# Pears

## Recommended Varieties

Bartlett, Bosc, Anjou, and Comice are best. Keiffer is acceptable. Seckel pears are suitable for pickled and spiced products.

## Quantity

A bushel weighs 50 pounds and yields 16 to 25 quarts. An average of 17½ pounds makes a 7-quart canner load; an average of 11 pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints; 2½ pounds make a quart. An average of 1½ pounds of pears makes 1 pint of frozen pears.

## Quality

Pears are harvested before they are ready to eat. Unless refrigerated, they will ripen within 7 to 14 days. For best quality, sort pears often and preserve them as they ripen to an ideal maturity for eating fresh. Raw-packed pears are poor-quality products.

## Preparation

Wash and peel pears. Cut lengthwise in halves and remove core. A melon baller or metal measuring spoon is suitable for coring pears. To prevent discoloration, keep peeled fruit in water with vitamin C made by mixing 1 teaspoon of crystalline ascorbic acid or six 500-milligram vitamin C tablets in 1 gallon of water.

## Freezing Procedure

Don't freeze more than 2 pounds of food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day.

### To Make a Syrup Pack

Heat pears in boiling syrup made of 2¾ cups sugar in 4 cups water for 1 to 2 minutes, depending on the size of pieces. For a better product, add ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid or three 500-milligram vitamin C tablets that are finely crushed. Drain pears and cool. Pack pears into freezer containers and add 1 cup of syrup per quart of prepared fruit. Allow 1 inch of headspace for quart containers. Place a small piece of crumpled water-resistant paper on top to hold fruit down. Seal and freeze.

### To Make a Dry Sugar Pack

Mix ½ cup of dry sugar per quart of prepared fruit.

## Canning Procedure

Wash jars. Prepare lids according to manufacturer's instructions. Fruit in jars may be covered with your choice of water, apple or white grape juice, or, more commonly, a very light, light, or medium syrup. Asian pears must be acidified before canning to make them safe from the microorganism that causes botulism. Add 1 tablespoon bottled lemon juice per pint jar or 2 tablespoons per quart jar before adding the Asian pears and canning liquid.

### To Make a Very Light Syrup

For a canner load of quarts, mix 1¼ cups of sugar in 10½ cups of water and heat to dissolve; mix and dissolve 2¼ cups of sugar in 9 cups of water to make a light syrup; or mix 3¾ cups of sugar in 8¼ cups of water to make a medium syrup.

**FLOATING FRUIT:** To avoid floating fruit start with firm, ripe fruit. Heat fruit before packing and use a light to medium syrup. Pack fruit as closely as possible without crushing. Follow directions for processing times.

### To Make a Hot Pack

Place drained fruit in boiling syrup, juice, or water and boil for 5 minutes. Fill clean jars with hot fruit and cooking liquid, leaving ½ inch of headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe sealing edge of jars with a clean, damp paper towel. Add lids and tighten screw bands. You may process jars in a boiling water or pressure canner.

### 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 1 inch above jars and cover. When water boils vigorously, lower heat to maintain a gentle boil and process for recommended time. After processing is complete, set canner off heat and remove canner lid. Wait 5 minutes before removing jars. Finish cooling as for pressure canning.

### To Process in a Pressure Canner

Place jar rack, 2 inches of water, and sealed jars in canner. Fasten lid and heat canner on high setting. After steam exhausts for 10 minutes, add weighted gauge or close petcock to pressurize the canner. Start timing the recommended process when the desired pressure is reached. Regulate heat to maintain a uniform pressure. When processing is complete, remove canner from heat. Air-cool canner until it is fully depressurized. Then slowly remove weighted gauge or open petcock, wait 10 more minutes, and unfasten and carefully remove canner lid.

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

**Table 1. Recommended hot pack process times for pears in a boiling water canner.**

| | Process time (in minutes) at altitudes of | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jar size | 0–1,000 ft | 1,001–3,000 ft | 3,001–6,000 ft | Above 6,000 ft |
| Pints | 20 | 25 | 30 | 35 |
| Quarts | 25 | 30 | 35 | 40 |

**Table 2. Recommended process times for pears in a pressure canner at designated altitudes.**

| | | Process time (in minutes) at altitudes of | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Dial gauge canner | | | | Weighted gauge canner | |
| Jar size | Process time (min) | 0–2,000 ft | 2,001–4,000 ft | 4,001–6,000 ft | 6,001–8,000 ft | 0–1,000 ft | Above 1,000 ft |
| Pints or quarts | 10 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 10 |

For additional information about food preservation, visit the Penn State Extension Home Food Preservation website at **extension.psu.edu/food/preservation**, or contact Penn State Extension in your county.

**Prepared by Luke LaBorde, associate professor of food science; Nancy Wiker, senior extension educator in Lancaster County; and Martha Zepp, extension project assistant.**

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