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How to Make Homemade Canned Pears!

It's easy to can your own pears! Here's how to do it, complete instructions in easy steps and completely illustrated. In the winter when you open a jar, the pears will taste MUCH better than anything you've ever had from a store, and by selecting the right fruit, it will use less sugar than store-bought canned pears. Pears, pears, plums, cherries or nectarines can be packed in very light, light or medium sugar syrup. They can also be packed in water, apple juice or white grape juice.



Prepared this way, the jars have a shelf life of about 12 to 18 months, and aside from storing in a cool, dark place, require no special attention.

You might also be interested in [making pear butter!](#)

How to Make Homemade Canned Pears

Directions for Making Canned Pears

Ingredients and Equipment

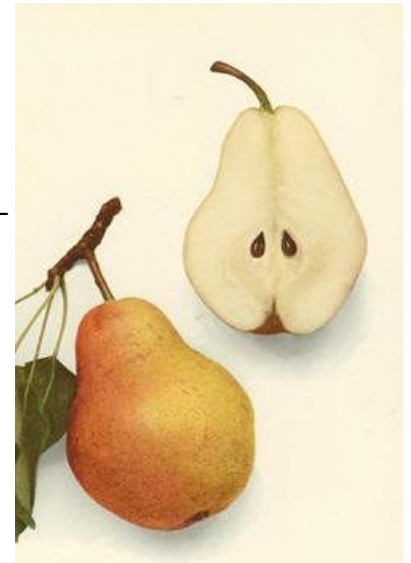
- Pears (see step 1)
- Jar grabber (to pick up the hot jars)
- Lid lifter (has a magnet to pick the lids out of the boiling water where you sterilize them. (\$2 at mall kitchen stores and local "big box" stores, but it's usually cheaper online from our affiliates)
- Jar funnel (\$2 at mall kitchen stores and local "big box" stores, but it's usually cheaper online from our affiliates)
- Ball jars (Publix, Kroger, other grocery stores and some "big box" stores carry them - about \$8 per dozen quart jars including the lids and rings)
- At least 1 large pot
- Large spoons and ladles
- Sugar (or fruit juice, or Splenda, or just water!)
- 1 Water Bath Canner (a huge pot with a lifting rack to sterilize the jars of pears after filling (about \$30 to \$35 at mall kitchen stores and local "big box" stores, but it's usually cheaper online from our affiliates) You CAN use a large pot instead, but the canners are deeper, and have a rack top make lifting the jars out easier. If you plan on canning every year, they're worth the investment.

Recipe and Directions

Step 1 - Selecting the pears

The most important step! You need pears that are sweet, and ripe. A little know fact: Pears are picked unripe - they don't ripen well on the tree. So, unlike peaches, pears WILL ripen at home!

Choose ripe, mature fruit of ideal quality for eating fresh or cooking. They should not be mushy, but they also should not be rock hard: just as ripe as you would eat them fresh.



Step 2 - How many pears and where to get them

An average of 17½ pounds is needed per canner load of 7 quarts; an average of 11 pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints. A bushel weighs 50 pounds and yields 16 to 25 quarts - an average of 2½ pounds per quart.

You can pick your own, or buy them at the grocery store. But for large quantities, you'll find that real* farmer's markets, like the Farmer's Market in Forest Park, Georgia have them at the best prices.

* - not the cutesy, fake farmer's markets that are just warehouse grocery stores that call themselves farmer's markets.

Step 3 - Prepare the sugar (or other sweetener) solution

Pears must be packed in a solution of water and sugar or fruit juice. It's up to you which to use. Sugar is added to improve flavor, help stabilize color, and retain the shape of the fruit. It is not added as a preservative.



Sugar solution is much less expensive (unless you have a supply of cheap grape juice), so I usually use a light solution to keep sugar (and the added calories) to a minimum.

Sugar Syrup

Syrup	Sugar	Water	Yield
Light	2 cups	6 cups	7 cups
Medium	3 cups	6 cups	6 1/2 cups
Heavy	4 cups	6 cups	7 cups

NOTE: you can ALSO use fruit juice (if you want a natural alternative; white grape juice or apple juice are ideal) or water or artificial sweetener (Splenda, but NOT Nutrasweet; if you want a low calorie alternative). [Click here for instruction about how to prepare these sugarless, fruit juice, or Splenda solutions!](#)

To prepare syrup, while heating water, add sugar slowly, stirring constantly to dissolve. Bring to a gentle boil. Fill jars while syrup is still boiling hot. After preparing the liquid syrup, keep it hot (but not boiling).

Step 4 - Wash the jars and lids



This is a good time to get the jars ready! The dishwasher is fine for the jars; especially if it has a "sterilize" cycle. Otherwise put the jars in boiling water for 10 minutes. I just put the lids in a small pot of almost boiling water for 5 minutes, and use the magnetic "lid lifter wand" (available from target, other big box stores, and often grocery stores; and available online - see this page) to pull them out.

Step 5 - Wash the pears!

I'm sure you can figure out how to wash the pears in plain cold or lukewarm water

Step 6 - Peel and cut up the pears

Peel pears just like you would a potato or an apple. Cut lengthwise in halves and remove the core (it has seeds just like an apple). A melon baller or metal measuring spoon is perfect for coring pears.

Cut out any brown spots and mushy areas. Cut the pears in half, or quarters or slices, as you prefer! Remove pits!

Step 7 - Prevent the fruit from darkening!



Now, to keep the fruit from turning brown, when you get a bowlful, sprinkle 1/4 cup lemon juice or Fruit-Fresh (which is just citric acid, vitamin C, perfectly natural). Then stir the pears to make sure all the surfaces have been coated.

Step 8 - For a Hot Pack

Hot packing is recommended for all fruits because it is a bit safer and makes fruit easier to pack in jars. Raw packs also make poor quality pears. Hot packed pears are less likely to float than pears canned by the raw-pack method. Just put the cut pears into the boiling syrup solution for 5 minutes. (If you want to use the "cold pack" or "raw pack" method, just skip this step!)



Step 9 - Fill the jars

Pack the pears into sterilized jars (leaving 1/2 inch space at the top) and cover with boiling sugar syrup leaving 1/2 inch head space. (If you don't cook or heat the pears first, this is called "cold packing"). Run a rubber spatula or table knife gently between pears and jar to release trapped air bubbles. To do this more



effectively, tilt the jar slightly while running the tool between the fruit and the edge of the jar and also pressing inward against the fruit a few times.

After packing the pears in the jar, pour the sugar solution up to 1/2 inch (1 cm) from the top. The fruit should be covered completely. Wipe rim and screw threads with a clean damp cloth. Add lid, screw band and tighten firmly and evenly. Do not over tighten.

Tips!

Canned fruits often will float if the sugar syrup is too heavy, if jars are packed too loosely or if air remains in the tissues of the fruit after processing. To avoid this use a light or medium sugar syrup, make sure fruit is firm and ripe and pack fruit tightly in jars without crushing.

If fruit is not covered by liquid it may darken during storage (but does not necessarily mean it is spoiled, as all fruits will darken somewhat). To avoid this be sure fruit is covered by remove air bubbles from jars liquid while still leaving the recommended head space. Also be sure to remove trapped air bubbles as described earlier.



Pears, peaches and apples may also show a blue, red or pink color change after canning. This is the result of natural chemical changes that sometimes occur as fruits are heated. It is harmless and won't affect flavor!

Also, avoid storing canned food near heat sources such as a furnace, water heater, hot water or sunny areas. Jars need to be kept cool and dark for longer storage life and to protect against spoilage. Be sure to store in a dry place. If the lid or band rusts, that can cause the seal to break.

Step 11 - Process the jars in the water bath

Put the sealed jars in the canner and keep them covered with at least 1 inch of water and boiling. Boil them for at least 20 minutes (and no more than 30 min).

Processing directions for canning pears in a boiling-water, a dial, or a weighted-gauge canner are given in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3.



Table 1. Recommended process time for Pears, halved or sliced in a boiling-water canner, using a hot pack in pints or quart jars.

Process Time at Altitudes of				
Jar size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 3,000 ft	3,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
pints	20 min	25	30	35
quarts	25 min	30	35	40

Table 2. Process Times for Pears, halved or sliced in a Dial-Gauge Pressure Canner.

			Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of			
Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time	0 - 2,000 ft	2,001 - 4,000 ft	4,001 - 6,000 ft	6,001 - 8,000 ft
Hot	Pints or Quarts	10 minutes	6 psi	7 psi	8 psi	9 psi

Table 3. Process Times for Halved or sliced Pears in a Weighted-Gauge Pressure Canner Using a Hot Pack

		Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of	
Jar Size	Process Time (Min)	0 - 1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Pints or Quarts	10	5	10

Step 12 - Remove and cool



Lift the jars out of the water and let them cool without touching or bumping them in a draft-free place (usually takes overnight), here they won't be bumped. You can then remove the rings if you like. Once the jars are cool, you can check that they are sealed verifying that the lid has been sucked down. Just press in the center, gently, with your finger. If it pops up and down (often making a popping sound), it is not sealed. If you put the jar in the refrigerator right away, you can still use it. Some people replace the lid and reprocess the jar, then that's a bit iffy. If you heat the contents back up, re-jar them (with a new lid) and the full time in the canner, it's usually ok.



Other Equipment:

From left to right:

1. Jar lifting tongs
helpful to
pick up hot jars
2. Lid lifter
- to remove
lids from the pot
of hot
water
3. Lid
- disposable
- you may only
use them
once
4. Ring
- holds the lids on the jar until after
the jars cool - then you don't need them
5. Canning jar funnel
- to fill the jars



Frequently asked questions!

1. Is it safe to can unpeeled pears? I've spent hours on websites and read several books on canning - to no avail. This is the second year I've canned unpeeled pears in a 5 to 1 water to sugar syrup (we're still alive). All my friends, their mothers and everything I've read says to peel and I'm beginning to buckle under all the finger wagging!!!

Answer: Buckle not! It is perfectly safe to can pears with the skins on!