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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 Pear Jam or Pear Jelly

Making and canning your own pear jam or jelly is quite easy. Here's how to do it, in 13 easy steps and completely illustrated. Essentially, pears cook much like apples; they simply tend to be more grainy. So almost anything you can make with apples, you can make with pears.

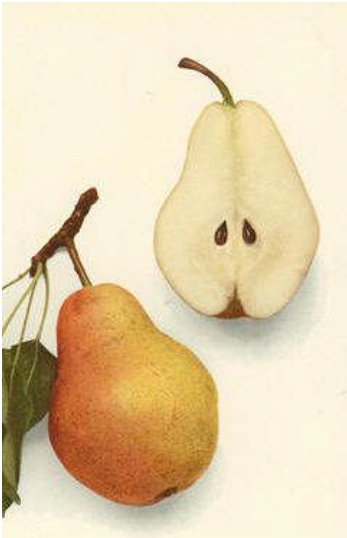
Also, see our easy illustrated directions about [how to can pears](#), [pear picking tips](#), make [pear or applesauce](#), [pear or apple butter](#) and our [list of apple festivals!!](#)

### Ingredients and Equipment

- 6 lbs. of pears to yield about 6 cups of pear juice (see step 1)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon Cinnamon (optional)
- Jar grabber
- Jar funnel (\$2 at Wal-Mart)
- At least 1 large pot
- Jelly strainer (see step 6) or cheesecloth
- Large spoons and ladles
- Ball jars (Publix, Wal-Mart carry them - about \$8 per dozen quart jars including the lids and rings)
- 1 Water Bath Canner (a huge pot with a lifting rack to sterilize the jars of apple jelly after filling (about \$30 to \$35 at mall kitchen stores, Wal-Mart) 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.
- Vegetable / fruit peeler (\$1.99 at the grocery store)

## Recipe and Directions

### Step 1 - Selecting the pears



The most important step! You need pears that are sweet if you want to cut down on the added sugar.

### Step 2 - How many pears and where to get them

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 [State Farmer's Market in Forest Park, Georgia](#) have them at the best prices. In 2007, they were available from late September at \$16 to \$30 per bushel.

You'll get about 14 quarts of pear jelly per bushel of pears.

### Step 3 - Wash and peel the pears!

I'm sure you can figure out how to wash the pears in plain cold water and remove any stickers or labels on them.

Using a vegetable peeler or a paring knife, peel the pears.



#### Step 4 -Chop the pears!



Chopping them is much faster if you use one of those pear corer/segmenters - you just push it down on a pear and it cuts it into segments.



Using a paring knife, be sure to

remove any seeds, hard parts (usually the part around the seeds) and any mush or dark areas.

#### Step 5 - Cook the Pears



Pretty simple! Put about 1 inch of water (I used either filtered tap water or store brand pear juice) on the bottom of a huge, thick-bottomed pot. Put the lid on, and the heat on high. When it gets really going, turn it to medium high until the pears are soft through and through.

Yes, this picture shows skins (I didn't have a photo of this step with peeled pears) and you CAN leave the skins on; it just clogs up the strainer more and takes more time. On the plus side, leaving on the skins usually imparts a little more flavor, plus the color of the skins to the finished jelly!

#### Step 6 - Decide whether you want to make pear jam or pear jelly

If you want pear jelly, you will need to filter, sieve or strain the pears - see step 6a.

If you want to make pear jam, you can just use a food mill, which is faster and easier. See step 6b.

### **Step 6a - Jellies: Filter or sieve the cooked pears**

You can either put the soft cooked pears through a jelly strainer (about \$9.00, see ordering at right, or pour them through cheesecloth in a colander.

Or if you don't mind slightly chunky jelly, you don't need to sieve it. Just let the juice stand for 20 minutes, and decant (pour off) the mostly clear liquid to use. Discard the bigger chunks of solids left behind at the bottom.

I pointed out in the ingredients list that you could start with pear juice, store bought or your own.

Either way, you'll need about 6 cups of juice now.

### **Step 6b - Jams: Simply crush or strain the cooked pears**

Depending upon how chunky you like your jam, you can just vigorously stir the cooked pears or strain them for a smoother consistency.

A simple and fairly inexpensive (\$20 - \$30) food mill, like the Foley food mill is the easiest, fastest way to strain or sieve the cooked pears and also to separate any remaining skins, seeds, hard parts of the core and stems from the pear sauce. Without a food mill, you'll have to use a colander which is hard and slow work!

Click on the links below or see the bottom of this page for more information and to order! The VillaWare model can handle higher volumes than a Foley food mill (without giving you cramps!)

To see a greater variety of [strainers in other types, sizes, and prices, click here!](#)



### Step 7 - Measure out the sweetener

Depending upon which type of jam or jelly 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). I haven't seen a jelly recipe that uses only Splenda, and I haven't yet tried it; I suspect it would taste bland.

Type of jam	Type of pectin to buy	Sweetener
regular	regular	7 cups of sugar
lower sugar	lower-sugar	4.5 cups of sugar
lowest sugar	no-sugar	4 cups of Splenda
lower sugar	lower-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, pear, apple or mixed)

### Step 8 - Mix the dry pectin with about 1/4 cup of sugar or other sweetener



In a small bowl, 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.



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

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 pears, 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 9 - Mix the pear juice with the pectin and cook to a full boil**



Stir the pectin into the pear juice 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 10 - Add the remaining sugar and bring to a boil**

When the pear-pectin mix has reached a full boil, add the rest of the sugar (or other sweetener) 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 1/4 to 1/2 of another package) and bring it to a boil again for 1 minute.

### 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. Then put them into the boiling water canner!

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 10 minutes, which is what SureJell (the makers of the pectin) recommend. 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, (this is called

"open kettle" processing). Open kettle process is universally condemned by all of the authorities (USDA, FDA, Universities - Clemson, UGa, Minnesota, WI, Michigan, etc.,) as being inherently dangerous and conducive to botulism. It does not create a sterile environment; it does create the ideal environment for botulism to grow.

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 or risk your family's health!





### 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 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 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, 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.

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  
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

