

## Peach Basics

### GETTING READY TO PRESERVE PEACHES

- Choose ripe, mature fruit of ideal quality for eating fresh or cooking.
- Dip fruit in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds until skins loosen. Dip quickly in cold water and slip skins off.
- Cut in half, remove pits and slice, if desired.
- To prevent darkening, keep peeled fruit in ascorbic acid solution of 1 teaspoon or 3000 milligrams ascorbic acid or vitamin C per gallon of water, or use a commercial ascorbic acid mixture according to directions on package. Drain when ready to process.

**Peach Yields:** 1 bushel = 50 pounds (approximate pounds needed for 1-quart jar = 2 to 2½).

**CANNING PEACHES** (Halved or Sliced)  
Prepare and boil syrup, using ½ cup (very light), 1 cup (light) or 1¾ cup (medium) sugar per quart of water, depending on desired sweetness. Or pack peaches in water, apple juice or white grape juice.

#### Hot Pack:

- Place drained fruit in a large saucepan with syrup, water or juice and bring to boil.
- Fill jars with hot fruit and cooking liquid, leaving ½-inch headspace
- Place halves in layers, cut side down
- Adjust lids and process in a boiling-water canner: 20 minutes for pints, 25 minutes for quarts at altitudes up to 1,000 feet.

#### Raw Pack:

- Fill hot jars with raw fruit, cut side down, and add hot water, juice or syrup, leaving ½-inch headspace
- Adjust lids and process in a boiling water canner: 25 minutes for pints, 30 minutes for quarts at altitudes up to 1,000 feet.

### FREEZING PEACHES

#### Syrup Pack:

- Sort, wash and peel well-ripened fruit, handling carefully to avoid bruising.
- Prepare 40 percent heavy syrup by dissolving 2¾ cups sugar in 1 gallon of warm water. Chill syrup before using.
- Add 2 teaspoons ascorbic acid per gallon of cold syrup to prevent browning of peaches.
- Put peaches in freezer containers and add just enough syrup to cover (½ to ⅔ cup syrup per pint). Allow ½-inch headspace for pints or 1-inch headspace for quarts.
- Place a small piece of crumpled water-resistant paper on top to hold fruit down.
- Seal, label, and freeze

#### Sugar Pack:

- Dissolve ¼ teaspoon ascorbic acid in 3 tablespoons cold water and add to each quart of peaches to retard darkening.
- Add ⅔ cup sugar to each quart (1⅓ pounds) of prepared fruit.
- Stir gently until sugar is dissolved or let stand 15 minutes. Place into containers.
- Seal, label and freeze.

### PEACH JAM

(About 8 half-pint jars)

Sterilize canning jars. Combine 2 quarts crushed, peeled peaches and ½ cup water; cook gently for 10 minutes. Add 6 cups sugar; slowly bring to boiling, stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves. Cook rapidly until thick, about 15 minutes; stir frequently to prevent sticking. Pour hot jam into sterilized canning jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids. Process 5 minutes in a boiling water bath canner at altitudes up to 1,000 feet.



For more information on preserving food at home, contact your local Extension office or the Home and Garden Information Center at 1-888-656-9988.

Sources:

1. Reynolds, Susan and Paulette Williams. *So Easy to Preserve* Bulletin 989. Revised 1999 by Elizabeth Andress and Judy Harrison. Cooperative Extension Service, the University of Georgia.
2. USDA Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 539. *Complete Guide to Home Canning*. Reviewed 1994.

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