



REMAKING SOFT JAMS AND JELLIES

By
Kayla Wells-Moses, Extension Regional Specialist, Family and
Consumer Sciences Educator, WSU Colville Reservation Extension

WSU PEER
REVIEWED

FS253E

Remaking Soft Jams and Jellies

General Information

Soft homemade jams and jellies can be an unfortunate occurrence and are often the result of using overripe fruit, fruit lacking the appropriate acidity, using the wrong amount of sugar, increasing the recipe, not bringing the product up to a full rolling boil, using old pectin or not enough pectin, or numerous other causes. Before remaking jellied products, let the jars of product sit in a cool place for 24 hours, as gelling can take time. When remaking soft jams and jellies, only work with 4 to 8 cups at a time. Working with larger quantities requires longer boiling times that can cause loss of flavor, darkening, and/or toughening of the jelly. Both canned (cooked) and freezer (uncooked) jams and jellies can be remade if the products are too soft. This publication outlines how to remake soft jams and jellies that were cooked using powdered pectin, liquid pectin, and no pectin. It also outlines how to remake freezer jams and jellies made with both powdered and liquid pectin.

Using Soft Jams and Jellies without Remaking

If you do not have the time to remake soft jams and jellies, do not despair! Sealed jars of soft jams and jellies can safely be consumed as a syrup or compote. Soft jams and jellies can be great toppings for pancakes, ice cream, and pastries, and make delicious additions to milk shakes and smoothies. Once opened, both canned and freezer jams and jellies, even those being used as syrup or compote, should be stored in the refrigerator, and will maintain high quality if used within one month. For safety, do not remake soft jams or jellies that were improperly processed or show signs of spoilage.

Remaking Cooked Jellies and Jams

Sterilizing Jars and Lids

All jams and jellies processed for less than 10 minutes need to be poured into clean, sterile jars.

This recommendation is the same when remaking soft jams and jellies. To sterilize jars, follow these steps:

1. Wash jars and lids with warm water and soap.
2. Place jars upright on a rack in a boiling water bath canner or other large saucepan.
3. Fill the pan and jars with hot water to 1 inch above the top of the jars.



Canning jars being sterilized in a large saucepan.

4. Heat water to boiling and boil for 10 minutes for sea level to 1,000 feet of elevation. At higher elevations, boil 1 additional minute for each additional 1,000 feet of elevation.
5. Keep the jars in the hot water until they are ready to be filled; this prevents jars from breaking when filled with hot product.
6. Prepare lids and rings according to manufacturer recommendations.

To Remake Cooked, Soft Jellies without Added Pectin

Ingredients:

- One quart (4 cups) soft jelly
- 2 Tbsp. bottled lemon juice

Directions:

1. Combine jelly and bottled lemon juice and heat to boiling for 3 to 4 minutes.
2. Use one of the tests described below to determine jelly doneness: temperature test, spoon or sheet test, or freezer test. Continue to cook, as needed, until the gelling point is reached.
3. When done, remove from heat, quickly skim off foam, and fill sterile jars to ¼-inch headspace. (Headspace is the distance between the bottom of the lid and the product in the jar.)



Skimming off the foam from a gelled product.

4. Thoroughly wipe jar rim and threads with a clean, damp paper towel.
5. Cover jar with new lid and ring, and tighten ring to “fingertip tight.” (Work quickly to ensure jars and jelly stay as hot as possible, but take precautions not to burn yourself.)
6. See Table 2 for processing time in a boiling water bath canner.

Testing Jelly Doneness without Added Pectin: Temperature Test

Of the three methods for testing doneness of jelly made without added pectin, the temperature test is the most dependable.

For this test, take the temperature of the jelly with a candy or jelly thermometer. At sea level, the jelly is done when the temperature reaches 220°F. For each additional 1,000 feet above sea level, subtract 2°F (see Table 1) to determine jelly doneness. For an accurate reading, place the thermometer vertically in the mixture and read at eye level. The bulb of the thermometer must be completely covered by the jelly, but not touching the bottom of the saucepan.



To measure the temperature of cooked product, use a candy or jelly thermometer.

Table 1. Temperatures for Jelly to Reach When Testing Doneness Through the Temperature Test

Sea Level	1,000 ft	2,000 ft	3,000 ft	4,000 ft	5,000 ft	6,000 ft	7,000 ft	8,000 ft
220°F	218°F	216°F	214°F	212°F	210°F	208°F	206°F	204°F

Testing Jelly Doneness without Added Pectin: Spoon or Sheet Test

1. Dip a cool metal spoon in the boiling jelly mixture.
2. Lift the spoon out of the mixture and above the steam so you can see the jelly running off the side.
3. When the mixture first starts to boil, the drops will be light and syrupy.
4. As the jelly continues to boil, the drops will become heavier and drop off the spoon, two at a time.
5. When the two drops form together and “sheet” off the spoon, that’s when the gelling point has been reached.



The sheet or spoon test. Top spoon: when mixture first boils the drops are light and syrupy. Middle spoon: as mixture continues to boil, the drops become heavier and drop off two at a time. Bottom spoon: the gelling point has been reached when two drops form together and “sheet” off the spoon. (Image from Fundamentals of Consumer Food Safety and Preservation: Master Handbook.)

Testing Jelly Doneness without Added Pectin: Freezer Test

Pour a small amount of boiling jelly on a plate, put the plate in the freezer for a few minutes, and remove the pot of jelly from the heat. If the mixture gels, it should be done. If the mixture does not gel, return the pot of jelly to the heat and keep boiling. Periodically test small amounts of jelly in the freezer, removing the pot of jelly from the heat each time.

To Remake Cooked, Soft Jam or Jelly with Powdered Pectin

It is best to recook a trial batch using 1 cup of jam or jelly first. Do not recook more than 8 cups of jam or jelly at one time.



Regular pectin in powdered form. (Photo courtesy of: Lizann Powers-Hammond, Fundamentals of Consumer Food Safety and Preservation: Master Handbook.)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup soft jam or jelly
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 Tbsp. water
- 1 ½ tsp. powdered pectin; be sure to mix the contents of the pectin package well before measuring.

Directions:

1. Stir the pectin into the water and bring to a boil, stirring constantly.
2. Add jam or jelly and sugar. Stir thoroughly and bring to a full rolling boil over high heat, stirring constantly.
3. Boil mixture hard for 30 seconds.
4. Remove from heat, quickly skim off foam, and fill sterile jars to ¼-inch headspace. (Headspace is the distance between the bottom of the lid and the product in the jar.)

Table 2. Recommended Process Times for Remade Soft Jams & Jellies in a Boiling Water Bath Canner

		Process Times at Altitude of:					
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0–1,000 ft	1,001–2,000 ft	2,001–3,000 ft	3,001–4,000 ft	4,001–5,000 ft	Above 5,000 ft
Hot	Half-pints or pints	5 min	11 min	12 min	13 min	14 min	15 min



Bringing jam to a boil.

5. Thoroughly wipe jar rim and threads with a clean, damp paper towel.
6. Cover jar with new lid and ring, tighten ring to “fingertip tight.”
7. See Table 2 for processing time.

To Remake Cooked, Soft Jam or Jelly with Liquid Pectin

It is best to recook a trial batch using 1 cup of jam or jelly first. Do not recook more than 8 cups of jam or jelly at one time.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup soft jam or jelly
- 3 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 ½ tsp. lemon juice
- 1 ½ tsp. of liquid pectin

Directions:

1. Place jam or jelly in a saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring constantly.
2. Add sugar, lemon juice, and liquid pectin at the same time to the boiling jam or jelly.



Regular pectin in liquid form. (Photo courtesy of: Lizann Powers-Hammond, Fundamentals of Consumer Food Safety and Preservation: Master Handbook.)

3. Bring mixture to a full rolling boil and boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly.
4. Remove from heat, quickly skim off foam, and fill sterile jars to ¼-inch headspace. (Headspace is the distance between the bottom of the lid and the product in the jar.)
5. Thoroughly wipe jar rim and threads with a clean, damp paper towel.
6. Cover jar with new lid and ring, tighten ring to “fingertip tight.”
7. See Table 2 for processing time.

Remaking Freezer Jams and Jellies

To Remake Freezer Jam or Jelly with Powdered Pectin

It is best to remake a trial batch using 1 cup of jam or jelly first. Do not remake more than 8 cups of jam or jelly at one time.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup soft jam or jelly
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 Tbsp. water
- 1 ½ tsp. powdered pectin

Directions:

1. In a bowl, mix jam or jelly and sugar, and stir until sugar is dissolved (about 3 minutes).
2. Place water and powdered pectin in a saucepan and place over low heat, stirring until the pectin is dissolved.
3. Add the jam or jelly and sugar mixture to the saucepan and stir until thoroughly blended (about 2–3 minutes).
4. Pour mixture into clean containers, leaving ½-inch headspace. (Headspace is the distance between the bottom of the lid and the product in the jar.)
5. Thoroughly wipe jar rim and threads with a clean, damp paper towel.
6. Cover tightly with lids. Place jars in the refrigerator to allow jam to set, then store in the refrigerator or freezer.

To Remake Freezer Jam or Jelly with Liquid Pectin

It is best to remake a trial batch using 1 cup of jam or jelly first. Do not remake more than 8 cups of jam or jelly at one time.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup soft jam or jelly
- 3 Tbsp. sugar
- 1 ½ tsp. lemon juice
- 1 ½ tsp. liquid pectin

Directions:

1. In a bowl, mix jam or jelly, sugar and lemon juice.
2. Stir until sugar is dissolved (about 3 minutes), then add liquid pectin and stir until well blended (about 3 minutes).
3. Pour mixture into clean containers, leaving ½-inch headspace. (Headspace is the distance between the bottom of the lid and the product in the jar.)
4. Thoroughly wipe jar rim and threads with a clean, damp paper towel.
5. Cover tightly with lids. Place jars in refrigerator to allow jam to set, then store in the refrigerator or freezer.

Resources

Andress, E.L., and J.A. Harrison. 2014. *So Easy to Preserve*. The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension.

Bastin, S., and D. Clouthier. 2016. *Home Canning Jams, Jellies, and Other Soft Spreads*. University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service.

OSU Extension. 2013. [Food Safety and Preservation: Remaking Soft Jellies](#). Oregon State University Extension Service Publication SP 50-604.

UGA Extension. 2009. [Making Jams and Jellies, Remaking Soft Jellies](#). USDA Publications, National Center for Home Food Preservation. University of Georgia.

USDA (United States Department of Agriculture). 2015. *Complete Guide to Home Canning*.



Copyright 2017 Washington State University

WSU Extension bulletins contain material written and produced for public distribution. Alternate formats of our educational materials are available upon request for persons with disabilities. Please contact Washington State University Extension for more information.

Issued by Washington State University Extension and the U.S. Department of Agriculture in furtherance of the Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914. Extension programs and policies are consistent with federal and state laws and regulations on nondiscrimination regarding race, sex, religion, age, color, creed, and national or ethnic origin; physical, mental, or sensory disability; marital status or sexual orientation; and status as a Vietnam-era or disabled veteran. Evidence of noncompliance may be reported through your local WSU Extension office. Trade names have been used to simplify information; no endorsement is intended. Published February 2017.