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Where you can find a pick-your-own farm near you!

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See [www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm](http://www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm) for many other canning directions and recipes

## How to Make Homemade Blueberry Jam - Easily!



Making and canning your own blueberry jam is so easy. And this blueberry jam is incredible. Even if you are a fan of strawberry, triple-berry, blackberry, or whatever, and don't like fresh blueberries, you MUST try this! Here's how to do it, in 12 simple steps and completely illustrated. Any variations will be spelled out in the directions inside the pectin. For more information about blueberries, see [Blueberry Picking Tips](#). I've got some other pages for specific types of jam and butters, too:

- [Apricot, peach, plum or nectarine jam.](#)
- [Apple jelly](#)
- [Apple butter](#)
- [Applesauce](#)
- [Blueberry Jam](#)
- [Fig Jam,](#)
- [Fig-strawberry jam,](#)
- [Grape jelly from fresh grapes](#)
- [Muscadine or scuppernong jelly](#)
- [Orange marmalade](#)
- [Peach butter](#)
- For more information about strawberries, see [Strawberry Picking Tips](#) and [Miscellaneous strawberry facts.](#)

And here are [simple directions to make blueberry deserts: cobbler, coffee cakes / buckles and pie!](#)

## Ingredients and Equipment

- **Blueberries** - 5 pints (which is: 10 cups, or 2.25 liters, about 3.5 lbs, almost 1.75 kg) preferably fresh, but frozen (without syrup works, too)
- **Lemon juice** - either fresh squeezed or bottled. 1/4 cup.
- **Water** - 1/2 cup
- **Sugar** - About 4.5 cups of dry, granulated (table) sugar. It is possible to make low-sugar, fruit juice-sweetened, or Splenda-sweetened fig jam; I'll point out the differences below.
- **Pectin** (it's a natural product, made from apples and available at grocery stores (season - spring through late summer) and in Wal-mart, grocery stores, etc. It usually goes for about \$2.00 to \$2.50 per box. [See here for more information about how to choose the type of pectin to use.](#)
- **Jar funnel** (\$2 at Walmart) or order it as part of the kit with the jar grabber.
- **Jar grabber** (to pick up the hot jars)- WalMart carries it *sometimes* - or order it here. It's a tremendously useful to put cars in the canner and take the hot jars out (without scalding yourself!). The kit sold below has everything you need, and at a pretty good price:



- **At least 1 large pot**; I prefer 16 to 20 quart Teflon lined pots for easy cleanup.
- **Large spoons and ladles**
- **1 Canner** (a huge pot to sterilize the jars after filling (about \$30 to \$35 at mall kitchen stores, sometimes at WalMart (seasonal item). Note: [we sell canners and supplies here, too - at excellent prices](#) - and it helps support this web site!
- **Ball jars** (Publix, WalMart carry them - about \$7 per dozen 8 ounce jars including the lids and rings)
- **Lids** - thin, flat, round metal lids with a gum binder that seals them against the top of the jar. They may only be used once.
- **Rings** - metal bands that secure the lids to the jars. They may be reused many times.

### Optional stuff:

- **Foley Food Mill** (\$25) - not necessary; useful if you want to remove seeds (from blackberries) or [make applesauce](#).
- **Lid lifter** (has a magnet to pick the lids out of the boiling water where you sterilize them. (\$2 at WalMart or it comes in the kit at left)

## Blueberry Jam-making Directions

This example shows you how to make blueberry jam! The yield from this recipe is about 10 eight-ounce jars (which is the same as 5 pints).

### Step 1 - Pick the blueberries! (or buy them already picked)



It's fun to go pick your own and you can obviously get better quality ones!

I prefer to grow my own; which is really easy - but that does take some space and time.

As mentioned in the Ingredients section; you may use frozen blueberries (those without syrup or added sugar); which is especially useful if you want to make some jam in December to give away at Christmas!

At left are blueberries (in my yard, actually; they make a great hedge or landscaping bush) almost ripe! If you want to pick your own, here is a list and links to the [pick your own farms](#).

### Step 2 - How much fruit?

Jam can ONLY be made in rather small batches - about 6 cups at a time - like the directions on the pectin say, DO NOT increase the recipes or the jam won't "set" (jell, thicken). It takes about 8 cups of raw, unprepared blueberries per batch. For triple berry jam, I use 4 cups of mashed (slightly crushed) blueberries, 1 cup of raspberries and 1 cup of blackberries.



### Step 3 - Wash the jars and lids



Now's a good time to get the jars ready, so you won't be rushed later. The dishwasher is fine for the jars, the water bath processing will sterilize them as well as the contents! If you don't have a dishwasher, you can wash the containers in hot, soapy water and rinse, then sterilize the jars by boiling them 10 minutes, and keep the jars in hot water until they are used.

<http://www.PickYourOwn.org/blueberryjam.htm>

NOTE: If unsterilized jars are used, the product should be processed for 5 more minutes. However, since this additional processing can result in a poor set (runny jam), it's better to sterilize the jars.

Put the lids into a pan of boiling water for 5 minutes, and use the magnetic "lid lifter wand" to pull them out.

Leave the jars in the dishwasher on "heated dry" until you are ready to use them. Keeping them hot will prevent the jars from breaking when you fill them with the hot jam.

Lids: put the lids into a pan of boiling water for at least several minutes; to soften up the gummed surface and clean the lids. I just leave them in there, with the heat on very low, until I need them!

#### **Step 4 -Wash the berries and sort!**



I'm sure you can figure out how to wash the fruit in a colander of plain cold water.

Then you need to pick out and remove any bits of stems, leaves and soft or mushy berries. It is easiest to do this in a large bowl of water and gently run your hands through the berries as they float. With your fingers slightly apart, you will easily feel any soft or mushy berries get caught in your fingers.



Then just drain off the water!

#### **Step 5 - Crush the berries**

You can go wild, be a conquering Genghis Khan crushing the peasants.. watch them flee. . Well, if they're not fleeing, the berries sure do manage to roll everywhere. You won't find them until the next time you clean behind your refrigerator!

Anyway, to crush them, you can either do one layer at a time in a pan or bowl, using a potato masher..



<http://www.PickYourOwn.org/blueberryjam.htm>

OR you can be lazy like me and use the slice mode on your food processor.

Either way, if you start with 10 pints of berries, you'll end up with about 6.5 cups of crushed blueberries.



**Step 6 - Measure out the sweetener**

Depending upon which type of jam you're making (sugar, no-sugar, Splenda, mix of sugar and Splenda or fruit juice) you will need to use a different amount of sugar and type of pectin. The precise measurements are found in directions inside each and every box of pectin sold (every brand, Ball, Kerr, Mrs. Wages, etc. has directions inside).

Type of jam	Type of pectin to buy	Sweetener
regular	regular	7 cups of sugar
low sugar	low-sugar or no-sugar	4.5 cups of sugar
lower sugar	low-sugar or no-sugar	2 cups sugar and 2 cups of Splenda
no sugar	no-sugar	4 cups of Splenda
natural	no-sugar	3 cups fruit juice (grape, peach, apple or mixed)

**Step 7 - Mix the dry pectin with about 1/4 cup of sugar or other sweetener**



Keep this separate from the rest of the sugar.

**Notes about pectin:** I usually add about 20% more pectin (just open another pack and add a little) or else the jam is runnier than I like. With a little practice, you'll find out exactly how much pectin to get the thickness you like.

For more about the [types of pectin sold, see this page!](#)

Is your jam too runny? Pectin enables you to turn out perfectly set jam every time. Made from natural apples, there are also low-sugar pectins that allow you to reduce the sugar you add by almost half!

[Get it here at BETTER prices!](#)



### Step 8 - Mix the blueberries with the pectin and cook to a full boil

Stir the pectin, lemon juice and water into the blueberries and put the mix in a big pot on the stove over medium to high heat (stir often enough to prevent burning). It should take about 5 to 10 minutes to get it to a full boil (the kind that can not be stirred away).



### Step 9 - Add the remaining sugar and bring to a boil

When the berry-pectin mix has reached a full boil, add the rest of the sugar (about 4 cups of sugar per 6 cup batch of blueberries) and then bring it back to a boil and boil hard for 1 minute.



### Step 10 - Testing for "jell" (thickness)



I keep a metal tablespoon sitting in a glass of ice water, then take a half spoonful of the mix and let it cool to room temperature on the spoon. If it thickens up to the consistency I like, then I know the jam is ready. If not, I mix in a little more pectin (about 1/8 to 1/2 of another package) and bring it to a boil again for 1 minute.

## Step 10 - Fill the jars and put the lid and rings on



Fill them to within 1/4 inch of the top, wipe any spilled jam off the top, seat the lid and tighten the ring around them. Then put them into the boiling water canner!

This is where the jar tongs and lid lifter come in really handy!



## Step 11 - Process the jars in the boiling water bath

Keep the jars covered with at least 1 inch of water. Keep the water boiling. In general, boil them for 5 minutes. I say "in general" because you have to process (boil) them longer at higher altitudes than sea level, or if you use larger jars, or if you did not sterilize the jars and lids right before using them. The directions inside every box of pectin will tell you exactly. The directions on the pectin tend to be pretty conservative. Clemson University says you only need to process them for 5 minutes. I usually hedge my bets and start pulling them out after 7 minutes, and the last jars were probably in for 10. I rarely have a jar spoil, so it must work.

Note: Some people don't even boil the jars; they just ladle it hot into hot jars, put the lids and rings on and invert them, but putting the jars in the boiling water bath REALLY helps to reduce spoilage! To me, it makes little sense to put all the working into making the jam and then not to process the jars to be sure they don't spoil!





## Step 12 - Remove and cool the jars - Done!

Lift the jars out of the water and let them cool without touching or bumping them in a draft-free place (usually takes overnight) You can then remove the rings if you like.



Once cooled, they're ready to store. I find they last up to 12 months. But after about 6 to 8 months, they get darker in color and start to get runny. They still are safe to eat, but the flavor and texture aren't as good. So eat them in the first 6 months after you prepare them!

### Other Equipment:

From left to right:

1. Jar lifting tongs  
to pick up hot jars
2. Lid lifter  
- to remove lids from the pot of boiling water (sterilizing )
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



You can get all of the tools in a kit here:

