

Strawberries

Recommended Varieties

Allstar, Cabot, Chandler, Earliglow, and Jewel and are usually excellent-quality berries for freezing. Most other varieties are suitable, especially for making jams and eating fresh. Locally grown strawberries are best for making jams and freezing.

Quantity

An average of 1 pound makes 1 pint of frozen berries. One pound of fresh berries is approximately 1 quart of fresh berries.

Quality

Freeze strawberries or preserve them on the day they are harvested for best quality. They should be picked when they reach an ideal maturity for eating fresh. Select berries with fresh, sweet flavor; deep, uniform color; and firm texture. Smaller, misshapen, and seedy berries may be used to make jam and jelly.

Berry Preparation

Start with clean countertops and utensils. Wash hands with soap and warm water.

All produce should be properly washed before it is consumed or preserved. Remove caps and rinse strawberries under cold running water in a colander. Toss or agitate the fruit while rinsing. Do not soak produce in water.

Freezing Procedure

Do not freeze more than 2 pounds of food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day. Whole berries may be packed in syrup or dry sugar or frozen without sugar. Sliced or crushed berries should be made with a dry sugar pack.

- To make a syrup pack: Dissolve 3 cups of sugar in 4 cups of water. Add 1 cup of this syrup per quart of prepared fruit.
- To make a dry sugar pack: Mix $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of dry sugar per quart of prepared fruit. Stir until most of the sugar is dissolved or let stand for 15 minutes.
- To make a dry pack: Omit sugar.
- To package: Fill plastic freezer containers, freezer jars, or zip-type freezer bags; remove air; seal; and label. Sealed bags may be frozen flat on a tray and stacked when completely frozen. If using rigid containers, allow $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (13 mm) of headspace for dry pack and 1 inch (2.5 cm) of headspace for syrup pack berries in quarts.



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- Whole berries can also be individually frozen on a tray until frozen solid, then packed into containers. These berries may be used partially thawed as a snack.

Strawberry Jam

Strawberry jam can be made from several commercial pectin products. To make jam with added pectin, follow the instructions of the pectin manufacturer to ensure obtaining a desirable mixture. Pectin products are available for making jam and jelly containing sugar (traditional style), with less sugar, and no sugar. Be sure to follow manufacturer's directions as these products are not interchangeable.

Uncooked Strawberry Jam from Fresh Fruit*

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups crushed strawberries (about 1 quart fresh)
- 4 cups sugar
- 2 Tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 pouch liquid pectin (3 ounces)

Yields approx. 4 half-pint jars

PROCEDURE. Measure 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups of crushed strawberries. Place in an extra-large bowl. Add sugar, mix well, and let stand for 10 minutes. Measure lemon juice into a small bowl. Add liquid pectin and stir well. Stir into fruit and continue stirring for 3 minutes. Pour jam into freezer containers or canning jars, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (13 mm) of headspace. Cover containers. Let stand at room temperature until set (up to 24 hours). Freeze for up to 1 year or refrigerate for up to 3 weeks.

*Source: Address, Elizabeth L., and Judy A. Harrison, *So Easy to Preserve*, 6th ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, 2014).



Strawberry-Rhubarb Jelly

- 1½ lbs. rhubarb
- 1½ quarts strawberries
- Jelly bag or cheesecloth
- ½ teaspoon butter
- 6 cups sugar
- 6 ounces (2 pouches) liquid pectin

Yields 7 half-pints

PROCEDURE. Wash and cut rhubarb into 1-inch (2.5-cm) pieces and blend or grind. Wash, stem, and crush strawberries, one layer at a time, in a saucepan. Place both fruits in a jelly bag or double layer of cheesecloth and gently squeeze out juice. Put 3½ cups of juice into a large saucepan. Add butter and sugar, thoroughly mixing into juice. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring constantly. Immediately stir in liquid pectin. Bring to a full, rolling boil and boil hard for 1 minute.

Quickly skim off any foam and immediately place in sterile jars, leaving ¼ inch (6 mm) of headspace. Wipe sealing edge of jars with a clean, damp paper towel. Add lids, tighten screw bands, and process jars in boiling water or atmospheric steam canner.

To Process in a Boiling Water Canner

Preheat canner filled halfway with water to 180°F (82°C). 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 1 inch above jars and cover. When water boils vigorously, lower heat to maintain a gentle boil and process jars of the product for the time given in the recipe. After processing is complete, set canner off heat and remove canner lid. Wait 5 minutes before removing jars from the canner with a jar lifter, being careful not to tilt the jars, to a wooden cutting board or towel-lined surface.

To Process in an Atmospheric Steam Canner

Preheat the base of a steam canner that has been filled with the amount of water designated in the instruction manual that

comes with the canner—usually about 2 quarts. Set the rack in the base of the canner. Heat water in the base of the canner to 180°F (82°C). As each jar is filled, place it on canner rack, keeping the cover or lid on the atmospheric steam canner as you work. When all jars are in the canner, bring the canner to a boil over medium to medium-high heat until a steady column of steam at least 6 inches long escapes from the vent hole(s). Processing time begins when there is a steady column of steam 6 to 8 inches long. Slowly adjust the heat to maintain a steady column of steam throughout the processing time. When processing is complete, turn off heat. Allow the jars to sit in the covered canner for 5 minutes before removing them from the canner with a jar lifter, being careful not to tilt the jars, to a wooden cutting board or towel-lined surface.

After Processing

Do not retighten screw bands. Cool jars for 12 to 24 hours and remove screw bands. Check lid seals. If the center of the lid is indented, the jar is sealed. Wash, dry, label, and store sealed jars in a clean, cool, dark place. If lid is unsealed, examine and replace jar if defective, use new lid, and reprocess as before or store in the refrigerator. Wash screw bands and store separately. Canned goods are best if consumed within a year and are safe as long as lids remain vacuum sealed.



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Table 1. Recommended process times for strawberry-rhubarb jelly in a boiling water or atmospheric steam canner.

Jar size	Process times (in minutes) at altitudes of		
	0–1,000 ft.	1,001–2,000 ft.	Above 2,000 ft.
Half-pints or pints*	5	10	15

*Use sterile jars. Place clean, empty jars in a boiling water canner, cover jars with water, and boil for 10 minutes.

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.

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Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences research and extension programs are funded in part by Pennsylvania counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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