

PRESERVE

3033 N.E. ALBERTA STREET
PORTLAND, OREGON 97211

Making homemade pectin stock

1. Slice about 4 pounds of washed, green apples (not Granny Smiths, but tart under-ripe apples, found in early summer). Place apples in a non-reactive saucepan. Add enough water to barely cover and bring to the boil. Lower heat immediately and simmer until soft, approximately 20-30 minutes.
2. Pour your apples and liquid through a fine sieve into another pot. Without stirring let this liquid drain overnight.
3. Bring liquid to a boil in the pot and cook till it has reduced to half its original volume.
4. Test pectin content (instructions below) and continue to cook if necessary.
5. Once liquid pectin has come to desired strength you can store it in your fridge or for greater shelf life, process the hot pectin in sterile pint jars for 5 minutes in a boiling water canner (ooh don't worry you'll understand in time.) You can also freeze your liquid pectin.

Using home-made pectin.

As a general guide 2/3 cups liquid pectin will be enough to set 4 cups of low-pectin prepared fruit or juice. So here again you have room for whimsy. If you are using strawberries (low pectin) alone I would use the full amount. If I wanted to throw in a few currants (high pectin) with the strawberries I might use less and if I was using half currants half strawberries, maybe none at all. And you can use less if you start with less fruit. For example, 2 cups of fruit will need 1/3 cup liquid pectin. This seems obvious but this is new to all of us. In the end, it will be trial and error and the willingness to love whatever the outcome that will win the day.

Adding Sugar and Acid

Again, the success of all jellies and jams depends on the balance of sugar, acid and pectin. Generally it is suggested to use 1_ to 2 cups of sugar for 2 cups of prepared fruit or fruit juice. The amount varies to the degree of set you want and to type of product - jellies, jam, preserves, conserves etc. you are making. The amount of acid to add depends on the amount in the fruit you are using so check the sheet. Acidity is easily boosted by adding lemon juice to the fruit before cooking – about 2 tablespoons to 2 cups of prepared fruit or fruit juice.

Testing the Pectin Level

I admit to loving this part. I suppose it comes as close to chemistry as I get these days (what with Mr. Leary long departed). To determine the amount of pectin in your liquid put one teaspoon of the liquid on a plate and add 2 tablespoons of rubbing alcohol to the mix. Swirl the mixture around until clots start to form. It will amaze you but it will happen and you will know the strength of the pectin by the size of the clots. Basically you want a fairly large viscous clot to form to indicate strong pectin. Weak pectin count will show up as several small, scattered clumps. If that is the case, just bring the liquid back to the boil and reduce further. And please toss out the test batch. You don't want to return that to the pot. Once it reaches the desired strength you can refrigerate, freeze or “can it” until you make jam. I would not keep it in the fridge for more than a week however.