

# Making Jam

## BASIC METHOD

### Stage 1 – preparing the jars

Make sure your jars are scrupulously clean; soak off the labels if possible. Sterilize the lids by pouring boiling water over them. Leave them in the hot water for 5 minutes, then place to drain and dry in the air. When your jam is nearly ready (stage 6 below) heat the jars in the oven at 150°C to sterilize them and to stop them cracking when you pour in the hot jam.

### Stage 2 - Selecting the fruit

Avoid over-ripe fruit; slightly under-ripe fruit will probably set more easily.

Skin and pips are often high in pectin, which will help the jam or jelly set. For jelly it generally isn't necessary to peel, core or stone fruit for jelly, but roughly chopping it may make it quicker to cook.

Wash the fruit. Remove stones if necessary.

### Stage 3 - Soften the fruit

Add water if the recipe specifies. Simmer gently over a low heat until the fruit is really soft. Stir occasionally to prevent it burning. This can also be done in a slow-cooker or in a tightly covered pot in a very low oven – 140°C (in which case reduce or omit the water, depending on how juicy the fruit naturally is). Time taken will depend on the fruit.

### Stage 4 – for jelly – Strain the juice

Put all the fruit and liquid in a jelly bag (a muslin bag which is suspended over a bowl) and let all the juice drain out overnight.

### Stage 5 – Add the sugar

Use a preserving pan, or other large heavy bottomed pan. The larger the diameter of the pan the quicker the cooking process will be. Use normal granulated sugar; there should be no need to go to the expense of using preserving sugar or pectin solutions. Weigh out the sugar (for jelly you will usually need 1lb sugar for 1 pint of juice/ 450g sugar for 600ml). Stir it into the fruit/warmed juice over a gentle heat, until it is all thoroughly dissolved and there is no gritty feel when you stir the pan. Then bring the mixture up to the boil and boil rapidly. This is when you need to make sure the jam doesn't boil over! Stir occasionally to prevent it sticking to the bottom of the pan.

### Stage 6 – Setting point

After about 10 minutes take a teaspoonful of jam, put it on a small plate and put the plate in the fridge. Meanwhile keep the jam boiling. Remove the plate from the fridge after 5 minutes. Run your finger fingertip gently across the surface of the jam. If it crinkles (ie a light skin has formed) the jam has reached setting point. Turn the heat off. Make sure your jars are heated in the oven (see stage 1 above). If the jam sample is still liquid and no skin forms return your spoonful of jam to the pan and continue boiling for another 5 or 10 minutes before testing again.

### Stage 7 – Filling the jars

Use oven gloves to place the heated jam jars on some newspaper close to the stove and your preserving pan. If a foamy scum has formed on top of the jam or jelly skim it off. It is perfectly edible so you might want to put it onto a plate and store in the fridge to eat later, but it detracts from the appearance of the jelly or jam, so it is best removed. A jam funnel helps pour the jam neatly into the jars. Use a cup or a jug to

pour from. Fill the jars very full; the jam will shrink as it cools. Cut circles of greaseproof paper to fit the jars and place over the full jars. Carefully screw the lids on tightly before the jam has totally cooled, wiping the necks of the jars to remove any spills if necessary. When the jars are cool label and store in a cool dark place.

**N.B. Remember to label your jars saying what it is and when it was made. If plums or any other stoned fruit was used, you should include a note that there might be stones in the product. (Do this, even if you stoned the fruit, as it's really difficult to get every last one out). Also, if you used nuts, include that on the label too.**

# Recipes for Jams, Jellies and Chutneys

## JAMS

### Plum jam

6lb plums, halved, stones removed (makes about 10lb)  
1½ pints water  
6lb sugar

### Quince jam

2lb prepared quinces: peeled, cored, sliced (makes about 5lb)  
1½ pints water  
3lb sugar

### Blackberry and apple jam

1½ lb apples, peeled, cored and sliced  
6lb blackberries (makes about 10lb)  
½ pint water  
6lb sugar

### Cherry jam (makes about 5lb)

4lb cherries, stoned  
juice of 3 lemons  
3½ lb sugar

NB cherries are low in pectin, so the jam will only give a light set. You may find it helpful to use preserving sugar for this jam. Alternatively you could add redcurrant juice – simmer 1lb redcurrants in ¼ pint water. Drain the juice in a jelly bag and add to the cherry jam before adding the sugar. This will help the jam to set, as redcurrants are fairly high in pectin.

### Blackcurrant jam

4lb blackcurrants (makes about 10lb)  
3 pints water  
6 lb sugar

### Damson jam

5lb damsons – you can stone them before cooking, or remove them from the simmering mixture as they rise to the top. It may be easier to cook in a very low oven (omit the water) in a tightly covered pot or slow cooker and remove the stones when the fruit is fully cooked.

1½ pints water  
6 lb sugar (makes about 10lb)

### Gooseberry jam

6lb gooseberries (makes about 10lb)  
2 pints water  
6 lb sugar

### **Marrow and ginger jam**

6lb/2.7kg diced marrow flesh (makes 10-12lb)  
Juice and grated rind of 4 lemons  
12 oz/350g crystallized ginger chopped *or* 3oz/75g root ginger (bruised and tied in a muslin bag) *or* 1 oz/25g ground ginger.  
6lb/2.7kg sugar

Put marrow flesh in large pan with a little cold water bring to boil and simmer at least 20 mins until tender. Drain thoroughly and mash the flesh.  
Return marrow to the pan. Add the rest of the ingredients. Bring to boil. Remove pan from heat. Add sugar and stir until dissolved. Return pan to heat and boil for about 20 mins until jam is thick. Stir regularly to avoid sticking/burning. Pot and cover as normal

### **Apple ginger**

4 lb cooking apples, peeled, cored and sliced. Tie the cores and peel in muslin and put in the pan with the fruit and 1½ pints water.  
Simmer apples and water till really soft. Remove muslin bag. Mash or sieve the apples to get a puree.  
8oz preserved ginger, finely chopped  
3 tbsp ginger syrup  
Grated rind and juice of 3 lemons  
3lb sugar  
Add the rest of the ingredients. Bring to the boil and boil rapidly until setting point is reached. Allow to stand for 15 mins. Pot and cover in the usual way. Makes 6-7lb.

### **Apple butter**

This will not keep for very long, but will use up lots of fruit, including the good parts of windfalls! It makes a thick brown spread which you use like jam.

6lb cooking apples or crab apples, washed and chopped (no need to peel and core)  
Water to just cover the fruit (about 3-4 pints)  
1 tsp cinnamon  
1 tsp powdered cloves (or put some whole cloves in while stewing the apples)  
½ tsp ginger  
12oz sugar to each 1lb of pulp  
Simmer the apples in the water until really soft and pulpy. Sieve or mouli to obtain a very smooth pulp. Weigh the pulp, return it to the pan with the spices and the appropriate amount of sugar. Stir till the sugar is dissolved then boil gently, stirring regularly, until creamy in consistency. Pot and cover as usual.

## **JELLIES**

### **Bramble jelly**

6lb blackberries  
¾-1 pint water  
1 cooking apple (chopped but not peeled or cored)  
Juice of 1 lemon  
¼ tsp mixed spice (optional)  
Sugar – 1lb for each pint of juice.

**Apple jelly**

6lb cooking apples, washed and roughly chopped  
Cinnamon stick or cloves (optional)  
Water to just cover (about 3 pints)  
Sugar – 1lb for each pint of juice.

**Crab apple jelly**

6lb crab apples, washed and roughly chopped  
12 cloves (optional)  
3 pints water  
Sugar – 1lb for each pint of juice.

**Hedgerow jelly**

1 cup rosehips, 1 cup hawthorn berries, 1 cup crab apples – for dark golden coloured jelly  
or 1 cup elderberries, 1 cup blackberries, 2 cups crab apples – for purple coloured jelly  
Water to cover  
Sugar – 1lb for each pint of juice.

**Mint Jelly**

6lb cooking apples, washed and roughly chopped  
Large bunch fresh mint  
2¼ pints water  
Boil together until the apples are really soft.  
Add 2 pints vinegar.  
Boil rapidly for 5 minutes. Strain the juice. Add 6-8 tbsps chopped mint with the sugar (1lb for each pint of juice)

**Damson and apple jelly**

6lb cooking apples  
3lb damsons  
4 pints water  
Sugar – 1lb for each pint of juice.

**Elderberry jelly**

2lb elderberries  
2lb cooking apples  
1 pint water  
Sugar – 1lb for each pint of juice.

**Redcurrant jelly**

3lb redcurrants  
1 pint water  
Sugar – 1lb for each pint of juice.

**Quince jelly**

4lb quinces  
Rind and juice of 3 lemons  
4 pints water  
Simmer till tender (1 hour approx) and strain through a jelly bag. Return the pulp (not the juice) to the pan and add a further 2 pints of water. Bring back to the boil, simmer 30 mins, strain through jelly bag. Mix the two lots of juice together, measure and add sugar – 1lb for each pint of juice. Continue as for any other jelly.

## CHUTNEY

Chutney needs to cook a long time over a very low heat, with regular stirring to keep it from burning. Try and chop all the fruit to a reasonably small size, as it will retain its shape in the finished product (apart from apple). If you prefer you can put the spices (cloves, root ginger – bashed with a rolling pin, peppercorns etc) in a muslin bag and remove it when the chutney is cooked. Pot chutney while it is still warm. Pack it tightly into the jars, using the back of a spoon to remove any air pockets. Use plastic lids if possible (eg old peanut butter jars), as metal lids may rust.

### Late summer chutney

1kg marrows (peeled) or overgrown courgettes, diced  
500g cooking apples, peeled, cored and diced  
1kg green tomatoes, diced  
500g onions, chopped  
500g sultanas  
500g soft brown sugar  
500ml cider vinegar or white wine vinegar  
2 tsp dried chilli flakes (optional)  
1 inch (2.5cm) fresh root ginger, grated or finely chopped  
12 cloves  
2 tsp black peppercorns

Mix everything together and let it simmer very slowly for 2½ - 3 hours, until it is thick and well reduced. Pot as above.

### Pear and ginger chutney

60ml olive oil  
200g sultanas  
100g raisins 400ml cider vinegar  
100g soft brown sugar  
100g crystallized ginger  
1 kg pears, peeled, diced  
1tsp chopped fresh rosemary  
½ tsp salt  
½ tsp nutmeg  
½ tsp ground allspice

Fry the sultanas and raisins in the oil for 3 or 4 minutes. Add the cider vinegar (stand back to avoid the fumes and fizzing) and boil for 3 minutes. Add the rest of the ingredients and simmer slowly till most of the liquid has gone, stirring regularly. Pot as above.

### Hot apple chutney (from *The Perfect Pickle Book* by David Mabey & David Collison)

2 lb (1kg) cooking apples, peeled, cored, sliced  
1 tbsp salt  
5 fl oz (150ml) vegetable oil  
1 inch (2.5cm) piece of root ginger, peeled and grated or finely chopped  
1 whole head of garlic, peeled and finely chopped  
1 tbsp white mustard seeds  
1 tsp fenugreek seeds, soaked in water and drained  
15 black peppercorns                      2 tsp ground cumin                      1 tsp chilli powder  
1 tsp turmeric                                3 or 4 fresh green chillies, de-seeded and chopped  
5 fl oz (150ml) cider vinegar

4 (100g) oz sugar

Sprinkle the apples with salt and set aside in a colander. Fry the ginger and garlic gently until just brown. Add all the spices and fry for a few minutes, stirring well. Add the apples, vinegar and sugar and simmer over a low heat for about 30 minutes until the chutney has thickened and the apples are soft and pulpy. Pot as above. Keep for at least 3 months before opening, the longer the better.

### **Blackberry chutney**

This needs to be kept in the fridge, so the quantities suggested only make one jar. You could also make it with frozen blackberries if you wanted to make more batches through the winter.

1 small red onion, finely chopped  
1cm piece root ginger, grated or finely chopped  
1 garlic clove, crushed  
1 tbsp olive oil  
Pinch dried chilli flakes  
8oz (250g) blackberries  
3 tbsp sugar  
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar  
½ tsp salt

Fry the onion, ginger and garlic together in the olive oil in a covered pan over a low heat until they are soft. Stir in the rest of the ingredients. Cook gently for 15-20 minutes until the mixture is fairly thick. Put into a clean screw top container with plastic lid. Cool and store in the fridge. Will keep 1-2 months.

**Pickled damsons** (from *The Perfect Pickle Book* by David Mabey & David Collison)  
Very good with ham, game pates and terrines.

1lb (500g) damsons, washed, stalks removed  
8 oz (250g) sugar  
2 sticks of cinnamon, each about 2 inches (5cm) long  
6 cloves  
1 oz fresh root ginger, peeled and sliced  
10fl oz (300ml) white vinegar or cider vinegar

Prick the damson skins with a needle to prevent them splitting. Place the damsons in an ovenproof dish and sprinkle with sugar. Scatter the cinnamon, cloves and ginger over the fruit and cover with the vinegar. Put the dish into a warm oven (140°C) and cook for about 20 minutes. Remove when the juice is running and set aside to cool. When cold, strain the juice, boil it for 5 minutes and pour over the fruit. Repeat this straining and boiling every day for one week, then leave the damsons in the pickle for a further week, by which time the damson skins will be wrinkled and the juice dark red. Strain the damsons and pack into warmed jars. Boil the juice once more and pour hot over the fruit. Seal well and store for one month before using. They will improve with age.