



Small Batch Fresh Strawberry Jam

Makes about 1_ cups

This quickly prepared jam calls for smaller amounts of fruit and sugar. Cooking it in a wide pan speeds up the gelling process, so no pectin is needed. The jam has a soft set, a bright color and a full fruit flavor. It is just right for spooning onto toast or muffins, but may not be stiff enough for a peanut butter sandwich.

Ingredients:

3 cups fresh strawberries, sliced (about 1_ pint baskets or 4 cups whole berries or 1 pound)
1 cup sugar
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Option: Add a tablespoon or two of diced candied ginger

Directions:

1. Chill a small plate or bowl in the freezer or over ice water.
2. In a 10 or 12-inch wide 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. Cook about 8-10 minutes, until mixture begins to look syrupy and thickens slightly.
3. Remove pan from heat.
4. Spoon _ teaspoon of the hot fruit onto the cold plate and let it rest for 30 seconds. Tip plate to one side; jam should be a soft gel that moves slightly. If mixture is thin and runs down side of plate, the gel is too soft. Return skillet to heat and cook jam 1 to 2 minutes longer, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and repeat test.
5. Cool jam to room temperature before serving. Because a minimum amount of sugar is used, the jam needs to be refrigerated to prevent mold from forming. Refrigerate 2-3 weeks.
6. For longer storage, freeze or process hot jam in a boiling water canner for 10 minutes.**

**Option: If jars are sterilized (heated in boiling water for 10 minutes) it's possible to use the inverted method to preserve jam: Pour hot jam into hot sterile jar leaving 1/8 inch head space. Wipe rim and apply prepared lid and ring. Screw ring on firmly. Invert jar and leave for 5 minutes. Turn jar right side up and let cool 12-24 hours. The heat from the jam will destroy mold spores. This method is not foolproof, so if you are preparing a lot of jam, process the jam in a boiling water canner.