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.
   - 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.
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 | 5 ¾ | 1 ½ |

* 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.

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.

| Table 2 |
| Processing Time for Preserving Peaches in a Boiling Water-bath Canner |
| Product | Style of Pack | Jar Size | 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 |

For more information on this and other topics, see www.ag.ndsu.edu/food. (Click on “Food Preservation”)