



Steps in Processing Jams and Jellies

Follow These Steps in Making Jam or Jelly at Home (for recipes suitable for boiling water canning):

1. Wash Mason-type canning jars (half-pint or pint size) in hot water with detergent and rinse well by hand, or wash in a dishwasher. If your recipe calls for pre-sterilized jars, sterilize the clean jars by submerging them 10 minutes in boiling water. The easiest way is to stand the empty jars upright on a rack in a boiling water canner filled with clean water. There should be enough water to fill the jars and still come to a level 1 to 2 inches above the tops of the jars. Bring the water to a boil and boil for 10 minutes. (If you are at an altitude of 1000 feet or more, add 1 minute of sterilizing time for each 1000 feet of altitude.) Jars can remain in the hot water until they are ready to be filled. If you are not pre-sterilizing jars, keep the clean (washed and rinsed) jars hot until time to fill them.
2. Prepare the canning jar lids according to the manufacturer's recommendations.
3. Prepare the jam or jelly according to recipe directions. Boil for the recommended time in the recipe and then quickly skim off foam (if needed or desired).
4. Remove presterilized jars from the hot water one at a time, carefully tilting them to quickly empty the water from them into the canner. Be careful not to burn yourself. To make sure they are completely drained, the jars may be turned upside down on a clean towel on the countertop. Fill pre-sterilized or clean hot jars quickly with the hot jelly or jam mixture, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Wipe the sealing surface of the jars with a clean paper towel, dampened with hot water, to remove any jelly, jam or sugar crystals. Adjust lids.

Work quickly to insure that the filled jars stay as hot as possible until all are filled and ready to be processed. However, remember the jam or jelly mixture is very hot and take precautions not to burn yourself.
5. Load the filled jars, fitted with lids, into the canner, fitted with the rack, one at a time, using a jar lifter. Make sure the jar lifter is securely positioned below the neck of the jar and ring band. Keep the jar upright at all times. Tilting the jar could cause the hot jelly or jam mixture to spill into the sealing area of the lid, which should remain clean and undisturbed. The water in the canner should be at least 180°F or can be slightly hotter when the jars are lowered into it.
6. The water level in the canner should be 1 to 2 inches above the tops of the filled jars. Turn the burner under the canner to its highest setting, cover the canner with its lid and heat until the water boils vigorously. Process the jars for the recommended number of minutes after the water boils. The water in the canner must remain boiling during the entire process time, so keep the heat source on high and a tight lid on the canner.
7. When the jars have been processed in boiling water for the recommended time, turn off the heat and remove the canner lid, tilting the steam away from your face. Wait 5 minutes. Remove jars from canner; use a jar lifter and keep jars upright. Carefully place the jars directly onto a towel or cooling rack, leaving at least one inch of space between the jars during cooling. Avoid placing the jars on a cold surface or in a cold draft.
8. Cool jars upright for 12 to 24 hours while vacuum seal is formed and the jam or jelly sets up. Let the jars sit undisturbed while they cool. Do *not* tighten ring bands on the lids or push down on the center of the flat metal lid until the jar is completely cooled.
9. Remove ring bands from sealed jars. Put any unsealed jars in the refrigerator and use first.
10. Wash jars and lids to remove all residues. Label and store in a cool, dry place out of direct light.

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Elizabeth L. Andress, Ph.D., Professor and Extension Food Safety Specialist

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