

FOOD PRESERVATION



## Let's Preserve **Fruit Pie Fillings**

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**T**he following fruit fillings are excellent and safe products. Each canned quart makes one 8-inch to 9-inch pie. Fillings may be used as toppings on dessert or pastries. Clear Jel is a starch modified to produce excellent sauce consistency even after fillings are canned and baked. Other available household starches break down, causing a runny sauce consistency when used in pie fillings. You can purchase Clear Jel from some retail stores and online.

Because the variety of fruit may alter the flavor of the fruit pie, you first should make a single quart, make a pie with it and serve. Then adjust the sugar and spices in the recipe to suit your personal preferences. The amount of lemon juice should not be altered because it aids in controlling the safety and storage stability of the fillings.

When using frozen cherries and blueberries, select unsweetened fruit. If sugar has been added, rinse it off while fruit is frozen. Collect, measure and use juice from thawing fruit to partially replace the water specified in the recipe and only  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup Clear Jel per quart, or  $1\frac{3}{4}$  cups for 7 quarts.

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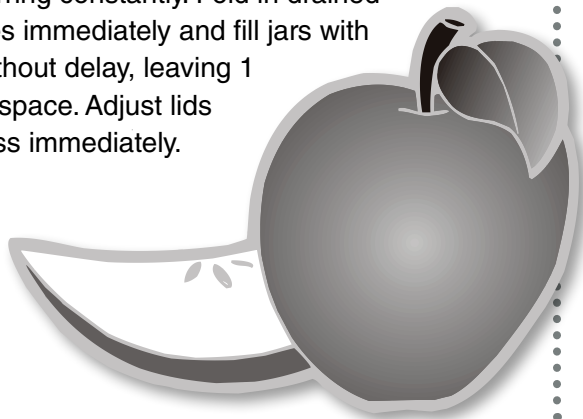
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## Apple pie filling

Ingredient	Quantities of ingredients needed for	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh sliced apples (blanched)	3½ c.	6 qt.
Granulated sugar	¾ c. + 2 Tbsp.	5½ c.
Clear Jel	¼ c.	1½ c.
Cinnamon	½ tsp.	1 Tbsp.
Cold water	½ c.	2½ c.
Apple juice	¾ c.	5 c.
Bottled lemon juice	2 Tbsp.	¾ c.
Nutmeg (optional)	⅛ tsp.	1 tsp.
Yellow food coloring (optional)	1 drop	7 drops

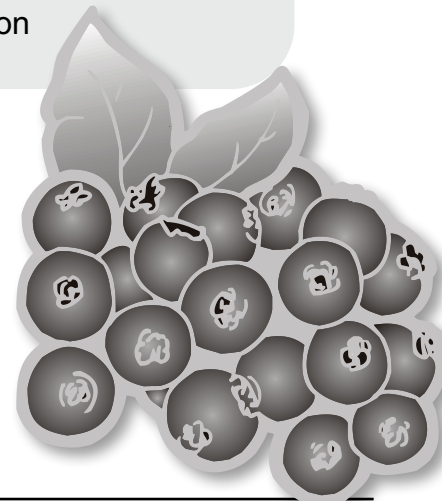
**QUALITY.** Use firm, crisp apples. Stayman, Golden Delicious, Rome and other varieties of similar quality are suitable. If apples lack tartness, use an additional ¼ cup of lemon juice for each 6 quarts of slices.

**PROCEDURE:** Wash, peel and core apples. Prepare half-inch-wide slices and place in water containing 1 teaspoon of ascorbic acid crystals or six 500-milligram vitamin C tablets in 1 gallon of water to prevent browning. For fresh fruit, place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch one minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain but keep heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine sugar, Clear Jel and cinnamon in a large kettle with water and apple juice. If desired, food coloring and nutmeg may be added. Stir and cook on medium-high heat until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil 1 minute, stirring constantly. Fold in drained apple slices immediately and fill jars with mixture without delay, leaving 1 inch head space. Adjust lids and process immediately.



## Key to Abbreviations

c. = cup  
 qt. = quart  
 Tbsp. = tablespoon  
 tsp. = teaspoon



## Blueberry pie filling

Ingredient	Quantities of ingredients needed for	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh blueberries	3½ c.	6 qt.
Granulated sugar	¾ c. + 2 Tbsp.	6 c.
Clear Jel	¼ c. + 1 Tbsp.	2¼ c.
Cold water	1 c.	7 c.
Bottled lemon juice	3½ tsp.	½ c.
Blue food coloring (optional)	3 drops	20 drops
Red food coloring (optional)	1 drop	7 drops

**QUALITY:** Select sweet, very ripe but firm, deep blue fruit.

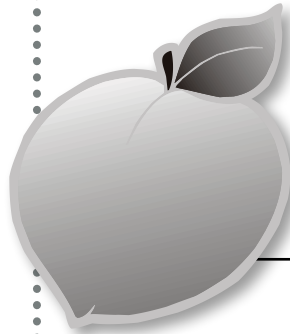
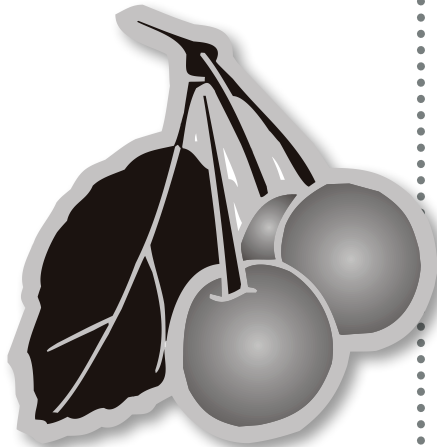
**PROCEDURE:** Wash and drain fresh blueberries. For fresh fruit, place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch one minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain, but keep heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine sugar and Clear Jel in a large kettle. Stir. Add water and, if desired, food coloring. Cook on medium high heat until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil one minute, stirring constantly. Fold in drained berries immediately and fill jars with mixture without delay, leaving 1 inch head space. Adjust lids and process immediately.

## Cherry pie filling

Ingredient	Quantities of ingredients needed for	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh sour cherries	3 $\frac{1}{3}$ c.	6 qt.
Granulated sugar	1 c.	7 c.
Clear Jel	$\frac{1}{4}$ c. + 1 Tbsp.	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ c.
Cold water	1 $\frac{1}{3}$ c.	9 $\frac{1}{3}$ c.
Bottled lemon juice	1 Tbsp. + 1 tsp.	$\frac{1}{2}$ c.
Cinnamon (optional)	$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp.	1 tsp.
Almond extract (optional)	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.	2 tsp.
Red food coloring (optional)	6 drops	$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp.

**QUALITY:** Select very ripe, firm, tart cherries.

**PROCEDURE:** Rinse and pit fresh cherries and hold in cold water. To prevent stem end browning, hold pitted cherries in water containing 1 teaspoon of ascorbic acid crystals or six 500-milligram vitamin C tablets in 1 gallon of water. For fresh fruit, place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch one minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain but keep heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine sugar and Clear Jel in a large saucepan and add water. If desired, add cinnamon, almond extract and food coloring. Stir mixture and cook over medium high heat until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil one minute, stirring constantly. Fold in drained cherries immediately and fill jars with mixture without delay, leaving 1 inch head space. Adjust lids and process immediately.



## Peach pie filling

Ingredient	Quantities of ingredients needed for	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh sliced peaches	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ c.	6 qt.
Granulated sugar	1 c.	7 c.
Clear Jel	$\frac{1}{4}$ c. + 1 Tbsp.	2 c. + 2 Tbsp.
Cold water	$\frac{3}{4}$ c.	5 $\frac{1}{4}$ c.
Bottled lemon juice	$\frac{1}{4}$ c.	1 $\frac{3}{4}$ c.
Cinnamon (optional)	$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp.	1 tsp.
Almond extract (optional)	$\frac{1}{8}$ tsp.	1 tsp.

**QUALITY.** Select ripe but firm peaches. Red Haven, Redskin, Sun High and other varieties of similar quality are suitable.

**PROCEDURE.** Peel peaches. To loosen skins, submerge peaches in boiling water for approximately 30 to 60 seconds and then place in cold water for 20 seconds. Slip off skins and prepare slices  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick. Place slices in water containing 1 teaspoon of ascorbic acid crystals or six 500-milligram vitamin C tablets in 1 gallon of water to prevent browning. For fresh fruit, place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch one minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain but keep heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine water, sugar, Clear Jel and, if desired, cinnamon and/or almond extract in a large kettle. Stir mixture and cook over medium high heat until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil one minute, stirring constantly. Fold in drained peach slices and continue to heat mixture for three minutes. Fill jars without delay, leaving 1 inch head space. Adjust lids and process immediately.

# Procedure for canning all fillings

**Wash jars.** Prepare lids according to manufacturer's instructions. Fill fruit mixtures into jars, leaving 1-inch head space. Wipe sealing surface of jars with a clean, damp paper towel. Add lids, tighten screw bands and process.

**To process in a boiling water canner,** preheat canner half filled with water to 180 F. Load sealed jars into the canner rack and lower with handles, or load one jar at a time with a jar lifter onto rack in canner. Add water if needed to a level of 1 inch above jars and cover. When water boils vigorously, lower heat to maintain a gentle boil and process for recommended time.

After processing is completed, remove jars from canner with a jar lifter and place them on a towel or rack. *Do not retighten screw bands.* Air-cool jars 12 to 24 hours. Remove screw bands and check lid seals. A jar is sealed if the center of its lid is indented or concave. Wash, dry, label and store sealed jars in a clean, cool, dark place. If a jar is unsealed, examine and replace the lid if it is defective; use a new lid and reprocess as before. Wash screw bands and store separately. Fillings are best if used within one year and safe as long as lids remain vacuum sealed.

## Process times

Recommended process times for pints and quarts of fruit pie filling in a boiling water-bath canner.

Fruit filling	Process time at altitude of		
	0-1,000 feet	1,001-3,000 feet	3,001-6,000 feet
	----- minutes -----		
Apple	25	30	35
Blueberry	30	35	40
Cherry	30	35	40
Peach	30	35	40

## For more information about preservation and other topics, visit:

NDSU Extension Food and Nutrition  
[www.ag.ndsu.edu/food](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food)

National Center for Home Food Preservation  
<https://nchfp.uga.edu>

*Source:* Based on "Complete Guide to Home Canning," Agriculture Information Bulletin 539, 2006 revision, and information from the National Center for Home Food Preservation, University of Georgia, Athens, Ga.: <https://nchfp.uga.edu>

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