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FOOD PRESERVATION



Let's Preserve Peaches!

Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., R.D., L.R.D.
Food and Nutrition Specialist

Peaches are a delicious fruit that are "in season," at their best quality and, often, best price in late summer. This publication provides step-by-step instructions for preserving them.

1. Get Ready to Can

- Before beginning to prepare fruit for canning, fill the water-bath canner about half full of clean water. For hot-packed food, preheat the water in the canner to about 180 degrees Fahrenheit. Use a rack in the canner.
- Wash canning jars with hot, soapy water, then keep them hot in the canner of hot water on the stove.
- Prepare lids as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Note: Boiling the lids may result in failed seals.
- Heat a kettle of water for dipping peaches to remove their skin.
- Prepare an antidarkening mixture, such as an ascorbic acid solution, according to the manufacturer's guidelines.
- Pure ascorbic acid is available in powdered form or as a mixture of ascorbic and citric acid in the canning section of grocery stores.

2. Choose High-quality Peaches

- Choose ripe, mature fruit of ideal quality for eating fresh or cooking. Avoid fruit with bruises or spoilage. You will use about 2½ pounds of fresh peaches to yield 1 quart of canned peaches.

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3. Prepare Peaches for Canning

- Dip peaches in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds until the skin loosens. Dip quickly in cold water and slip off skin.
- Cut peaches in half, remove the pits and slice if desired.
- Keep peeled fruit in ascorbic acid solution.

4. Prepare Syrup

- Heat water and sugar together as shown in Table 1. Bring to a boil and pour over raw fruits in jars. For hot packs, bring the water and sugar to a boil, add fruit, reheat to boiling and fill into jars immediately.
- Other types of syrup can be found in "Home Canning Fruit and Fruit Products," FN174, available at https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/food-nutrition/home-canning-fruit-and-fruit-products

Table 1

Measures for Water and Sugar for 9-pint Load*

Syrup Type	% Sugar	Cups Water	Cups Sugar
Light	20	5¾	1½

*Adequate for 4 quarts

5. Pack the Peaches in Jars

Either of these methods can be used, but hot pack produces better-quality canned peaches.

- **Hot pack -** In a large saucepan, place drained fruit in syrup, water or juice and bring to a boil. Fill jars with hot fruit and cooking liquid, leaving ½ inch of head space. Place halves in layers, cut side down.
- **Raw pack -** Fill jars with raw fruit, cut side down, and add hot water, juice or syrup, leaving ½ inch of head space. Adjust the lids and process according to Table 2.

6. Fill the Jars and Process

- Fill jars, leaving ½ inch of head space. After filling the jars with food, remove trapped air bubbles with a nonmetallic spatula, adjusting head space if needed.
- Wipe the rim of each jar carefully with a cloth or paper towel and apply the lid and screw ring. Do not overtighten the screw ring. It should be only "finger tight" or the lids may not seal properly.
- Place the jars in the canner using a jar lifter positioned below the screw band of the lid. Keep the jars upright at all times.
- Add boiling water, as needed, to bring the water level at least 1 inch over the jar tops.
- Begin timing when the water boils. Keep the canner covered during processing.
- The water should remain boiling at all times.
- When the processing time is complete, carefully remove the jars from the canner, using a jar lifter. Place the jars at least 1 inch apart on cooling racks or towels to cool at least 12 hours. Do not retighten the screw rings. Do not expose the jars to a cold surface or cold drafts, which could lead to cracking or breaking.
- Test seals the next day. A concave lid that does not move when pressed indicates you have a good seal. Remove the screw rings. Label sealed jars with the contents and canning date.
- Unsealed jars may be reprocessed safely *within 24 hours*.

For best quality, store jars in a cool, dark place and use within one year.

Table 2

Processing Time for Preserving Peaches in a Boiling Water-bath Canner

Product	Style of Pack	Jar Size	Processing Time (minutes) and Altitude 0 – 2,000 feet	2,001 – 4,000 feet	4,001 – 6,000 feet
Peaches halved or sliced	Hot	Pint	20	25	30
		Quart	25	30	35
Peaches halved or sliced	Raw	Pint	25	30	35
		Quart	30	35	40