

THE HOME PREPARATION OF JAMS.

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UNDER ordinary circumstances nearly every description of fruit can be converted into jam, but there are jams *and* jams, and, as the season for their preparation is rapidly approaching, this paper will doubtless be opportune.

Somehow there is a prevalent idea that each pound weight of fruit requires a pound of sugar. This is erroneous; each variety of fruit contains a

different proportion of acid, and therefore the same rule *cannot* possibly apply to all without distinction. The following table is as nearly exact as possible—the variations from it will only be trifling:—

Fruit.	Sugar.
One pound of Apples (Sweet)	Twelve ounces.
„ „ (Sour)	One pound.
„ Apricots	Twelve ounces.
„ Currants (Red)	Fourteen ounces.
„ „ (White)	Fourteen ounces.
„ „ (Black)	One pound.
„ Cherries (Red or White)	Fourteen ounces.
„ Damsons*	One pound.
„ Egg Plums	Fifteen ounces.
„ Gooseberries (Red)	Fourteen ounces.
„ „ (Green)	One pound.
„ Greengages	Fifteen ounces.
„ Grapes	Fourteen ounces.
„ Lemons (for Marmalade)	Twenty-one ounces.
„ Magnum Bonum Plums	Twelve ounces.
„ Oranges (Seville) for Marmalade	One pound.
„ Pineapples	Ten ounces.
„ Peaches	Fourteen ounces.
„ Quinces	Ten ounces.
„ Raspberries	Twelve ounces.
„ Rhubarb (Green)	One pound.
„ „ (Red)	Fourteen ounces.
„ Strawberries	Thirteen ounces.

Apples are an improvement in all jams with one exception; in fact, apples are the most useful fruit that a jam-preserver can have. The juice of gooseberries is an excellent thing to add to brightly-coloured jams, because it will invariably heighten the tints.

Jams need not be covered over in the pots. If the conserve is properly made, the proper proportion of sugar used, and none but perfectly sound fruit employed, it will keep for years without any covering at all. Stand jams in a cool and dry atmosphere, where there is a current of cool dry air continually passing; loosely cover the tops of the pots with oiled paper, to keep out the dust and prevent incrustation, and nothing more is required.

All the after-given jams are made by very slightly

* As this fruit varies very much in quantity of acid, one pound of sugar can only be taken as a guide.

varying the one recipe which I give for Raspberry Jam. The difference is simply in the fruit and proportions of sugar.

As I have spoken of the use of apples in all jams, I think I had better give the recipe for

APPLE PULP,

which is the best form of using the fruit. Keswick apples are the best, on account of their flavour. Wash them in cold water, wipe them, and slice them up without peeling or coring; put them into a bright, dry copper pan, with water enough to just slightly more than cover them. Cover the pan, and stand it at the fireside. Stir occasionally, and let the fruit boil till it has become a thick pulpy mass, adding more water if necessary. If you can then find a piece of apple, rub it between your thumb and finger, and should it easily pulp the fruit is done.

Smash up all the lumps with a wooden spoon, thin with a little more boiling water, stir well, let it boil up again, and then remove from the fire. Strain through jelly-bags, wash out the pan with a *little* boiling water, and pass these washings through the same jelly-bags.

Measure the apple-juice into a stewpan, and to every pint add six ounces of crushed lump sugar. When the latter is melted, stir constantly till the whole boils and forms a jelly, taking care of two things—(a) Don't allow the pan to be more than three-quarters filled with apple-juice, or it may flow over when it boils; (b) Skim the boiling fruit all the time it is on the fire. The jelly or pulp being ready, pour it into clean, dry, open-mouthed jars till required for use.

The *Gooseberry-juice* for heightening colour is made in identically the same manner, except that the berries are first picked over and the heads and tails cut off.

The foregoing juices or pulps are not to be eaten in the above condition; they are simply prepared in this way for ultimate re-boiling with other fruits.

Recipe for Best Raspberry Jam.—One quart of water to every fourteen pounds of fine, ripe, dry, fresh and picked fruit. To every pound of fruit use twelve ounces of roughly-broken lump sugar. Every article for use must be clean, dry, and bright, the fire clear and fierce, and every requirement at hand.

Put the fruit and water in the pan, and stir continuously till boiling, when boil for *exactly* two minutes (not longer). Add the sugar, stir and skim well, and be sure the jam boils, not “coddles.” Now add to every pound weight of sugar and fruit three ounces of apple pulp, one ounce of crushed loaf sugar, and one ounce of gooseberry-juice. Skim and stir till it gets thick, remove to the side of the fire, or the trivet, and try a little of the jam on a plate; if it congeals in two minutes the jam is done, and may be poured into the clean, dry pots; if not, return the pan to the fire until it is ready.

Damsons are best when made into jam whole (*i.e.*, uncut), but *Plums* should be cut through lengthwise,

and have their stones removed, unless preferred Damson fashion. The stones can be cracked and the kernels boiled with the fruit. This is a great improvement. Damsons require no apple pulp, or, by this process, they will be too tart.

Recipe for Quince Jam.—Pare, core, and slice the ripe fruit, and cover them with water in the copper pan. Let them boil till perfectly tender, and then force the soft fruit through a sieve made of cane, not wire. Replace the pulp on the fire, putting ten ounces of sugar into the pan for each pound of fruit pulp. Stir very systematically and continuously (as this fruit is likely to burn rapidly), skimming all the while it boils. Finish as usual.

A great improvement is made in Quince Jam by adding to every complete pound of jam ingredients—six ounces of apple pulp, three ounces of extra sugar, and a little strained fresh lemon-juice.

Apple and Pear Jams are made the same way as Quince, but the Pear Jam is tinged with a little liquid cochineal.

Apricot Jam requires much care to make it properly. The best recipe is this one:—Peel and divide the ripe fruit, and take out the stones. Break the latter, blanch the kernels, and put one-half of them into the pan in which the fruit is lying “bleeding.” Mix thoroughly the kernels, fruit, and sugar (see the table) till the latter is dissolved. When this is accomplished, put the pan on the fire and let its contents boil *fast* for twenty-five minutes, stirring and skimming all the time. It should then be ready.

Peach Jam.—See Apricot Jam, except that fourteen ounces of sugar will be required to the pound of fruit.

Pineapple Jam.—If fresh fruit is used the stalk must be pulled out and the pineapple peeled, its eyes gouged out, the hard central core removed, and the whole fruit afterwards sliced into small and regular-sized pieces. The proportion of sugar is ten ounces to the pound of fruit. Put the fruit and sugar on the fire with but a very sparing quantity of water, just enough to prevent burning; boil to a pulp, and finish as Apricot Jam.

Mixed Currant Jam.—Two pounds of black currants to one pound of red ones make a nice jam.

Raspberry and Red Currant Jam.—Equal proportions of each fruit give an excellent mixture.

Raspberry and Gooseberry Jam.—Two pounds of raspberries to one of gooseberries produce a tasty jam.

Damson and Apple Jam.—Equal quantities.

Strawberry and Red Currant.—Ditto.

Strawberry and Gooseberry.—Two pounds of the former to one of the latter.

Raspberry and Apple.—Three pounds of raspberries to one of apple.

Black Currant and Apple.—Similar proportions.

Blackberry and Apple.—Ditto.

Cherry and Gooseberry.—Equal quantities.

Plum and Rhubarb.—Two pounds of the former to one of the latter.

Greengage and Gooseberry.—Ditto.

Red Currant and Gooseberry.—Equal quantities.

Blackberry and Gooseberry.—Ditto.

Rhubarb Preserve.—Peel thinly and slice green rhubarb till you have two and a half pounds of regular-sized pieces, and lay these out thinly on a flat dish. Sprinkle over the fruit one pound of large-grained crystallised white sugar, and stand it in a cold cellar for twelve or more hours. Pour off the liquid into the preserving-pan, and add to it one and a half pounds of lump sugar. Now make up the “spice-bag,” and put it into the sugar and juice. (A “spice-bag” is two thicknesses of muslin in which are such quantities of thinly-cut lemon-rind, stick cinnamon, whole cloves, and bruised ginger as suit the taste.) Boil for forty minutes, till the syrup is quite thick; remove the spice-bag, drop in the rhubarb, and allow the latter to boil gently until it is all soft and tender, but yet not damaged, and skim carefully during the whole time of the boiling.

Orange Marmalade.—Here is the whole secret of making the very finest quality of marmalade fully explained:—

Take any quantity of bitter Seville oranges, and wash and wipe them clean and dry. Have the kettle *boiling* on the fire. Put the oranges into an earthenware pan, pour on enough of the *boiling* (scalding) water to cover them, and then keep in the steam by covering the vessel with a tea-tray or board. Let the fruit soak for just *ten* minutes, when strain off the water, and cover the fruit with a large cloth. The latter will keep the oranges warm, while they are removed one at a time to “nick” the rinds into four parts. Turn out the pulps whole, and stand them aside, but drop each piece of rind into cold water immediately it is removed from the fruit. Place the pulps in a little water in the stewpan, and cook them till quite tender. Now rub them through a cane sieve, taking care not to force the pips through too. While the pulps are boiling, take the peels from the cold water and cut them into fine shreds, which afterwards put into the stewpan with some cold water. Let them boil *once*, and remove just at boiling point. Strain them, throw away the bitter water, and re-boil in fresh cold water exactly as before. Strain again, and re-boil, &c. Repeat this four times altogether. When this is done, mix the pulp and the peel-shreds together; weigh them, and to every pound of the mixture add one pound of best loaf sugar broken up finely. Set all in the pan, and on a bright, fierce fire; stir and skim thoroughly while boiling, and then finish as for jam.

Lemon Marmalade.—The same as orange, except that the rinds will only require two boilings, and twenty-one ounces of sugar is the proper proportion to the pound of fruit.

Memoranda.—A copper stewpan, a brisk (fierce) and clear fire, a broad wooden stirring-spoon, a thin wooden skimmer, a watchful eye, and strict attention to all the details of these recipes are necessary to the making of first-class jams.

