

preserve the Harvest

June 2005 (pr)

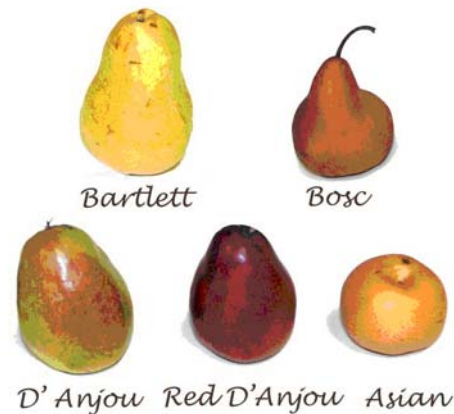
FN/2005/Harvest-05

Pears

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Did you know?

- There are over 5,000 varieties of pears.
- Joining the old-fashioned European yellow pears these days are crimson-red varieties and small, round Asian pears. European pears have typical pear shapes and their flesh is soft and succulent with skin either yellow or red.
- Asian pears have round shapes with green-yellow or russet skin and their flesh is unique in pears in that it is crunchy.
- Pears can improve in both texture and flavor after picking.



PREPARING PEARS FOR FREEZING AND CANNING

The most popular variety is Bartlett pears available the first two weeks in September in Utah. If they are to be transported or not processed immediately, pick while slightly green and allow them to ripen in a cool, dark place.

One bushel of pears weights about 50 pounds and will yield 16-25 quarts of pears. A pound of pears yields 2 cups of sliced pears.

Wash and peel pears, cut them in half or quarters and core. Place in water containing 1 teaspoon crystalline ascorbic acid to each pint of water or follow recommendations on commercial preparations that contain ascorbic acid OR use 2 tablespoons salt to 1 gallon of water to prevent discoloration (do not soak longer than 20 minutes). Rinse and drain.

FREEZING PEARS

Prepare pears as above. Make a 40% syrup by boiling 3 cups sugar and 4 cups water. Add pears and simmer 1-2 minutes; drain and cool. Cover with cooled syrup, leaving ½ inch headspace. Add 1/2 teaspoon ascorbic acid per quart to avoid discoloration (optional). Seal and freeze.

CANNING PEARS

Pretreat pears as described in the previous section on “Preparing Pears.” Prepare a very light, light or medium syrup or pack pears in apple juice, white grape juice or water. To prepare a light syrup: Bring 2 cups sugar and 4 cups water to a boil.

Boil drained pears 5 minutes in syrup, juice or water. Fill jars with hot fruit. Pack hot pears in jars, leaving 1/2 inch headspace, then cover with boiling syrup. Remove air bubbles and adjust lids. Process in hot water bath OR a pressure canner as follows, based on altitude.



To water bath can: Place jars and rack in hot water adequate to cover jars by 1 inch. Begin timing when water begins to boil.

Processing Times at different altitudes for Pears in a BOILING WATER canner				
Altitude	0-1,000 ft	1,001-3,000 ft	3,001-6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Pints	20 min	25 min	30 min	35 min
Quarts	25 min	30 min	35 min	40 min

To pressure can: Place jar rack in 2 inches of water, add prepared jars of pears. Fasten canner lid, and heat on high setting. After steam exhausts 10 minutes, add weighted gauge or close petcock to pressurize the canner. Start timing when the desired pressure is reached, according to chart below:

Processing Times at different altitudes for Pears in PRESSURE Canners								
			Dial Gauge Pressure Canners				Weighted Gauge	
Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time	0-2,000 ft	2,001-4,000 ft	4,001-6,000 ft	6,001-8,000 ft	0-1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Hot	Pints or Quarts	10 min	6 lb	7 lb	8 lb	9 lb	5 lb	10 lb

Regulate heat to maintain a uniform pressure. When processing is complete, remove canner from heat. Air-cool canner until it is fully depressurized. Then slowly remove weighted gauge or open petcock, wait 2 more minutes, and unfasten and carefully remove canner lid.

After processing is completed, remove jars from water bath or pressure canner with a jar lifter and place on a towel or rack. Do not retighten screw bands. Air-cool jars 12-24 hours. Remove screw bands and check lid seals. If the center of the lid is indented, wash, dry, label and store jar in a clean, cool, dark place. If lid is not sealed, examine and replace jar if defective. Use new lids and reprocess according to the processing instructions above. Alternately, jars of pears with unsealed lids can be refrigerated or frozen. To freeze in narrow neck canning jars, remove a portion of pears and liquid so that the jar will not break.

Pear Puree

Wash fruit; drain. Cut fruit in half and pit. Coarsely chop. Measure fruit. Add 1 cup boiling water for each quart of fruit. Cook fruit in water until soft. Press through a sieve or food mill. Measure purée. Add 1 tablespoon lemon juice and sugar to taste to each quart of purée, if desired. Reheat slowly until sugar dissolves, stirring to prevent sticking. Ladle hot purée into hot jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Add clean lids and rings. Process in boiling water bath canner for 15 minutes if under 1,000 feet in altitude, 20 minutes if 1,001-6,000 feet, and if above 6,000 feet, process 25 minutes.

Note: Purée may be thinned with a sugar syrup or water before canning. When purée is used as a syrup for canning other types of fruit, add water to thin purée. If canned purée is to be used as a drink, add cold water before serving.

Jams and Preserves

Pear Syrup

5 pounds pears, peeled and cored
10 cups sugar
2 cups crushed pineapple

Stir all together and cook 20 minutes or until of spreading consistency. Mash with potato masher to desired consistency. Put in hot jars (leaving 1/2 inch headspace), add clean lids and rings. Process in a boiling water bath canner as shown in the processing time table below.

Pear Butter

2 quarts pear pulp (about 20 medium, fully ripe pears)
4 cups sugar
1/3 cup orange juice
1 teaspoon grated orange rind
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg or 1/2 ground ginger

Quarter and core pears. Cook until soft, adding only enough water to prevent sticking. Press through a sieve or food mill. Measure pulp.

Add remaining ingredients; cook until thick, about 15 minutes. As mixture thickens, stir frequently to prevent sticking. Pour hot butter into jars, leaving 1/4 inch head space. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids. Process as shown in the processing time table below.

Pear-Pineapple Jam

24 large pears (if small, use 36)
3-4 large oranges
1 can #2 or 2 1/2 cups crushed pineapple, drained
Sugar

Peel pears and cut in small pieces. Peel oranges and cut in small pieces. Mix all fruit together; measure. For each cup of fruit, add 2/3 cup sugar. Mix and allow to stand 24 hours. Bring to a boil and let simmer 1 hour. Put in hot jars (leaving 1/2 inch headspace), add clean lids and rings. Process as shown in the processing time table below.

Processing Times at different altitudes for Pear Syrup, Pear Butter, and Pear Pineapple Jam in a BOILING WATER canner			
Altitude	0-1,000 ft	1,001-6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot pack Pints or Half pints	5 min*	10 min	15 min

*Note: If processing time is less than 10 minutes, sterilize jar before filling.

Spiced Pears

3 1/2 pounds medium-ripe pears (14-16)
 2 1/2 cups sugar
 1 1/4 cup white vinegar
 1 cup water

Tie in a spice bag:
 2 teaspoons whole ginger
 2 tablespoons whole cloves
 7 sticks cinnamon (3-inch pieces)

Wash, peel, and core pears. Place immediately in a solution of 1/2 teaspoon ascorbic acid and 2 quarts of water to prevent browning. Combine sugar, vinegar, and 1 cup water; bring to a boil. Add spices tied in cheesecloth bag. Boil 5 minutes. Drain pears and add to syrup. Simmer 5 minutes or until soft but still firm. Remove spice bag.

Pack pears into hot jars, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Fill jars to 1/2 inch of top with boiling hot syrup. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims. Process 15 minutes in a boiling water bath.

DRIED PEARS

Pears should be fully ripe for drying, but not soft or mushy. Typically the best varieties for drying are Bartlett or other summer varieties—but others may be used.

Peel and core the pears and slice into desired thickness—remember the thicker the slice, the longer the drying time. Place sliced pears in a pretreatment solution of 1 teaspoon ascorbic acid per quart of water. Other pretreatments, such as sulfuring, may be used, but are more labor intensive.

Hold only a few minutes in the solution as longer times will soften the pears.

Place on drying tray and dry 2-3 hours at 160°F, then 130°F until dry.

Dried pears may be used dry as a snack, or slightly rehydrated in breads, cobblers, cooking, fritters, etc. They are also good chopped into hot oatmeal.

STORAGE

Store fresh pears in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks. Canned pears and nectar will maintain quality when stored up to 66 months at 40°F, 40 months at 70°F, or 15 months at 90°F. Dried pears can be stored up to 24 months at 40°F, 3 months at 70°F, or 1 month at 90°F. Well packaged frozen pears will keep up to 18 months.

NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION

	Calories	Fiber g	Vit. A IU	Vit. C Mg	Sodium mg	Potassium mg	Iron mg	Calcium mg
Fresh pear, 1 large	121	6.5	48	9	2	249	0.36	19
Canned, light syrup, 1 cup	143	4.0	0	1.8	13	166	0.7	13
Dried, rehydrated, 1 cup	324	16.3	107	10	7.6	658	2.6	41

Savor the Season All Year Long!

References

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