

## Bulletin #4045, Let's Preserve: Cranberries

---

 [extension.umaine.edu/publications/4045e](https://extension.umaine.edu/publications/4045e)



*Adapted by Extension Associate Professor*

*Kathleen Savoie, University of Maine Cooperative Extension.*

**For information about UMaine Extension programs and resources, visit [extension.umaine.edu](https://extension.umaine.edu).**

**Find more of our publications and books at [extensionpubs.umext.maine.edu](https://extensionpubs.umext.maine.edu).**

With Fall comes the arrival of local cranberries! As cranberries become available, it's a good idea to buy extra cranberries and freeze them. Fresh cranberries are available from October through December/early January, usually in 12-ounce bags (equivalent to 3 cups of whole berries).

### Freezing Cranberries

---

Cranberry marketers promote placing the plastic bags of cranberries you buy directly in the freezer and using them without thawing—just running cold water over them to rinse them before using. The preferred method is to sort and wash the berries before freezing to eliminate any stems, leaves and bruised or soft berries.

### Preparation

---

Choose firm, deep-red berries with glossy skins. Stem and sort. Wash and drain. A salad spinner is an excellent tool to use to spin off excess moisture that will otherwise cause the skins to toughen and the berries to stick together in the container. Pack cranberries into freezer grade containers, label with date, leave headspace or freeze them first on a tray and then pack them into containers as soon as they are frozen. Remove as much air as possible from the container.

## Storage

---

To extend the time frozen foods maintain good quality, package foods in material intended for freezing and keep the temperature of the freezer at 0°F or below. Cranberries should be used within 12 months.

## Canning Procedure

---

It is recommended that you read [Let's Preserve: Food Canning Basics](#) (Bulletin #4078) before starting. For safe, high-quality home-canned food, it's important that you follow these directions carefully. Altering these directions in any way can result in improperly canned food, which can be dangerous to consume.

Wash jars. Prepare lids according to the manufacturer's instructions. Fill hot cranberry products in jars. Wipe sealing edge of jars with a clean, damp paper towel. Add lids and tighten screw bands to fingertip tight. Process in a boiling water bath canner.

To process in a boiling water bath canner, fill canner halfway with water and preheat to 180 degrees F for raw packs. Load sealed jars onto 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 add canner cover. When water boils vigorously, lower heat to maintain a gentle boil and process jars for the time given in Table 1.

After processing is completed, remove jars from canner with a jar lifter and place on a towel or rack. Do not retighten screw bands. Air-cool jars for 12-24 hours. Remove screw bands and check lid seals. If the center of the lid is indented, wash, dry, label, and store jars in a clean, cool, dark place. If the lid is unsealed, examine and replace jar if defected, use new lids, and reprocess as before. Wash screw bands and store separately. Cranberry products are best if eaten within one year.

[How To Use and Preserve Maine Cranberries \(YouTube video\)](#)

## Process Times

---

Product	Style of Pack	Jar Size	Minutes of processing time at altitudes of		
			0 – 1,000 ft.	1,001 – 6000 ft.	Above 6,000 ft.
Cranberry Sauce	Hot	Pints or quarts	15	20	25
Spicy Cranberry Salsa	Hot	Half-pints or pints	10	15	20

Product	Style of Pack	Jar Size	Minutes of processing time at altitudes of		
			0 – 1,000 ft.	1,001 – 6000 ft.	Above 6,000 ft.
Cranberry Orange Chutney	Hot	Half-pints	10	15	20
Cranberry Conserve	Hot	Half-pints	10	15	20

**Table 1. Recommended Processing Times in a Boiling Water Canner**

---

## Cranberry Sauce

### Ingredients

*4 cups cranberries*  
*1 cup water*  
*2 cups sugar*

### Procedure

Wash cranberries. Cook berries in water until soft. Press through a fine sieve. Add sugar and boil 3 minutes. Pour boiling hot sauce into hot jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a damp, clean paper towel. Adjust two-piece metal canning lids. Process jars as described in Table 1. Let cool, undisturbed, 12-24 hours and check for seals.

**Yeild:** About 2 pint jars or 1 quart jar

---

## Spicy Cranberry Salsa

### Ingredients

*6 cups chopped red onion*  
*4 finely chopped large Serrano peppers\**  
*1 1/2 cups water*  
*1 1/2 cups cider vinegar (5% acidity)*  
*1 tablespoon canning salt*  
*1 1/3 cups sugar*  
*6 tablespoons honey*  
*12 cups (2 3/4 pounds) rinsed, whole cranberries*

**\*CAUTION:** Wear plastic or rubber gloves and do not touch your face while handling or cutting hot peppers. If you do not wear gloves, wash hands thoroughly with soap and water before touching your face or eyes.

### **Procedure**

Combine all ingredients except cranberries in a large Dutch oven. Bring to a boil over high heat; reduce heat slightly and boil gently for 5 minutes. Add cranberries, reduce heat slightly and boil mixture for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally to prevent scorching. Fill the hot mixture into clean, hot pint jars, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Leave saucepot over low heat while filling jars. Remove air bubbles. Adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a damp, clean paper towel. Apply two-piece metal canning lids. Process in a boiling water canner according to the recommendations in Table 1. Let cool, undisturbed, 12-24 hours and check for seals.

**Yeild:** About 6 pint jars

---

## **Cranberry Orange Chutney**

---

### **Ingredients**

*24 ounces fresh whole cranberries*  
*2 cups chopped white onion*  
*2 cups golden raisins*  
*1 1/2 cups white sugar*  
*1 1/2 cups packed brown sugar*  
*2 cups white distilled vinegar (5% acidity)*  
*1 cup orange juice*  
*4 teaspoons peeled, grated fresh ginger*  
*3 sticks cinnamon*

### **Procedure**

Rinse cranberries well. Combine all ingredients in a large Dutch oven. Bring to a boil over high heat; reduce heat and simmer gently for 15 minutes or until cranberries are tender. Stir often to prevent burning. Remove cinnamon sticks. Fill the hot chutney into hot sterilized half-pint jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a damp, clean paper towel. Adjust lids. Process in a boiling water canner according to the recommendations in Table 1. Let cool, undisturbed, 12-24 hours and check for seals.

**Yeild:** About 8 half-pint jars

---

## **Cranberry Conserve**

---

## **Ingredients**

*1 unpeeled, finely chopped orange*

*1 cup water*

*3 cups sugar*

*4 cups cranberries, washed*

*1/2 cup seedless raisins*

*1/2 cup chopped nuts*

## **Procedure**

Combine orange and water; cook rapidly until peel is tender (about 20 minutes). Add cranberries, sugar, and raisins. Bring slowly to boiling, stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves. Cook rapidly, almost to the jelling point of 220°F (about 8 minutes). As mixture thickens, stir frequently to prevent sticking. Add nuts during the last 5 minutes of cooking. Pour hot conserve into hot jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Wipe rims of jars with a damp, clean paper towel. Adjust lids. Process in a boiling water canner according to the recommendations in Table 1. Let cool, undisturbed, 12-24 hours and check for seals.

**Yeild:** About 4 half-pint jars

---

Adapted with permission from “Using and Preserving Cranberries,” Elaine M. D’Sa, Ph.D, [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#).

---

*Information in this publication is provided purely for educational purposes. No responsibility is assumed for any problems associated with the use of products or services mentioned. No endorsement of products or companies is intended, nor is criticism of unnamed products or companies implied.*

© 2014

**Call 800.287.0274 or TDD 800.287.8957 (in Maine), or 207.581.3188, for information on publications and program offerings from University of Maine Cooperative Extension, or visit [extension.umaine.edu](http://extension.umaine.edu).**

*The University of Maine does not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, including transgender status and gender expression, national origin, citizenship status, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status in employment, education, and all other programs and activities. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies: Director, Office of Equal Opportunity, 101 North Stevens Hall, 207.581.1226.*