

## Let's Preserve Fruit Pie Fillings

### General

The following fruit fillings are excellent and safe products. Each canned quart makes one 8-inch to 9-inch pie. Fillings may be used as toppings on dessert or pastries. Clear Jel is a starch modified to produce excellent sauce consistency even after fillings are canned and baked. Other available household starches break down, causing a runny sauce consistency when used in these pie fillings. Clear Jel is increasingly available among canning and freezing supplies in some stores. If you cannot find it, ask your county Extension home economist about its availability in your region.

Because the variety of fruit may alter the flavor of the fruit pie, you should first make a single quart, make a pie with it, and serve. Then adjust the sugar and spices in the recipe to suit your personal preferences. The amount of lemon juice should not be altered, because it aids in controlling the safety and storage stability of the fillings.

When using frozen cherries and blueberries, select unsweetened fruit. If sugar has been added, rinse it off while fruit is frozen. Collect, measure, and use juice from thawing fruit to partially replace the water specified in the recipe and only 1/4 cup Clear Jel per quart, or 1-3/4 cups for 7 quarts.

### Apple pie filling

Ingredient	Quantities of ingredients needed for	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh sliced apples (blanched)	3-1/2 cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	3/4 cup + 2 tbsp	5-1/2 cups
Clear Jel	1/4 cup	1-1/2 cups
Cinnamon	1/2 tsp	1 tbsp
Cold water	1/2 cup	2-1/2 cups
Apple juice	3/4 cup	5 cups
Bottled lemon juice	2 tbsp	3/4 cup
Nutmeg (optional)	1/8 tsp	1 tsp
Yellow food coloring (optional)	1 drop	7 drops

**Quality.** Use firm, crisp apples. Stayman, Golden Delicious, Rome, and other varieties of similar quality are suitable. If apples lack tartness, use an additional 1/4 cup of lemon juice for each 6 quarts of slices.

**Procedure for preparing apple filling.** Wash, peel, and core apples. Prepare slices 1/2 inch wide and place in water containing 1 teaspoon of ascorbic acid crystals or six 500-mg vitamin C tablets in 1 gallon of water, to prevent browning.

Place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch 1 minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain, but keep blanched apples in a covered pot so they will stay warm while other batches of apples are being blanched. Combine sugar, Clear Jel, cinnamon, and nutmeg in a large kettle with water, apple juice, and food coloring. Cook on medium-high heat, stirring until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil sauce 1 minute, stirring constantly. Fold in apple slices, immediately fill jars with mixture, and process without delay.

**Blueberry pie filling**

Ingredient	Quantities of ingredients needed for	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh blueberries	3-1/2 cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	3/4 cup + 2 tbsp	6 cups
Clear Jel	1/4 cup + 1 tbsp	2-1/4 cups
Cold water	1 cup	7 cups
Bottled lemon juice	3-1/2 tsp	1/2 cup
Blue food coloring (optional)	3 drops	20 drops
Red food coloring (optional)	1 drop	7 drops

**Quality.** Select sweet, very ripe but firm, deep blue fruit.

**Procedure for preparing blueberry filling.** Wash and drain blueberries. For fresh fruit, place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon boiling water. Boil each batch 1 minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain, but keep heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine sugar and Clear Jel in a large kettle. Stir. Add water and, if desired, food coloring. Cook on medium-high heat, stirring until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil 1 minute, stirring constantly. Fold in drained berries, fill jars immediately with mixture, leaving 1-inch headspace, and process without delay.

### Cherry pie filling

Ingredient	Quantities of ingredients needed for	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh sour cherries	3-1/3 cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	1 cup	7 cups
Clear Jel	1/4 cup + 1 tbsp	1-3/4 cups
Cold water	1-1/3 cups	9-1/3 cups
Bottled lemon juice	1 tbsp + 1 tsp	1/2 cup
Cinnamon (optional)	1/8 tsp	1 tsp
Almond extract (optional)	1/4 tsp	2 tsp
Red food coloring (optional)	6 drops	1/4 tsp

**Quality.** Select very ripe, firm, tart cherries.

**Procedure for preparing cherry filling.** Rinse and pit cherries, and hold in cold water. To prevent stem end browning, hold pitted cherries in water containing 1 teaspoon of ascorbic acid crystals or six 500-mg vitamin C tablets in 1 gallon of water. For fresh fruit, place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon boiling water. Boil each batch 1 minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain, but keep heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine sugar, Clear Jel, and cinnamon, if desired, in a large saucepan. Add water, food coloring, and almond extract, if desired. Stir mixture and cook over medium-high heat until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil 1 minute, stirring constantly. Fold in drained cherries, fill jars immediately with mixture, leaving 1-inch headspace, and process without delay.

### Peach pie filling

Ingredient	Quantities of ingredients needed for	
	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh sliced peaches	3-1/2 cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	1 cup	7 cups
Clear Jel	1/4 cup + 1 tbsp	2 cups + 3 tbsp
Cold water	3/4 cup	5-1/4 cups
Cinnamon (optional)	1/8 tsp	1 tsp
Almond extract (optional)	1/8 tsp	1 tsp
Bottled lemon juice	1/4 cup	1-3/4 cups

**Quality.** Select ripe but firm peaches. Red Haven, Redskin, Sun High, and other varieties of similar quality are suitable.

**Procedure for preparing peach filling.** Peel peaches. To loosen skins, submerge peaches in boiling water for 30–60 seconds, and then place in cold water for 20 seconds. Slip off skins and prepare slices 1/2 inch wide. Place slices in water containing 1 teaspoon of ascorbic acid crystals or six 500-mg vitamin C tablets in 1 gallon of water to prevent browning. For fresh fruit, place 6 cups at a time in 1 gallon boiling water. Boil each batch 1 minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain, but keep heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine sugar, Clear Jel, and cinnamon or almond extract in a large kettle of water. Cook on medium-high heat and stir until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil sauce 1 minute more, stirring constantly. Fold in peach slices and continue to heat for 3 minutes, then fill jars with mixture leaving 1-inch headspace and process without delay.

**Procedure for  
canning all  
fillings**

Wash jars. Prepare lids according to manufacturer's instructions. Fill fruit mixtures into jars, leaving 1-inch headspace. Wipe sealing surface of jars with a clean, damp paper towel. Add lids, tighten screw bands, and process.

*To process in a boiling water canner*, preheat canner half filled with water to 180°F. Load sealed jars into the canner rack and lower with handles; or load one jar at a time with a jar lifter onto rack in canner. Add water if needed to a level of 1 inch above jars and cover. When water boils vigorously, lower heat to maintain a gentle boil and process for recommended time.

**Process times**

**Recommended process times for fruit pie fillings in a boiling water canner**

Fruit filling	Jar size	Process time at altitude of		
		0–1000 feet (in minutes)	1001–3000 feet (in minutes)	3001–6000 feet (in minutes)
Apple	Pints or quarts	25	30	35
Blueberry		30	35	40
Cherry		30	35	40
Peach		30	35	40

After processing is completed, remove jars from canner with a jar lifter and place them on a towel or rack. Do not retighten screw bands. Air-cool jars 12 to 24 hours. Remove screw bands and check lid seals. A jar is sealed if the center of its lid is indented or concave. Wash, dry, label, and store sealed jars in a clean, cool, dark place. If a jar is unsealed, examine and replace it if defective; use a new lid and reprocess as before. Wash screw bands and store separately. Fillings are best if used within 1 year and safe as long as lids remain vacuum sealed.

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