

FOOD PRESERVATION



Let's Preserve Peaches!

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Peaches are a delicious fruit that are “in season,” at their best quality and, often, best price in late summer. This publication provides step-by-step instructions for preserving them.

1. Get Ready to Can

- Before beginning to prepare fruit for canning, fill the water-bath canner about half full of clean water. For hot-packed food, preheat the water in the canner to about 180 F. Use a rack in the canner.
- Wash canning jars with hot, soapy water, then keep them hot in the canner of hot water on the stove.
- Prepare lids as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Note: Boiling the lids may result in failed seals.
- Heat a kettle of water for dipping peaches to remove their skin.
- Prepare an anti-darkening mixture, such as an ascorbic acid solution, according to the manufacturer's guidelines.
- Pure ascorbic acid is available in powdered form or as a mixture of ascorbic and citric acid in the canning section of grocery stores.

2. Choose High-quality Peaches

- Choose ripe, mature fruit of ideal quality for eating fresh or cooking. Avoid fruit with bruises or spoilage. You will use about 2½ pounds of fresh peaches to yield 1 quart of canned peaches.

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3. Prepare Peaches for Canning

- Dip peaches in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds until the skin loosens. Dip quickly in cold water and slip off skin.
- Cut peaches in half, remove the pits and slice if desired.
- Keep peeled fruit in ascorbic acid solution.

4. Prepare Syrup

- Heat water and sugar together as shown in Table 1. Bring to a boil and pour over raw fruits in jars. For hot packs, bring the water and sugar to a boil, add fruit, reheat to boiling and fill into jars immediately.
- Other types of syrup can be found in “Home Canning Fruit and Fruit Products,” FN174, available at www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn174.pdf

Table 1

Measures for Water and Sugar for 9-pint Load*

Syrup Type	Percent Sugar	Cups Water	Cups Sugar
Light	20	5¾	1½

*Adequate for 4 quarts

5. Pack the Peaches in Jars

Either of these methods can be used, but hot pack produces better-quality canned peaches.

- **Hot pack** - In a large saucepan, place drained fruit in syrup, water or juice and bring to a boil. Fill jars with hot fruit and cooking liquid, leaving ½ inch of head space. Place halves in layers, cut side down.
- **Raw pack** - Fill jars with raw fruit, cut side down, and add hot water, juice or syrup, leaving ½ inch of head space. Adjust the lids and process according to Table 2.

Table 2

Processing Time for Preserving Peaches in a Boiling Water-bath Canner

Product	Style of Pack	Jar Size	Processing Time (minutes) and Altitude		
			0 – 2,000 feet	2,001 – 4,000 feet	4,001 – 6,000 feet
Peaches halved or sliced	Hot	Pint	20	25	30
		Quart	25	30	35
Peaches halved or sliced	Raw	Pint	25	30	35
		Quart	30	35	40

6. Fill the Jars and Process

- Fill jars, leaving ½ inch of head space. After filling the jars with food, remove trapped air bubbles with a nonmetallic spatula, adjusting head space if needed.
- Wipe the rim of each jar carefully with a cloth or paper towel and apply the lid and screw ring. Do not overtighten the screw ring. It should be only “finger tight” or the lids may not seal properly.
- Place the jars in the canner using a jar lifter positioned below the screw band of the lid. Keep the jars upright at all times.
- Add boiling water, as needed, to bring the water level at least 1 inch over the jar tops.
- Begin timing when the water boils. Keep the canner covered during processing.
- The water should remain boiling at all times.
- When the processing time is complete, carefully remove the jars from the canner, using a jar lifter. Place the jars at least 1 inch apart on cooling racks or towels to cool at least 12 hours. Do not retighten the screw rings. Do not expose the jars to a cold surface or cold drafts, which could lead to cracking or breaking.
- Test seals the next day. A concave lid that does not move when pressed indicates you have a good seal. Remove the screw rings. Label sealed jars with the contents and canning date.
- Unsealed jars may be reprocessed safely **within 24 hours**.

For best quality, store jars in a cool, dark place and use within one year.