

Fiercely
— D.I.Y. GUIDE TO —
**Jams, Jellies
& Fruit Butters**



Kathie N. Lapcevic



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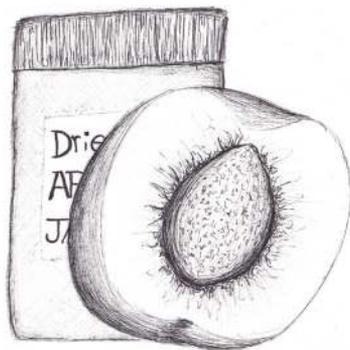


- INTRODUCTION -

Preserving food is an amazing and satisfying way to express our fiercely independent and D.I.Y. spirits. For many, the door to home food preservation is opened through the simple and delicious process of making fruit preserves in the forms of jams, jellies, and fruit butters. This process can be done in a water bath canner, allowing new folks to build up skills before tackling the pressure canner, and it's usually fast meaning something that can be done in the cooler evening hours of summer.

Jams and jellies offer the creative cook plenty of opportunities to show their flair and be inspired by the food growing and available around them. Recipes abound for newer cooks or folks who would rather follow a clear set of instructions. Make this summer the year you put the season in a jar. Make this a fun process, relax and don't worry, you won't poison your family.

Following are a number of recipes as well as general instructions and plenty of variations to help you make the most of the fruits, herbs, and even weeds available in your growing area. Follow the recipes exactly or use them as a jumping off point to create more individual flavors to suit your family's taste buds.



Kathie



- CANNING JAMS, JELLIES, & FRUIT BUTTERS -

Canning is an exacting process that allows for food to be shelf-stable for at least a year. The recipes that follow all include canning processing times. Freezing will work for most of them and refrigeration of small batches is, of course, an option.

Some things to keep in mind to keep the canning process safe:

Water Bath Canning

A water bath canner is simply any pot deep enough to cover the jars by 1-inch of water while they process inside the canner. You can buy a canner or simply use a deep stockpot, just put something (a towel or round cooling rack) at the bottom of the pot to keep the jars from touching the bottom of the pot and breaking from direct contact with the heat.

All of the recipes have times included for processing. It's important to start that timing process after the water comes to a full boil with the jars submerged.

Altitude Effects Timing

All of the recipes include processing times for up to 1,000 feet above sea level. Processing times increase the higher the altitude. Figure your altitude and add time to the recipe as follows:

- 1,001 – 3,000 feet above sea level – Add 5 minutes
- 3,001 – 6,000 feet above sea level – Add 10 minutes
- 6,001 – 8,000 feet above sea level – Add 15 minutes
- 8,001 – 10,000 feet above sea level – Add 20 minutes



Canning Basics – Not Covered Here

We do not cover the basics of canning other fruits and vegetables, the removal of air bubbles, or the proper placement of canning lids and rings in this book. If you don't have basic canning skills, please take a class or read up on the skills in books or by visiting some great websites:

- Ball Complete Book of Home Preserving by Judi Kingri
- The National Center for Home Food Preservation
- Simply Canning
- Food in Jars



- ABOUT GEL STAGE -

The trick to making jams and jellies is making sure gel stage is reached. There are a few ways to check for this as the jam or jelly is cooking:

Temperature

Again, knowing your elevation is important. Water boils at different temperatures at different elevations.

For gel stage to be reached, the cooking jam or jelly must be boiled until it gets to 8 degrees Fahrenheit above the boiling point of water.

A good way to check for this is to simply bring a pot of water to a boil and use a thermometer to give the exact temperature at which it comes to a full rolling boil in your kitchen. Use that as the base temperature and add 8 degrees for jam gel stage.

Sheet Test

Dip a cold metal spoon into the boiling jam or jelly. Lift and hold it horizontally over the pot so that the mixture runs off the edge. When the mixture runs off in a sheet, rather than drips off, gel stage has been reached.



Refrigerator Test

Keep a few small plates chilled in the freezer.

Remove the cooking jam from the heat to prevent overcooking. Place a teaspoon of the mixture onto the chilled plate and put it back into the freezer for 1 minute. Remove the plate from the freezer and push the edge of the mixture with a finger. If the chilled mixture wrinkles when pushed gel stage has been reached.

When Something Fails To Set

You did all the tests and it seemed like gel stage had been reached, however something still went wrong and the jars of huckleberry jam are more like huckleberry syrup. Don't be discouraged, it happens. The syrupy, saucy mixture is still edible and likely very tasty. No one but the cook knows it was supposed to be jam not pancake topping. Simply don't mention it. Give those jars away (or use them up at home) under a different name. It may no longer be mixed berry jam but it can easily be mixed berry ice cream sauce. No one will complain about tasty goodness, I promise.



- SOME WORDS & ADVICE ABOUT PECTIN -

Pectin is that ingredient that makes jams and jellies gel. Gel stage can sometimes be reached by cooking for a long time but even then the results can be a little iffy. In the recipes that follow there are several different kinds of pectin used:

- Boxed Powdered Pectin (Regular & Low-Sugar Varieties)
- Liquid Pectin (usually comes in pouches)
- Pomona's Pectin

All three of these can usually be purchased in the canning section of most grocery stores. Pomona's might be the exception but most health food stores carry it if not the main big grocery stores.

When faced with a recipe that uses boxed or liquid pectin it's not wise to double or triple recipes or change the sugar content. Doing so, might prevent the jam or jelly from reaching gel stage. Feel free to play with that just know that results might vary.

Pomona's pectin on the other hand gels with no sugar in many cases. Use Pomona's when wanting to lessen sugar content or double or triple recipes.



- HOMEMADE PECTIN -

Pectin can be made from apples and is most definitely worth trying. It is different than using store-bought pectin but can be a worthwhile endeavor. If you'd like to try making your own follow these instructions:



Wash, but don't peel, about seven large tart apples. Cut them into pieces and add four cups of water and two tablespoons of lemon juice. Boil the mixture for 40 minutes, then strain it through cheesecloth. Boil the strained juice for another 20 minutes, pour it into jars, leaving 1/2" headspace. Process in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes. Can also be frozen.

Use in place of boxed pectin in jams - how much is tough to gauge (every batch of pectin will vary in strength), you simply need to test for gel stage.



- MAKING JELLY -

Jelly is technically the fruit juice that has been gelled. It has no chunks of fruit and is fairly translucent. It can be a fussy animal and wasteful in that only the juice is used and much of the fruit is tossed. Conversely there are recipes for making jelly from the pits and peels of many fruits meaning it can potentially make use of things that might otherwise get wasted.

Jellies can also be made from teas and other drinks meaning it's a great way to experiment with herbs, flowers, and weeds. Jelly can even be made from black teas, coffee, beer, wine, and other beverages.

Pomona's pectin on the other hand gels with no sugar in many cases. Use Pomona's when wanting to lessen sugar content or double or triple recipes.





Cooking Fruit Into Juice

Before making most jellies, the juice must be extracted from the fruit. This can be done with a steam juicer assuming a person has one. This is essentially a colander set over an empty bowl with water steaming below that, the juice is then cooked out of the fruit and extracted from the pot into a tube that can be drained. If a person isn't making much fruit juice, syrup, or jelly it's not worth having in the kitchen.

The traditional way to cook fruit into juice is to put fruit, quartered and pitted into a large pot add some water (roughly about 1/2 cup for each pound of fruit) and bring to boil. Reduce heat and boil gently, stirring and crushing the fruit occasionally until the fruit is soft. Once soft the cooked fruit is transferred to a dampened jelly bag or cheesecloth lined strainer set over a bowl.

Leave that fruit to drip for several hours without squeezing or pressing the dripping the fruit. Squeezing or pressing the fruit could result in a cloudy jelly – it's not the worst thing the world but it does mean no blue ribbon at the fair should a person be concerned about that. The juice collected from the dripping fruit is what is used for making jelly.

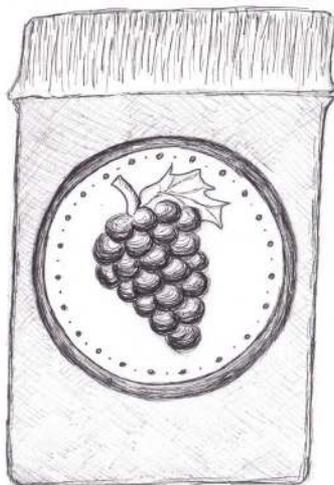
- BASIC FRUIT JUICE JELLY -

You can cook fruit as described on the previous page or even use store bought juices for this recipe. It's a very sweet jelly but can be done quickly and easily for party favors or gift baskets:

- 4 Cups Unsweetened Fruit Juice (apple, grape, etc.)
- 1 Box of Powdered Pectin
- 5 Cups Sugar

Pour juice into a saucepan, stir in pectin until dissolved. Bring to a boil over high heat, add sugar all at once and return to a boil, stirring constantly.

Boil hard, stirring constantly for 1 minute. Remove from heat and skim off foam. Fill jars leaving 1/4" headspace before processing in a boiling water canner for 10 minutes.





- SPICY PINOT NOIR JELLY -

This basic recipe might work with any wine sitting around the kitchen. It's sweet and spicy so don't bother using expensive wine here. This is a place for the bottle cheaply purchased or even perhaps the more expensive bottle that wasn't so tasty for drinking:

- 2 1/2 Cups Pinot Noir Wine
- 4 Whole Star Anise
- 5 Whole Cloves
- 1 Cinnamon Stick
- 4 Cups Sugar
- 1/4 Cup Lemon Juice
- 3 Ounces Liquid Pectin

Put the wine in a saucepan with the star anise, cloves, and cinnamon stick. Bring to a boil, lower heat and simmer 5 minutes. Cool for 10 minutes, then strain out the spices. Measure out 2 cups of wine.

Combine the 2 cups of wine with the lemon juice and sugar. Bring to a boil. Add the liquid pectin and boil for 1 minute. Remove from heat, skim off foam. Pour into jars, leaving 1/4" headspace, process in a boiling water canner for 10 minutes.



- QUICK HERB JELLY -

This basic recipe is a great way to give sweet and savory homegrown herbs as a gift in a more interesting fashion.

- 2 Cups Water or 2 1/2 Cups Fruit Juice or Wine
- 1 Cup Fresh Herbs, Chopped
- 4 Cups Sugar
- 1/4 Cup Lemon Juice
- 3 Ounces Liquid Pectin

Bring liquid to a boil, pour over herbs. Let steep until completely cooled. Strain the infusion.

Combine 2 cups of the infused liquid with sugar and lemon juice. Bring to a boil, stirring to dissolve sugar completely. Add the pectin and stir boiling for one minute. Fill jars leaving 1/4" headspace. Process in a water bath for 10 minutes.

Herbs To Consider

All those herbs growing in the herb beds make a tasty jelly. Sweet ones like mint or lemon balm are a natural choice. Don't forget the savory ones like oregano or basil which go wonderfully with cheese and crackers.

Bee balm flowers, dandelion flowers (the yellow petals only), fireweed petals, lilacs, and more can all be used in this recipe too. Get creative and use what is found in the backyard and on foraging adventures.

- COWBOY COFFEE JELLY -

I'm not sure why or how coffee and cinnamon became cowboy coffee, but it is a delicious combination. This unusual jelly makes a great gift for the coffee lover in your life.

- 4 Cups Cold Coffee
- 1/2 teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
- 1/4 Cup Lemon Juice
- 4 1/2 teaspoons Pomona's Calcium Water
- 1 Cup Sugar
- 4 1/2 teaspoons Pomona's Pectin Powder

In a saucepan, combine the coffee, lemon juice, cinnamon, and calcium water. Stir to combine.

In a small bowl, whisk together the sugar and pectin powder. Set aside.

Bring the coffee to a rolling boil, add the sugar mixture and stir vigorously for 2 minutes. Return to a boil for 2 minutes. Remove from heat.

Pour jelly into jars leaving 1/4" headspace, process in a water bath for 10 minutes.





- MAKING JAMS -

Jams are a thick mixture of sugar and fruit that has been boiled gently until the fruit is soft and mostly formless. It can have seeds or not, chunks of fruit or be mostly smooth. Jams are generally less time consuming and fussy than jelly. Using pectin instead of a long cooking time to gel the mixture gives it a more ‘fresh’ taste along with just being a faster method.

Jams are great spread on toast naturally, but also make for tasty ingredients in desserts. They can be slathered between layers of cake, spooned into thumbprint cookies, swirled into sweetened cheese for pastries, and much more.

Jams offer an endless variety of customization opportunities as well. Toss a few mint leaves or other herbs in just before putting it into jars for a different flavor. Mix up different berries and fruits to make the most of what’s on hand and create unique combinations.

Even if your household doesn’t eat a lot of jam on toast, consider making some for dessert making and plenty for gift-giving.

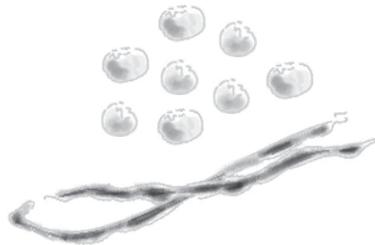


- BLUEBERRY VANILLA JAM -

This basic recipe would likely work with any berries that happened to be in season and be delicious. There is something inherently warming and exotic about vanilla and berries. Sweet cherries will also work exceedingly well instead of blueberries in this recipe.

- 4 Cups Mashed Blueberries
- 1/4 Cup Lemon Juice
- 1/2 Cup Honey
- 1 Vanilla Bean Scraped
- 2 teaspoons Pomona's Pectin Powder
- 2 teaspoons Pomona's Calcium Water

In a saucepan combine fruit, vanilla bean contents, and lemon juice, add calcium water, stir well. In a small bowl combine honey with Pomona's Pectin, mix thoroughly. Bring fruit to a boil for 2 minutes, add pectin-honey mixture stirring to dissolve. Return to a boil for another 2 minutes, then remove from heat. Fill jars leaving 1/4" headspace. Process in a water bath for 15 minutes.





- MELON STAR ANISE JAM -

This jam came to be simply because some homegrown melons grew but were not very tasty at all. Rather than force ourselves to eat less-than-ideally-sweet melons and to avoid throwing it all into the compost heap, jam was made. It made for a delicious and different jam perfect for snacking and gift giving. It's a bit longer of a process here because it needs to sit overnight but that sitting increases the sweet flavor and gives the jam an entirely different depth of flavor.

- 3 Pounds Musk Melon / Cantaloupe Peeled, Seeded, and Diced
- 1 Cup Sugar
- 3 Whole Star Anise
- 2 Tablespoons Lemon Juice
- 1 Pouch Liquid Pectin

Combine the melon, sugar, and star anise in a jam pot, mixing well. Cover and let sit in the fridge overnight.

Uncover the melon mixture, add lemon juice and bring the melon mixture to a simmer over medium heat. Simmer for about 30 minutes. Remove from heat and remove the star anise from the mixture. Using a potato masher, mash the melon for a smooth mixture. Put the mixture back on the stove and bring to a simmer. Add the liquid pectin and boil hard for 1 minute.

Pour jam into jars, leaving 1/4" head space. Process in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes.



- TOMATO-BASIL JAM -

While tomato and basil is a classic combination, as a jam it might seem a bit odd, but it makes for a truly delicious bite. It's great on a grilled cheese sandwich, tasty slathered on some garlic bread, delicious when mixed with cream cheese and spread onto savory crackers, and much more.

- 3 Cups Tomatoes, Peeled and Chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon Salt
- 1/4 Cup Lemon Juice
- 3 Tablespoons Basil, Chopped
- 3 Cups Sugar
- 1 1.75 Ounce Package Low-Sugar Pectin

Place tomatoes, lemon juice, basil, and salt in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring frequently.

Combine 1/4 cup of sugar with the pectin and stir into tomatoes. Bring to a full rolling boil. Stirring constantly add the remaining sugar and return to a boil for 1 minute. Skim off foam.

Pour into jars leaving 1/4" headspace. Process in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes.





- PEPPERED BALSAMIC BERRY JAM -

It seems like an unusual combination, but I promise it works and wonderfully so:

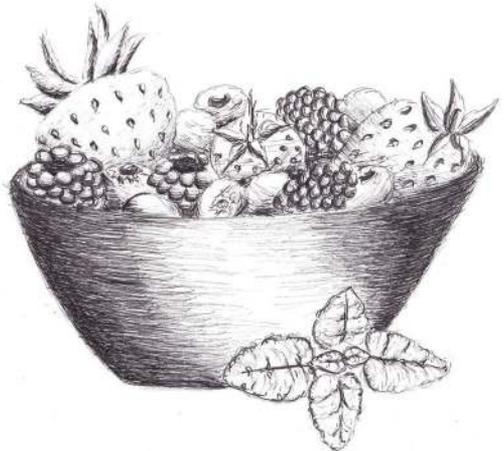
- 4 Cups Strawberries, Quartered
- 2 Cups Blueberries
- 1/3 Cup Balsamic Vinegar
- 1/4 teaspoon Black Pepper
- 1 Cup Honey
- 2 teaspoons Pomona's Pectin
- 2 teaspoons Pomona's Calcium Water

In a small bowl combine, the pectin and honey. Set aside.

In a pot, combine berries, vinegar, black pepper, and calcium water. Mash berries and bring to a boil. Boil for 2 minutes before adding the honey, pectin mixture. Boil for 2 more minutes.

Pour into jars, leaving 1/4" headspace. Process in boiling water bath for 14 minutes. Makes about 6 half pints.

Note: Use any berries or combination of berries that happen to be ripe at the moment for a delicious jam.





- MAKING FRUIT BUTTERS -

Fruit butters are the easiest of fruit spreads to make. There is no straining of fruit for juice, no worry about pectin or gel stage. Fruit butters are usually fruit cooked and puréed with some juice, some sugar, and usually spice which are then cooked slowly until thick and creamy like butter. Ideally a fruit butter reaches its final stage when it mounds up on the spoon. Simply a scoop some of the simmering mixture onto a spoon and if it holds shape into a mound on the spoon it's done.

The thing about fruit butters is that they can take a long time to cook, here are some tips to speed up that process and make it a little easier:

Freeze The Fruit

Pit, core, remove pits, etc. and chop fruit into chunks. Put these chunks into a freezer container and freeze until solid (days, weeks, even months okay). A few hours before making the fruit butter, dump the chopped fruit into a colander in a sink. Let the fruit thaw and all the water drain off. The freezing and thawing of the fruit convinces it to give up some water making the cooking down process quicker.

Purée Before Cooking

If the fruit was frozen and thawed, it will most likely puree very easily (just like making a smoothie). Even raw fruits will puree easily with most modern blenders or food process. Doing this before getting started will cut out the initial step of cooking and then blending often called for in many fruit butter recipes.



Use the Slow Cooker

Combine the fruit, sugar, and other ingredients in a slow cooker. Leaving the lid off, to allow steam to escape cook the fruit butter on high (or low if your cooker tends to run a little hot). Cook the butter until thick and creamy, stirring occasionally.



- NECTARINE MAPLE BUTTER -

The hint of real maple syrup gives this fruit butter a light sweetness but also a deliciously dark flavor that will be a hit on pancakes and in gift basket:

- 5 Pounds Nectarines, Pitted & Coarsely Chopped
- 2 Tablespoons Lemon Juice
- 1 Cup Water
- 1/2 Cup Maple Syrup
- 2 Vanilla Beans, Split and Scraped - save only the seeds scraped from the inside

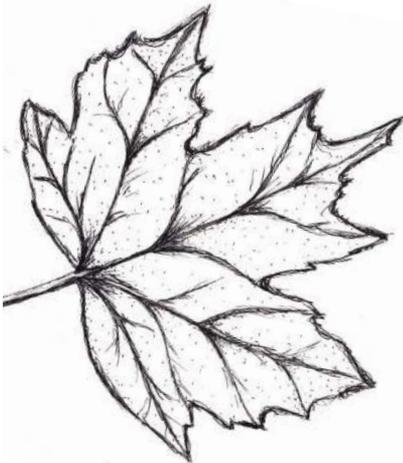
In a heavy sauce pan combine the nectarines, lemon juice, and water. Cover and bring to a simmer. Stirring frequently to prevent scorching, cook until fruit is soft - 10 to 20 minutes.

Remove from heat and puree in a blender.

Pour the puree into a slow cooker with the maple syrup and scraped vanilla beans. Set the slow cooker on high, do NOT cover.

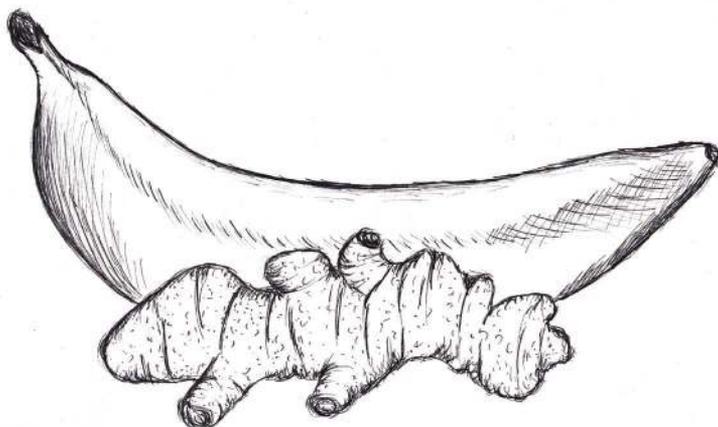
Allow the steam to escape. Stir occasionally and cook until the puree is a thick spreadable butter. Probably about 4 hours, but actual time will depend on your fruit and slow cooker.

Pour into hot jars and can for 10 minutes in a boiling water bath.



- BANANA GINGER BUTTER -

Use overripe bananas for this recipe. Bananas are already naturally thick so the cooking of this butter can go rather quickly; keep an eye on it to avoid scorching.



- 8 Large Bananas
- 2 Cups Sugar (more or less to taste)
- 1/3 Cup Lemon Juice
- 2 teaspoons Ground Ginger

Mash bananas until smooth, combine with remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil and simmer, uncovered for 20 minutes or until thick. Stir occasionally. Fill jars leaving 1/4" headspace, process in boiling water canner for 10 minutes.



- APPLE BUTTER -

This is probably the most classic fruit butter. It's warm and sweet, delightful on toast or even used in a homemade barbecue sauce.

- 5 Pounds Apples, Cored and Quartered
- 2 Cups Apple Cider
- 3 Cups Sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon Ground Cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon Ground Allspice
- 3 teaspoons Ground Cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon Ground Nutmeg

Cook apples slowly in cider until tender. Puree in a blender.

Add the sugar and spices to the apple puree. Pour into a slow cooker on low, leaving the lid off. Stir occasionally and cook until mixture is thick.

Pour into jars and process in a water bath canner for 10 minutes.

Pear Variation – Substitute pears for the apples and pear cider / juice for the apple cider and proceed as recipe describes for a tasty and different variation.

Plum Variation – Substitute plums for the apples and prune juice for the apple juice, proceed with the recipe as written.



- PUMPKIN BUTTER -

This recipe cannot be safely canned per USDA guidelines (no winter squash puree is safe to process in a home canner). It can however be refrigerated or frozen with great results. Also use any winter squash that happens to be on hand – pumpkin is great but so is butternut squash, sweet meat squash, hubbard squash, etc.

- 9 Cups pumpkin cooked and mashed
- 6 Cups sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 1/2 teaspoons lemon juice

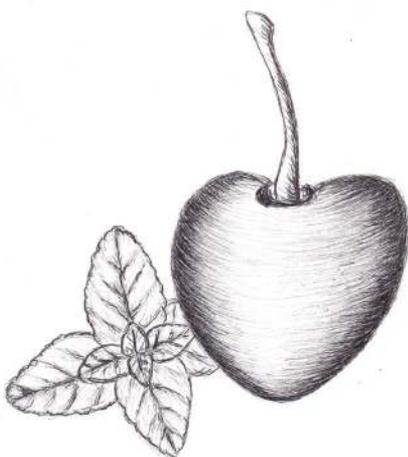
Combine all ingredients in a medium saucepan; stir well. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes until mixture is smooth and thickened. Pour into storage containers and refrigerate or freeze.



- MINTED CHERRY BUTTER -

This quickly became a favorite in our house. It's sweet and delicious and unexpected in flavor. If the cherries are particularly sweet, you may not want to add any additional sugar, start with small bits of sugar and taste before adding more to avoid making it too sweet.

- 10 Cups Sweet Cherries, Pitted
- Up to 4 Cups of Sugar
- 1/2 Cup Packed Mint Leaves
- Up to 1 Cup Apple or Cherry Juice



Puree the cherries and mint in a blender, adding just enough juice to make the blender move well.

In a large saucepan, combine puree and sugar, bring to a boil. Simmer until, mixture should mound on a spoon for a true fruit 'butter.'

Pour into jars, leaving 1/2" headspace, and process for 10 minutes in a water bath.

Spiced Cherry Butter Variation – instead of the mint, add 1 Tablespoon Ground Cinnamon, 1/2 teaspoon Ground Cloves, 1/4 teaspoon Ground Allspice

Vanilla Cherry Butter Variation – instead of mint, add 1 Tablespoon Vanilla Extract or the split contents of 1 whole vanilla bean.



- FINAL POINTS TO REMEMBER -

Have Fun

Making jams and jellies should be a fun process full of love for the ingredients, the process, and the people who will eventually be consuming these jars of goodness. Enjoy the process, enjoy the making, and let it happen. Remember – it's not about perfection and if it doesn't turn out perfectly no one else but you will know.

Make It A Gift

Jams and jellies make excellent gifts. Doing it now and having it set aside for the holiday season, means one less thing during all those days of family gatherings, office parties, and cookie baking later.

Make pretty labels and be sure to tout that the jam was made with homegrown or personally foraged produce when applicable. Always say it was produced with love and care because it undoubtedly was.

Keep It Local & Frugal

As often as possible use what's available locally. Ask your farmers for seconds or bruised fruits – when making jams or jellies we don't need perfectly beautiful fruit, it all gets mashed, puréed, or juiced anyway. Cut out the bad spots and proceed with the recipe as normal.



- ABOUT THE AUTHOR -

Kathie N. Lapcevic is a freelance writer and teacher who blogs about her Fiercely D.I.Y. adventures in food preservation, gardening, foraging and more at Homespun Seasonal Living (www.homespunseasonalliving.com). She lives in northwest Montana with her soulmate, Jeff, and when not getting dirty in the garden or messing up the kitchen can she be found wandering the mountains she calls home.

- ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATORS -

Meredith Skyer is a freelance writer, photographer, and illustrator from Rochester, NY. She runs a tiny urban farm where she raises livestock, grows food, and creates whimsical works of art. She blogs about her adventures at [ImaginAcres \(imaginacres.com\)](http://imaginacres.com), it's where art meets farm.

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- ABOUT THE GRAPHIC DESIGNER -

Rachel Arsenault is a freelance graphic designer and blogger at [Grow a Good Life \(growagoodlife.com\)](http://growagoodlife.com) where she writes about her journey to live a more self-sufficient life on her little homestead. Along the way, she shares helpful information about growing a garden, preserving the harvest, keeping backyard chickens, and living a simple life in rural Maine.

There's something inherently comforting about a jar of homemade fruit preserves.

They are delicious, of course, but they're also the very essence of freshness, love, and beauty all contained in a simple glass jar.

Jams, jellies, and fruit butters are easy and satisfying to make a great way to save one season for another but also a wonderful homemade gift that is almost perfectly wrapped just as it sits.

This Fiercely D.I.Y. Guide to Homemade Jams, Jellies, and Fruit Butters is bursting with:

- Methods to make the process more efficient and easier
- Tips to combine homegrown herbs with fresh fruits for tasty variation
- Inspiration for the novice to experienced jam maker
- Recipes for products like Tomato Basil Jam, Fresh Herb Jelly, Banana Ginger Butter, and much more!

