canner and cover with water. Boil jars for at least 10 minutes and keep them hot. All jars must be warm prior to filling with food.

Preheating is not required for standard metal lids. Always wash lids in hot, soapy water before use. If using reusable plastic lid systems with rubber rings, follow the manufacturer's directions.

### Quantity

A bushel of peaches weighs 50 pounds and yields 18 to 24 quarts. An average of 17 pounds makes a 7-quart canner load; 11 pounds makes 9 pints.

**Caution:** Use yellow peaches only.

Dip peaches in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds to loosen skins. Dip quickly in cold water and slip off the skins. Cut peaches in half, remove pits, and slice if desired. To prevent darkening, place peeled fruit in a solution containing 1 teaspoon of ascorbic acid crystals or six 500-milligram vitamin C tablets crushed in 1 gallon of water. Cover peaches with water, apple or white grape juice, or a very light, light, or medium syrup. See chart in next column for preparing a sugar syrup.

*Hot pack:* Place drained fruit in syrup, juice, or water into a large saucepan and bring to a boil. Fill clean jars with hot fruit, cut side down, and cooking liquid, leaving ½ inch of headspace.

*Raw pack:* Raw packs make poor quality peaches. Fill jars with raw fruit, cut side down. Add hot water, juice, or syrup, leaving ½-inch headspace.

*Processing:* Remove air bubbles and readjust headspace.

Wipe jar rims. Apply lids and rings fingertip-tight. Process in a water bath or steam canner according to Table 1, or in a pressure canner according to Table 2. Turn off heat and remove canner lid. If pressure canning, let canner depressurize naturally, remove lid. Let jars cool 5 minutes. Remove jars from canner; do not retighten bands. Cool completely, check seals, label, date, and store.

*Nutrition:* Canned Peaches, very light sugar syrup  
Serving size: ½ cup — 50 calories, 0 g fat, 13 g carbohydrate, 1 g protein, 2 g fiber, 0 mg sodium, 12 g sugar

### Sugar Syrup for Peaches

Syrup type	% sugar	For 9-pint load		For 7-quart load	
		Water (cups)	Sugar (cups)	Water (cups)	Sugar (cups)
Very light	10	6½	¾	10½	1¼
Light	20	5¾	1½	9	2¼
Medium	30	5¼	2¼	8¼	3¾

### Peach Pie Filling

Clear Jel® is a starch modified to produce excellent sauce consistency even after the fillings are canned and baked. Instant Clear Jel® is not recommended. Other available household starches break down, causing a runny sauce consistency when used in these pie fillings. Clear Jel® is available from bulk food stores or online retailers and may be labeled as “cook type.”

Because the variety of fruit may alter the flavor of a fruit pie, make a single quart of filling first. Make a pie with it and serve. Then adjust the sugar and spices in the recipe to suit your personal preference. Do not alter the amount of lemon juice because it helps to ensure the safety and storage stability of the fillings. If the filling is too tart, add more sugar to taste.

Each canned quart of pie filling makes one 8- to 9-inch pie. The fillings may be used as toppings on desserts or pastries.

Ingredient	Quantities needed for:	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh sliced yellow peaches	3½ cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	1 cup	7 cups
Clear Jel®	¼ cup + 1 tbsp.	2 cups + 3 tbsp.
Cold water	¾ cup	5¼ cups
Cinnamon (optional)	⅛ tsp.	1 tsp.
Almond extract (optional)	⅛ tsp.	1 tsp.
Bottled lemon juice	¼ cup	1¾ cups

## Procedure

Peel the peaches. To loosen skins, submerge the peaches in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds, then place them in cold water for 20 seconds. Slip off skins and slice into ½-inch wide slices. Place the slices in water containing one teaspoon of ascorbic acid crystals or six 500-milligram vitamin C tablets (crushed) in one gallon of water to prevent browning. For fresh fruit, place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch 1 minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain but keep the heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot.

Combine sugar, Clear Jel®, water, and, if desired, cinnamon or almond extract in a large kettle. Stir and cook on medium high heat until the mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil the sauce one minute more, stirring constantly. Fold in drained peach slices and continue to heat for 3 minutes, then fill jars with the mixture leaving 1-inch headspace.

Remove air bubbles, readjust headspace, wipe jar rims, then apply lid and ring fingertip tight. Process in a boiling water canner or steam canner according to Table 1. Turn off heat and remove canner lid. Let jars cool 5 minutes. Remove jars from canner; do not retighten bands. Cool completely, check seals, label, date, and store.

*Nutrition:* Peach Pie Filling

Serving size: ⅓ cup — 90 calories, 0 g fat, 24 g carbohydrate, 0 g protein, 1 g fiber, 5 mg sodium, 21 g sugar

## Peach Jam

*Yield:* 8 half-pint jars

- 2 quarts crushed, peeled yellow peaches
- ½ cup water
- 6 cups sugar

## Procedure

Combine peaches and water; cook gently for 10 minutes. Add sugar; slowly bring to a boil, stirring occasionally until the sugar dissolves. Cook rapidly until thick, about 15 minutes, stirring frequently to prevent sticking. Remove foam. Pour hot jam into hot jars, leaving ¼ inch of headspace. Wipe jar rims. Apply lid and ring fingertip-tight.

Process in a boiling-water bath or steam canner according to the directions in Table 1. Turn off heat and remove canner lid. Cool jars for 5 minutes and

remove from canner. Do not retighten bands. Cool completely, check seals, label, date, and store.

For spiced peach jam, tie the following ingredients in a piece of cheesecloth and add during cooking:

- 1 teaspoon whole cloves
- 1 stick cinnamon (3-inch piece)
- ½ teaspoon whole allspice

Remove spice bag before pouring jam into hot jars. Process as directed for peach jam.

*Nutrition:* Peach Jam

Serving size: 1 tablespoon — 40 calories, 0 g fat, 10 g carbohydrate, 0 g protein, 0 g fiber, 0 mg sodium, 10 g sugar

## Peach Butter

*Yield:* About 8 half-pint jars

- 2 quarts peach pulp (about 18 medium yellow peaches)
- 4 cups sugar

*To prepare pulp:* Rinse, scald, pit, peel, and chop peaches; cook until soft, adding only enough water to prevent sticking. Press through a sieve or food mill. Measure pulp.

*To make butter:* Combine peach pulp and sugar in a large, heavy saucepot. Cook until thick enough (about 30 minutes) to round up on a spoon. As mixture thickens, stir frequently to prevent sticking. Ladle hot butter into hot jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and readjust headspace. Wipe jar rims. Apply lid and ring fingertip-tight. Process in a boiling-water canner or steam canner according to Table 1. Turn off heat and remove canner lid. Let jars cool 5 minutes. Remove jars from canner; do not retighten bands. Cool completely, check seals, label, date, and store.

*Variation:* For spiced peach butter add ½ to 1 teaspoon each of ginger, nutmeg, and cinnamon or any combination of these spices when adding sugar.

*Nutrition:* Peach Butter

Serving size: 1 tablespoon — 15 calories, 0 g fat, 4 g carbohydrate, 0 g protein, 0 g fiber, 0 mg sodium, 4 g sugar

## Peach Salsa

*Option:* About 3 to 4 large, hard, green, unripe mangoes, can be used in place of peaches. Mangoes may irritate the skin of some people. Wear plastic gloves and do not touch your face, lips, or eyes until gloves are removed and hands are washed.

*Yield:* About 6 half-pint jars

- 6 cups diced hard, underripe yellow peaches
- 1½ cups diced red bell pepper
- ½ cup finely chopped yellow onion
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped garlic
- 2 teaspoons finely chopped ginger
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- 1¼ cups cider vinegar (5% acidity)
- ½ cup water

Rinse all produce well. Peel and chop peaches into ½-inch cubes. Dice bell pepper into ½-inch pieces. Finely chop yellow onions.

Combine all ingredients in an 8-quart Dutch oven or stockpot. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring to dissolve sugar. Reduce to simmering, and simmer for 5 minutes.

Fill clean, hot half-pint jars. Cover with hot liquid, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a damp, clean paper towel; apply two-piece metal canning lids. Process in a boiling water canner or steam canner according to the directions in Table 1. Turn off heat and remove canner lid. Let jars cool 5 minutes. Remove jars from canner; do not retighten bands. Cool completely, check seals, label, date, and store.

*Nutrition:* Peach Salsa

Serving size: 2 tablespoons — 25 calories, 0g fat, 6g carbohydrate, 0g protein, 0g fiber, 0mg sodium, 5g sugar

## Mixed Fruit Cocktail

*Yield:* About 12 half-pints or 6 pints

- 3 pounds yellow peaches
- 3 pounds pears
- 1½ pounds slightly underripe seedless green grapes
- 10-ounce jar of maraschino cherries
- 3 cups sugar
- 4 cups water

Stem and wash grapes, and keep in ascorbic acid solution of 3,000 milligrams (six 500 mg vitamin C tablets, crushed) ascorbic acid to 1 gallon water. Dip ripe but firm peaches, a few at a time, in boiling water for 1 to 1½ minutes to loosen skins. Dip in cold water and slip off skins. Cut in half, remove pits, cut into ½-inch cubes, and keep in solution with grapes. Peel, halve, and core pears. Cut into ½-inch cubes, and keep in solution with grapes and peaches. Combine sugar and water in a saucepan and bring to boil. Drain mixed fruit. Add ½ cup of hot syrup to each jar. Then add a few cherries and gently fill the jar with mixed fruit and more hot syrup, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe jar rims. Apply lids and rings fingertip-tight. Process in a boiling water canner or steam canner according to directions in Table 1. Turn off heat and remove canner lid. Let jars cool 5 minutes. Remove jars from canner; do not retighten bands. Cool completely, check seals, label, date, and store.

*Nutrition:* Mixed Fruit Cocktail

Serving size: ½ cup — 120 calories, 0 g fat, 32 g carbohydrate, 1 g protein, 2 g fiber, 0 mg sodium, 28 g sugar

## Problems and Solutions

### 1. Why do peach pieces float to the top of jam?

The fruit was either not ripe enough, not crushed into small pieces, not cooked long enough, or not packed properly into the jars.

### 2. What causes canned peaches to float?

The fruit is lighter than the sugar syrup. Use firm, ripe fruit. The hot pack method helps to remove air from the fruit. Use a light or medium syrup instead of a heavy syrup. Pack fruit as close as possible and release trapped air as you fill the jar and before applying the lid.

### 3. What are some steps to prevent oozing in canned pie filling?

When canning pie filling, sometimes the pie filling expands and oozes out the top of the jar after removing the jars from the canner. Some prevention tips include:

- Prepare the fruit carefully, such as completely thawing frozen fruit and blanching fresh fruit. This helps remove air from inside the fruit.
- Remove air bubbles before applying the lid and ring.

- Reduce the amount of ClearJel® to  $\frac{3}{4}$  the amount stated in the recipe. For example, if the recipe states 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups of ClearJel®, use 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons. Do not use regular cornstarch or flour when canning pie filling as these thickeners give poor quality results.
- Do not double recipes.
- Leave at least 1-inch headspace. It is acceptable to leave  $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch headspace in this case.
- Keep the filling hot and have a hot canner ready to go.
- After processing, leave the jars in the water bath canner for 10 minutes. If using a steam canner, remove the jars after processing time has ended.

### 4. Is it safe to can peaches, or other fruit, without sugar?

Yes. Sugar is added to improve flavor, help stabilize color, and retain the shape of the fruit. It is not added as a preservative.

**Table 1. Recommended processing times in a water bath canner or steam canner.**

Product	Style of Pack	Jar Size	Minutes of processing at different elevations (in feet)		
			0-1,000	1,001-3,000	3,001-6,000
Peaches	Hot	Pints	20	25	30
		Quarts	25	30	35
Peaches	Raw	Pints	25	30	35
		Quarts	30	35	40
Peach pie filling	Hot	Pints or quarts	30	35	40
Peach jam	Hot	Half -pints	5	10	10
Peach butter	Hot	Half -pints	5	10	15
Peach salsa	Hot	Half-pints	10	15	15
Mixed fruit cocktail	Hot	Half-pints or pints	20	25	30

**Table 2. Recommended processing times in a pressure canner for canned peaches.**

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time (min.)	Canner gauge pressure for different elevations (in feet)			
			Dial gauge (lbs)		Weighted gauge (lbs)	
			0- 2,000	2,001-4,000	0-1,000	Above 1,000
Hot and raw	Pints or quarts	10	6	7	5	10

**Revised by Karen Blakeslee, M.S., Extension Associate, Food Science**

*Complete Guide to Home Canning*, USDA AIB No. 539, 2015, and *So Easy to Preserve*, 6th ed., The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.

Safe Preserving: Oozing canned pie filling, Dr. Barbara H Ingham, University of Wisconsin-Madison, <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/safefood/2017/10/23/safe-preserving-oozing-canned-pie-filling/>

Nutrition data provided by USDA FoodData Central, <https://fdc.nal.usda.gov/index.html> and ESHA Genesis R&D Food Formulation & Labeling Software, version 11.13

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