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## **Fruit Float**

Summer Brasuel

UCCE Master Food Preserver of El Dorado County

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Fruit float is the term used when produce, usually fruit, separates and floats to the top of the jars. It is a common occurrence in home canning and an irritating one! We put a lot of work into our canning and want our jars of love to be perfect. Fruit float occurs because air is trapped in the cells of the fruit, causing it to rise. If products are properly prepared using methods in tested recipes, most of the air will be removed, and the possibility of fruit float will be reduced.

There are some things we can do to avoid or reduce float in canned fruit.

- Use firm, ripe fruit.
  - Firm fruit has less air trapped in it than soft, ripe fruit. It also absorbs less liquid during the canning process.
  - You may see a little fruit float when you take the jars out of the canner; do not despair. Over time as the fruit absorbs the sugar syrup, the fruit will sink in the jar.
- Use a hot pack method.
  - A hot pack is the process of heating the fruit before canning it. Heating the fruit forces air out of the fruit's cell walls. A hot pack also produces a better textured product.
- Use light or medium syrup.
  - Fruit is lighter than sugar, so a lighter syrup will help reduce fruit float.
- Pack fruit as closely as possible without crushing it.
- Debubble jars.
  - Use a debubbler or a non-metallic tool, such as a chopstick, to remove air bubbles in the jar. Add additional covering liquid, if needed to have the correct headspace, before applying the lid.
- Make sure the liquid covers the food completely before applying the lid.

Here are a few more hints for avoiding fruit float in soft spreads.

- Use frozen fruit. As we know, liquid expands when frozen. The frozen liquid in produce will expand and burst the cell walls. This is why we see a lot of liquid when we thaw produce. Since the cell walls burst, air is released. Therefore, we will have less fruit float if we use fruit from the freezer.
- Always thaw fruit before using and always use the juice that has seeped out of the fruit.
- Another way to release air is to crush fruit when making soft spreads, not chop. Crushing releases some air from the cells in the fruit. Also, chopped fruit does not absorb as much sugar as crushed fruit and the fruit may separate as it cools in the jar.

Still getting fruit float? Don't worry; it's not a food safety issue and the food still tastes great!

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UCCE Master Food Preservers are available to answer home food preservation questions; leave a message at (530) 621-5506 or email us at [edmf@ucanr.edu](mailto:edmf@ucanr.edu). For more information about our program and events, visit our website at <http://ucanr.edu/edmf>. Sign up to receive our ENewsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpenews/>. Find us on Facebook, too (UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County)!