

Basic jam recipes

Contributed by gil

The second part of Gil's guide introduces some of the first jams most people will want to master.

Jam recipes

Jar size : 12-16oz. You don't want jam hanging around going mouldy or runny in the jar. If it does go mouldy, just spoon off the mould, and eat the rest as soon as possible. (Note - some advice says that the mould has already penetrated the jam)

Equipment summary from previous article:

Clean, washed empty jars with screw lids
Adhesive labels

For dealing with fruit :
Weighing scales
Knives and chopping board (if fruit requires it)

For making the jam :
Large [stainless steel] pan
Long-handled wooden spoon
Clean roasting tin or casserole dish (for warming sugar)

To skim off scum :
A tea / dinner plate
Slotted or similar spoon, or any spoon

To check setting point :
A cold tea plate
A teaspoon

To pot jam into jars without too much mess :
A ladle
A gravy boat, jug, or anything with a good wide spout
A tea towel to get hot jars out of oven and hold them while filling with hot jam

Jam ingredients :Fruit
Sugar (white ordinary, or 'jam sugar' if wished)
Water (perhaps – see specific recipes)
Lemon juice (perhaps – see recipes)

General jam making method

1. Wash and prepare fruit
2. Place in preserving pan
3. Put sugar and jars to warm in a slow oven (100 degrees C, or lower)
4. Cook fruit gently till tender
5. Add sugar and stir till dissolved (do not allow to boil yet)
6. Bring quickly to a gentle rolling boil, and boil till setting point is reached
7. Skim off the scum
8. If the fruit is not evenly distributed (i.e. if it floats on top), leave to cool a bit and then stir
9. Pot into warmed, clean jars
10. Put the lids on immediately while hot, or wait till completely cold to do this.
11. Leave to stand until cold
12. Label with type of fruit and date

Simple jam recipes

Please add to these on the forum! You can scale up or down in proportion, depending on how much fruit you have.

Strawberry jam

3 ½ lb fruit
3lb sugar (possibly jam sugar)
juice of 1 lemon (do not increase in absolute proportion if scaling up quantity)

Yield = about 4 ¾ lbs ?

1. Hull the berries but do not wash
2. Simmer berries and lemon juice on low heat (ring 1) until soft. This could take up to an hour.
3. Add sugar and stir till dissolved
4. Bring to a gentle boil and cook till setting point reached (about 20 mins, in theory)
5. Skim off the scum
6. If the fruit is not evenly distributed (i.e. if it floats on top), leave to cool a bit and then stir
7. Pot into warmed, clean jars
8. Put the lids on immediately while hot, or wait till completely cold to do this.
9. Leave to stand until cold, then label.

Someone else may have a recipe that works for them every time. I've never had complete success with strawberry jam, and my preserving notebook is full of tales of woe : jam that refused to set, jam that tasted of too much lemon, etc. These days I don't bother making it. But then I prefer raspberry jam, which is easier.

Raspberry jam

2lb fruit
2lb sugar
No water

Yield = just over 4lb jam

1. Clean and prepare fruit (minimal, just pick over to check soundness)
2. Either
 - a. Put berries in pan and heat on very very low heat (electric ring 1) until they release their juice
 - b. Layer berries and sugar in a bowl and leave overnight to release juice
3. Put sugar and jars to warm in low oven
4. Cook berries gently till tender
5. Add sugar and stir till dissolved
6. Bring to the boil and cook till setting point reached (about 20 mins at ring 3 - 4)
7. Pot into clean, warmed jars, put lids on
8. Label when cold

There will be scum, and you may lose some fruit skimming it off. Scum is edible, just doesn't look nice, and doesn't keep well.

Blackcurrant jam

4lb fruit
3pts water
6lbs sugar

Yield : 10lb jam, approx (13 x 12oz jars)

1. Wash and prepare fruit
2. Put sugar and jars to warm in low oven
3. Simmer currants till soft (could take 2hrs if gently done)
4. Add sugar and stir till dissolved
5. Bring to the boil and cook till setting point reached (books say 15 mins, but this took 30-35 mins)
6. Pot into clean, warmed jars, put lids on
7. Label when cold

This jam can be quite scummy, but it is easy to skim off. You may lose some currants doing this, as they get caught in the scum.

Damson / plum jam

5 lb damsons
1 ½ pts water
6lb sugar

Yield : about 10lb jam (OK to make recipe with half quantities)

1. Wash and destalk fruit. Leave stones in (they will float to the surface during cooking and can be skimmed off)
2. Put sugar and jars to warm in low oven
3. Simmer damsons till soft (will reduce in volume), stirring to prevent sticking (about 30 mins)
4. Add sugar and stir till dissolved
5. Bring to the boil and cook till setting point reached (about 15-20 mins)

6. Pot into clean, warmed jars, put lids on
7. Label when cold

Easy. No setting problems. Skim off stones and scum simultaneously. One of my favourites.

Rhubarb jam

The best time to make rhubarb jam is after June but before it goes shot. Use medium to big / wide stalks, not the forced or puny early season stuff.

Rhubarb jam is supposed to be difficult to set, loses the shape of the fruit and is thus prone to burning on the bottom of the pan. This recipe with its associated tricks can help you avoid these problems.

3lb fruit (leaves removed)
 3lb sugar
 juice of 3 lemons

To flavour this jam you can add fresh root ginger or cinnamon sticks. You will need a small jelly bag in which to put them, and something to tie it to the handle of the pan so it floats in the mix). Quantity depends on taste. For a hint of ginger, 1-2 big knobby bits (oo er) will do. For a bigger ginger hit, 3-6 big bits with as many of their adjoining smaller knobs as you can be bothered with. Peel and chop the ginger. Bash the spices in the bag. For mega-gingery jam, don't bother with the bag - just put the bashed ginger into the pan and leave it in the finished jam.

Yield = 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ lb +

1. Keep the de-leafed rhubarb in a cool place for a week
2. Cut into 1" lengths
3. Layer fruit in a bowl with the sugar and leave overnight
4. Cook gently [with bag of spices] till sugar dissolved
5. Boil gently to setting point (may take about an hour), or faster for 20 mins or so. Try not to stir too much (just enough to avoid burning)
6. [Remove the bag of spice]
7. Pot into clean, warmed jars, put lids on
8. Label when cold

There will not be much scum, and it can be pushed out to the sides of the pan with the wooden spoon. The jam should still have some glossy chunks of fruit in, so it can be harder to pot neatly.

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