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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 for many other canning directions and recipes

How to Make Homemade Fig Jam - Easily!

Making and canning your own fig jam is also quite easy. If you've never tasted it, it is quite amazing. If you like strawberry jam, you'll love fig jam. Here's how to make it, in 13 easy steps and completely illustrated. These directions work equally well for regular sugar, low sugar, fruit juice-sweetened and Splenda-sweetened jam. Any variations will be spelled out in the directions inside the pectin, and below!

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-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.](#)

Ingredients and Equipment

- **Fruit** - fresh figs - about 2 dozen medium to large figs (about 3 to 5 lbs) makes 7 jars (8 ounces each) of jam.
- **Lemon juice** - either fresh squeezed or bottled. 1/4 cup.
- **Water** - 1/2 cup
- **Cinnamon** - 1/4 teaspoon - optional!
- **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.](#)
- **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.
- **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)
- **Jar funnel** (\$2 at WalMart, Target, and sometimes at grocery stores) or order it as part of the kit with the jar grabber.
- **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:

<http://www.pickyourown.org/figjam.htm>

- **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:
- **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)



Fig Jam-making Directions

This example shows you how to make fig jam; regular or with added seasoning. The yield from this recipe is about 7 eight-ounce jars (which is the same as 3.5 pints).

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

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

At right is a picture I took of figs from my own tree - these are a variety called Celeste - see this page for more information on various [types of figs, how to select the variety and how to pick them!](#)

To pick your own, here is a list and links to the [pick your own farms](#). just select your area!

FYI, Figs are REALLY easy to grow and also make an attractive landscaping tree!



Step 2 - How much fruit?



Jam can ONLY be made in rather small batches - up to 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 3 to 5 lbs or roughly 2 dozen medium to large figs to produce the 5 cups of prepared (peeled, sliced or chopped) fig pulp to make 1 batch of fig jam, yielding 7 jars, each 8 ounces in size.

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.



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. Some newer dishwashers even have a "sterilize" setting.

Step 4 - Get the lids sterilizing

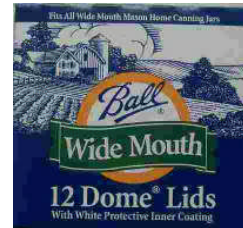


Lids: put the lids into a pan of boiling water (or on the stove in a pot of water on low heat) for at least several minutes; to soften up the gummed surface and clean and sterilize the lids.

Need lids, rings and replacement jars?

[Get them all here, delivered direct to your home, at the best prices on](#)

[the internet!](#)



Step 5 - Wash and cut up the figs!

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

You need to cut off the stems and the bottom of the fig, but you do not need to peel them - you CAN peel them if you want to. I only peel the grody* looking ones (example photo below)

(* knarly, gross, yucky)



At left, sample figs with unappealing peels (skins). If the skin looks fine, I chop it up, but ones like these...

I peel...

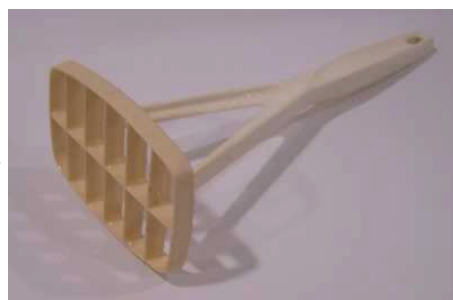


<http://www.pickyourown.org/figjam.htm>

You'll need 4 to 5 cups crushed or chopped figs (maximum 5 cups). You can chop them up more, if



you like, but I find the soften and break up during cooking, and if I want smaller pieces, I just use a sharp-edged plastic potato masher (shown at right) to mush them while cooking)



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 each and every box of pectin sold.



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)

Mix the dry pectin with about 1/4 cup of sugar or other sweetener and keep this separate from the rest of the sugar.



<http://www.pickyourown.org/figjam.htm>

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

Notes:

- Nutrasweet (aspartame) will NOT work - it breaks down during heating).
- Splenda (sucralose) substitutes exactly with sugar BUT even the manufacturers of Splenda will tell you that you get best results if you just use a 50-50 mix; half regular sugar and half Splenda.
- Sugar not only affects the sweetness, but also the color and flavor. It does not affect the preserving or spoilage properties - that has to do with acid and the processing method.
- you can use "no sugar" pectin in place of "low sugar" pectin - you can still add sugar or other sweeteners.



Step 7 - Mix the figs with the pectin and bring to a full boil



Mix the figs (4 to 5 cups), pectin (1 packet), water (1/2 cup) and lemon juice (1/4 cup) in the pot on the stove and get it cooking.



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.



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 - Add the remaining sugar and bring to a boil

When the fig mix has reached a full boil, add the rest of the sugar and then bring it back to a boil and boil hard for 1 minute.



Step 9 - 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/s to 1/2 of another package) and bring it to a boil again for 1 minute. Get a few jars out of the dishwasher (still hot) and get your funnel, lid lifter and ladle ready. I put an old towel down - it makes cleanupo easier.



Step 10 - Let stand for 5 minutes and stir completely.

Why? Otherwise, the fruit will often float to the top of the jar. This isn't a particular problem; you can always stir the jars later when you open them; but some people get fussy about everything being "just so", so I've included this step! Skipping this step won't affect the quality of the jam at all.



Step 11 - 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.

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



Step 12 - 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, 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 13 - 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 about 18 months. After that, they get darker in color and start to get runny. They still seem safe to eat, but the flavor is bland. So eat them in the first 12 to 18 months after you prepare them!



Other Useful 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:

