

Easy Fresh Fruit Jam



WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS

When developing our ideal fruit jam recipe, we discovered that making a relatively small amount of jam at one time (this jam recipe produces about 2 1/2 cups) has several advantages.

First, it allows for a thorough and even distribution of heat, which is crucial to proper jelling. It's also easier to observe the progress of a small amount of jam, so you're less likely to let it overcook (which gets in the way of proper jelling). Finally, since you're not making industrial quantities, there's no need for canning. You can store it in the refrigerator for a couple of weeks—if it lasts that long.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound fruit fresh, (prepared according to chart below), about 3 cups
sugar (amount according to chart below)
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice from 1 lemon

INSTRUCTIONS

The jam will continue to thicken as it cools, so err on the side of undercooking. Overcooked jam that is dark, thick, and smells of caramelized sugar cannot be saved. Note: Because of its reduced sugar amounts, this jam cannot be canned.

1. Set small bowl over larger bowl of ice water; set aside.
2. In 10- or 12-inch skillet, bring fruit, sugar, and lemon juice to boil over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring constantly and skimming foam as necessary, until mixture begins to look syrupy and thickens slightly, about 5 minutes for strawberries and apricots and 8 to 9 minutes for plums, peaches, and nectarines; remove from heat. Spoon 1/2 teaspoon fruit mixture into bowl over ice water; allow to set for 30 seconds. Tip bowl 45 degrees to one side; jam should be a soft gel that moves slightly. If mixture is liquid and runs to side of

MAKES 2 1/2 CUPS

bowl, return skillet to heat and cook, stirring constantly, 1 to 2 minutes longer; then repeat test. Cool jam to room temperature before serving. (It will keep, covered and refrigerated, for up to two weeks.)