

FOOD PRESERVATION



Reduced-sugar or No-sugar Fruit Spreads

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Do you like apple or grape jelly on toast, muffins or other foods? Some people are trying to consume less sugar and calories in their diet. This handout provides research-tested recipes for reduced-sugar refrigerated fruit spreads that are easy to make.

Ingredients

Fruit and/or fruit juice provide color, flavor, natural sugars, natural pectin and acid to spreads.

- When starting with juice, use juice without added sugar.

Gelatin or pectin products are added to reduced-sugar jellies and jams to “gel,” or thicken, the spread.

- Gelatin can be used as a thickener in lower-sugar recipes. Jams and jellies made with gelatin must be refrigerated because sealing the jars by using a water-bath canner is not safe.
- Low-methoxyl pectin is available to use with less or no sugar, and the resulting products can be water-bath canned. Recipes are provided on the package; follow them precisely.
- Store gelatin and pectin products in a cool, dry place and use by the date printed on the package.

Acid is found naturally in fruit or fruit juice used to make spreads. It adds flavor and helps in gel formation.

- If fruits are lower in acid, you need to add lemon juice or another acid to the recipe.

Sugar or artificial sweetening agents provide flavor.

Sugar helps form the gel and preserve the jelly. Artificial sweeteners tend to provide sweetness but lack sufficient preservation action, so refrigeration is needed for storage of products with artificial sweeteners. Only use artificial sweeteners in recipes developed for their use.

Making Reduced-sugar Refrigerator Fruit Spreads

The recipes on this handout were tested for quality and safety. They are lower in calories and sugar than commercial jellies. One tablespoon of each of these spreads has about 15 calories, compared with about 50 calories per tablespoon for commercial spreads.

Sterilized jars are not required for these recipes; however, sterilizing the jars helps prevent spoilage during storage. The ingredients can be filled into hot, clean jars or plastic refrigerator containers.

Store these spreads in your refrigerator and use within one month.

NDSU Extension has a variety of research-tested “regular” recipes for making jams, jellies and fruit spreads from your favorite fruits. For more information, see www.ag.ndsu.edu/food/food-preservation.

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Recipes

Note: Low-methoxyl pectin products provide recipes for low-sugar jellies and jams that can be water-bath canned. See the manufacturer's directions for details.

Refrigerated Apple Spread¹

2 Tbsp. unflavored gelatin powder
4 c. unsweetened apple juice
2 Tbsp. bottled lemon juice
2 Tbsp. liquid low-calorie sweetener
Food coloring, if desired

In a saucepan, soften the gelatin in the apple juice and lemon juice. To dissolve gelatin, bring to a full rolling boil and boil two minutes. Remove from heat. Stir in sweetener and food coloring, if desired. Fill jars, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of head space. Adjust lids. Do not process or freeze. **Yield:** 4 half-pints
Note: Use within four weeks.

Refrigerated Grape Spread¹

2 Tbsp. unflavored gelatin powder
1 (24-oz.) bottle unsweetened grape juice
2 Tbsp. bottled lemon juice
2 Tbsp. liquid low-calorie sweetener

In a saucepan, soften the gelatin in the grape juice and lemon juice. Then bring to a full rolling boil to dissolve gelatin. Boil one minute and remove from heat. Stir in sweetener. Fill jars quickly, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of head space. Adjust lids. Do not process in a canner or freeze. Seal, cool and store in refrigerator.

Yield: 3 half-pints

Note: Use within four weeks.

Refrigerator Jelly With Splenda²

2 Tbsp. unflavored gelatin powder
4 $\frac{1}{4}$ c. bottled unsweetened fruit juice (1 quart plus $\frac{1}{4}$ c.)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ c. Splenda[®] Granular

In a saucepan, soften gelatin in juice. Bring to a rolling boil, dissolving gelatin; boil one minute. Remove from heat. Stir in Splenda Granular. Skim foam if needed. Pour into hot, sterilized jars, leaving at least $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of head space. Apply lids, cool and store in refrigerator. Do not process in a canner or freeze. **Yield:** About 4 half-pint jars

Note: Use within four weeks.



Sources

¹"Complete Guide to Home Canning," Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 539, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), revised 2015.

²National Center for Home Food Preservation at <https://nchfp.uga.edu/>

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