



How to Make Quick Homemade Jam (No Canning Needed!)

By Mary Margaret Chappell
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Store-bought jams are often loaded with added sugar, and canning your own can take a lot of time, equipment, and effort. But there's another way that's easy, healthy, and skips the worry of sterilizing and sealing jars. It's called quick jam, or refrigerator jam, and it will keep in the fridge for up to two weeks and in the freezer for up to a year. Best of all, you can do it in four steps using whatever fresh or frozen fruit you have on hand.

1. Prep the Fruit

The secret to homemade jam is simmering the fruit without completely cooking it down. Berries and pitted cherries are small enough to cook quickly without chopping. Apricots have thin skins that can be left on, but you'll need to peel, seed, and chop other fruits into ½-inch pieces.

2. Sweeten with Apples

Many all-fruit jams are sweetened with fruit juice. Cooked chopped apples work even better; their natural pectin content helps thicken the jam. Ultra-sweet Fuji and Gala varieties work best because their flesh cooks down quickly. Use 2 cups peeled, chopped apples per pound of fruit.

3. Thicken with Pectin

An all-natural fruit starch, pectin gives jams their shine and spreadable consistency. It's also a polysaccharide, a natural soluble fiber that supports digestive health and may even reduce cholesterol levels. Classic preserving pectin requires sugar to activate its gelling properties. Low- or no-sugar-needed pectin will set fruit mixtures without any added sweetener. Pomona's Universal Pectin is pure fruit pectin. Versions from Ball and Bernadin contain a small bit of dextrose (a sugar) to activate the gelling process.

4. Refrigerate or Freeze

No-sugar jams and preserves are more perishable than sugar-sweetened jams and should be kept in cold storage.

All-Fruit Quick Homemade Jam Recipe

For healthy homemade jam in 45 minutes, use this basic recipe with any type of fresh or frozen fruit. *Makes three 8-oz. jars*

- 3 cups fresh or frozen fruit, peeled, pitted, and chopped as needed (1 lb.)
- 2 tsp. lemon juice
- 2 Fuji or Gala apples, peeled and diced (2 cups)
- 3 Tbsp. low- or no-sugar-needed pectin

1. In a medium bowl toss your chosen fruit with lemon juice. Set aside.
2. In a medium saucepan combine apples and 1 cup water; bring to a simmer. Cover and cook over medium-low 15 minutes, occasionally mashing apples with a fork to make a smooth applesauce.
3. Stir the prepped fruit into the applesauce. Simmer, covered, 15 minutes, stirring and mashing occasionally to help the fruit break down. Stir in the pectin and bring the mixture to a rapid boil; cook 1 minute, stirring constantly.
4. Ladle jam into clean jars. Close jars and let jam cool to room temperature. Refrigerate up to 2 weeks or freeze up to 1 year.

(continued)

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