

Cherries

Cherries have a short growing season and most Washington cherries are grown in the Yakima Valley and Wenatchee. Different varieties of cherries look different and have different flavor profiles. Dark Red Bings are intensely sweet, two-toned yellow blush Rainiers have a complex sweet to almost bitter flavor, and Mahogany Lapins are great for garnish and display. Montmorency cherries' tartness makes them perfect for pies and preserves.

Nutrition

Cherries are high in Vitamin C, potassium, and fiber, and rich in antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds. Like most fruits, cherries are low in calories, contain no fat, cholesterol or sodium. Fifteen large cherries have 70 calories.

Selection

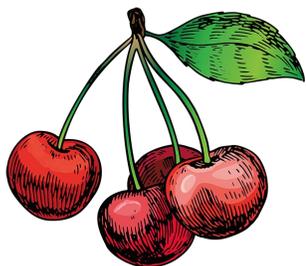
Choose firm and dense fruit with vibrant color, and a shiny appearance. Avoid wrinkled or soft fruit, dull skins, and dried stems as these indicate overripe fruit.

To clean, thoroughly rinse cherries under running water before eating or preserving.

Storage

Refrigerate cherries as soon as possible as storage at room temperature or warmer can quickly degrade fruit. Store in a plastic bag or container in the refrigerator. Wash and remove the stems just before eating.

Measurements



X 80



Weight



Volume

Freezing

- Select tree-ripened fruit.
- Stem and wash.
- Remove pits, if desired.
- Pack in your choice of sugar syrup, sugar, or without sugar in moisture-vapor proof freezer containers or freezer weight plastic bags, squeezing out as much air as possible.
- Label, seal and freeze.



Tip: It is easier to pit cherries when frozen!

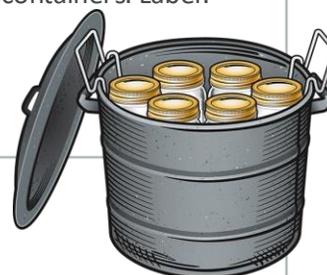
Drying

Preparation: Wash and remove stems. Remove pits; slice in half or dry whole.

Pretreatment: No pretreatment is needed, although an anti-darkening agent may be used to prevent browning for light colored cherries.

Drying Procedure:

- Dry in single layers on drying trays.
- Dry at 140° F, approximately 24 - 36 hours, until leathery and pliable.
- Cool thoroughly.
- Package in moisture/vapor proof containers. Label.
- Store in a cool, dark, dry place.



Boiling Water Canning

Canned Cherries

An average of 17½ pounds is needed per canner load of 7 quarts; an average of 11 pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints. Any variety of cherry can be safely processed in a boiling water canner.

Stem and wash cherries. Remove pits if desired. If pitted, place light colored cherries in water containing an anti-darkening agent to prevent discoloration. Cherries may be canned in water, apple juice, white-grape juice, or sugar syrup.

Hot pack – In a large saucepan add ½ cup water, juice, or syrup for each quart of drained fruit and bring to boil. Fill hot jars with cherries and cooking liquid, leaving ½-inch headspace.



Tip: If canning unpitted cherries, prick skins on opposite sides with a clean needle to prevent splitting.

Raw pack – Add ½ cup hot water, juice, or syrup to each hot jar. Fill jars with drained cherries, shaking down gently as you fill. Add more hot liquid, leaving ½-inch headspace.

Wipe rims with a clean, damp paper towel. Apply two-piece lids and process in boiling water canner according to directions below.

Once processing is complete, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes before removing jars. Let cool at room temperature, undisturbed, for 12 to 24 hours and check for seals. Wipe jars, remove rings, label, and store in a cool, dry place.

Processing Directions:

Style of pack	Jar Size	1–1,000 ft	1,001 to 3,000 ft
Hot	Pints or Quarts	Pints 15 minutes, Quarts 20 minutes	Pints 20 minutes, Quarts 25 minutes
Raw	Pints or Quarts	25 minutes	30 minutes

Boiling Water Canning

Sweet Cherry Topping

Yield: 2 pints

Ingredients.

5 cups pitted, halved Bing cherries (about 2.5 pounds as purchased)

¼ cup water

2 cups sugar

1 pouch liquid pectin (3 fl. oz.)

Wash cherries well under running water; remove stems and pits. Cut cherries in half. Measure 5 cups of pitted, halved cherries into a 4-quart Dutch oven. Stir in water. Heat over medium-high heat while stirring to prevent sticking and scorching. Simmer until cherries are softened enough to mash with a potato masher, about 8 to 10 minutes.

Mash cherries with a potato masher. Stir in 2 cups of sugar, mixing thoroughly.

Over high heat, stirring constantly, bring to a full boil that cannot be stirred down. Boil for 1 minute.

Remove from heat. Stir in pectin until thoroughly combined. Skim foam from top.

Pour hot cherry topping into clean hot jars, leaving ½-inch headspace. Wipe jar rims with a clean, dampened paper towel and adjust two-piece metal lids and bands. Process in boiling water canner according to directions below. Once processing is complete, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes before removing jars. Let cool at room temperature, undisturbed, for 12 to 24 hours and check seals. Wipe jars, remove rings, label, and store in a cool, dry place.



Processing Directions:

Style of pack	Jar Size	1–1,000 ft	1,001 to 6,000 ft
Hot	Half Pints or Pints	15 minutes	20 minutes

Preserve Skagit Crop Sheets describe three food preservation techniques—freezing, drying, and boiling water canning—consistent with USDA Food Preservation and Food Safety recommendations. Pressure canning for low acid foods such as meats and vegetables is not included.

Additional resources and recipes, as well as information on Pressure Canning, can be found on the WSU Skagit Food Preservation Website <https://extension.wsu.edu/skagit/fam/food-preservation/> or the National Center for Home Food Preservation <https://nchfp.uga.edu/index.html>.

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