

# CANNING & FREEZING BERRIES, CHERRIES & RHUBARB

Read our canning and freezing basics. Wash fresh fruits with cool, clear tap water but do not soak them; drain. Follow preparation directions, below. If you choose to can or freeze fruits with syrup, select the syrup that best suits the fruit and your taste. Generally, heavier syrups are used with sour fruits, and lighter syrups are recommended for mild fruits. To prepare a syrup, place the following recommended amounts of sugar and water in a large saucepan (see below). Heat until the sugar dissolves. Skim off foam, if necessary. Use the syrup hot for canned fruits and chilled for frozen fruits. Allow 1/2 to 2/3 cup syrup for each 2 cups fruit.

Food	Preparation	Boiling-Water Canning, Raw Pack	Boiling-Water Canning, Hot Pack	Freezing
<b>Berries</b>	Allow 1 to 3 pounds per quart. Can or freeze blackberries, blueberries, currants, elderberries, gooseberries, huckle-berries, loganberries, and mulberries. Freeze (do not can) boysenberries, raspberries, and strawberries.	Fill jars with blackberries, loganberries, or mulberries. Shake down gently. Add boiling syrup, leaving a 1/2-inch headspace.* Process pints for 15 minutes and quarts for 20 minutes.	Simmer blueberries, currants, elderberries, gooseberries, and huckleberries in water for 30 seconds; drain. Fill jars with berries and hot syrup, leaving a 1/2-inch headspace.* Process pints and quarts for 15 minutes.	Slice strawberries, if desired. Use a syrup, sugar, or unsweetened pack, leaving the recommended headspace.*
<b>Cherries</b>	Allow 2 to 3 pounds per quart. If desired, treat with ascorbic acid color keeper solution; drain. If unpitted, prick skin on opposite sides to prevent splitting.	Fill jars, shaking down gently. Add boiling syrup or water, leaving a 1/2-inch headspace.* Process pints and quarts for 25 minutes.	Add cherries to hot syrup; bring to boiling. Fill jars with fruit and syrup, leaving a 1/2-inch headspace.* Process pints for 15 minutes and quarts for 20 minutes.	Use a syrup, sugar, or unsweetened pack, leaving the recommended headspace.*
<b>Rhubarb</b>	Allow 1½ pounds per quart. Discard leaves and woody ends. Cut into 1/2- to 1-inch pieces. Freeze for best quality.	Not recommended.	In a saucepan sprinkle 1/2 cup sugar over each 4 cups fruit; mix well. Let stand until juice appears. Bring slowly to boiling, stirring gently. Fill jars with hot fruit and juice, leaving a 1/2-inch headspace.* Process pints and quarts for 15 minutes.	Blanch for 1 minute; cool quickly and drain. Use a syrup or unsweetened pack or use a sugar pack of 1/2 cup sugar to each 3 cups fruit, leaving the recommended headspace.*

**Unsweetened or Dry Pack:** Do not add sugar or liquid to the fruit; simply pack in a container. This is best for small whole fruits, such as berries.

**Water Pack:** Cover the fruit with water or unsweetened fruit juice. Do not use glass jars. Maintain the recommended headspace.

**Sugar Pack:** Place a small amount of fruit in the container and sprinkle lightly with sugar; repeat layering. Cover and let stand about 15 minutes or until juicy; seal.

**Syrup Pack:** Cover fruit with a syrup of sugar and water. For a very thin syrup, use 1 cup sugar and 4 cups water to yield about 4 cups syrup. For a thin syrup, use 1 2/3 cups sugar and 4 cups water to yield about 4 1/4 cups syrup. For a medium syrup, use 2 2/3 cups sugar and 4 cups water to yield about 4 2/3 cups syrup. For a heavy syrup, use 4 cups sugar and 4 cups water to yield about 5 3/4 cups syrup.

## \*CHECKING HEADSPACE

The space between the top of the food and the container rim is the headspace. Leaving the correct amount is essential.

**CANNING:** Headspace allows a vacuum to form and the jar to seal. Use a ruler to make sure you have the amount specified in each recipe.

**FREEZING:** Headspace provides room for food to expand as it freezes. When using unsweetened (dry) pack, leave a 1/2-inch headspace unless otherwise directed. When using water, sugar, or syrup pack in freezer containers with wide tops, leave a 1/2-inch headspace for pints and a 1-inch headspace for quarts. For narrow-top containers, don't fill above the "shoulder."