Preserving Foods at Home Without Salt or Sugar

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This fact sheet presents general guidelines for preserving food without adding salt or sugar and includes recipes for making jams and jellies without added sugar. You will need reliable canning and freezing directions to use along with this fact sheet.

Liquid sodium saccharin is the most commonly used artificial sweetener in place of sugar in home food preservation. A sodium-free saccharin (calcium saccharin) is available for people on low-sodium diets.

These recipes are based on a liquid sweetener in which 1/8 teaspoon of liquid sweetener equals the sweetness of one teaspoon of sugar, or 2 tablespoons of sweetener equals one cup of sugar. Check the label on the sweetener you use for the calorie value and the amount that equals the sweetness of 1 teaspoon of sugar. Adjust amounts accordingly.

Food Preservation Without Added Salt

When canning and freezing foods at home, follow usual recipes and reliable canning and freezing directions, but do not add salt. You can improve the flavor of saltless vegetables. One-half to one tablespoon of lemon or orange juice and a tiny piece of peel will give flavor to each pint of carrots, beets, or asparagus. Green beans and peas get a lift from a bit of onion, nutmeg, or curry powder. Any green vegetable is improved with a spoonful of finely chopped celery and a sliver of pimiento in each jar.

In making pickles or cucumbers and smoked foods, always add the amount of salt specified in the recipe. Salt is essential for safe preservation. Consult with your physician on whether foods should be excluded from your diet altogether or eaten only in small amounts.

Canning Without Added Sugar

Follow reliable directions for canning foods, taking special care to follow methods that prevent darkening of light-colored fruits. Add the fruit to jars and cover with water or fruit juice instead of sugar syrup.

If a sweet flavor is desired, a liquid artificial sweetener may be added to the cooking liquid. Always try a small batch first to find the best method and the desired sweetness. Many people prefer the flavor when the sweetener is added at serving time. Some feel that heating processing tends to change the flavor of the sweetener.

Freezing Without Added Sugar

Method 1. Fruit may be frozen whole on trays, then packed into freezing containers. This works best for fruits, such as berries, that do not darken when exposed to air. These may be served partially thawed, giving some juice, but with some fruit freshness still remaining in the fruit itself.

Method 2. Fruit may be frozen in water, with or without artificial sweetener. The darkening of light-colored fruits, (apples, pears, peaches, figs, prunes, and sweet pitted cherries) is retarded by adding ascorbic acid (vitamin C). Dissolve ascorbic acid in two to three teaspoons of cold water just before using, then add in cool water. Allow 1/2 teaspoon of crystal or powdered ascorbic acid to one quart of water.

Artificial sweetener may be added to the water in an amount equal in sweetness to the sugar-sweetened syrup. Make a small batch to taste for acceptability before freezing large quantities.

Jams and Jellies Without Added Sugar

Jams and jellies can be made with or without pectin or gelatin. Diet jams and jellies with added pectin or gelatin must be refrigerated or frozen. If they will be stored longer than three weeks, it is best to freeze them. Those on diabetic diets need to be aware that the gums and syrups in the recipes below contain the carbohydrates that is naturally present in the fruit. The approximate Calorie count per tablespoon is given for each recipe.

Jams

To prepare fruit for jam, sort and wash fully ripe fruit. Remove stems, caps, and pits. Peel fruits such as peaches and apricots.

Jams contain fruit pulp or pieces which tend to stick to the kettle during cooking. Stir constantly to prevent scorching.

The cooking time for the pectin recipes is one minute at a full boil. The full boil is reached when bubbles form over the entire surface of the mixture.

Strawberry Jam with Gelatin

(Makes 1 pint)

1 1/2 teaspoons unflavored gelatin
1 1/2 tablespoons cold water
3 cups strawberries, crushed
1 tablespoon liquid sweetener
1/4 teaspoon ascorbic acid powder
Red food coloring as desired

Soften gelatin in cold water. Combine strawberries and sweetener in a saucepan. Place over high heat and stir constantly until mixture comes to a boil. Re-
move from heat; add softened gelatin; return to heat
and continue to cook for 1 minute. Remove from
heat; blend in ascorbic acid powder and food coloring.
Ladle into clean jars, leaving 1/2-inch head space.
Cover. Store in freezer or refrigerator.

1 tablespoon equals 5 calories.

Peach Jam with Pectin
(Makes 1 pint)

4 cups peeled peaches
3 to 4 teaspoons liquid artificial sweetener
1 tablespoon unsweetened lemon juice
1/2 teaspoon ascorbic acid
1 1/2-ounce package powdered fruit pectin

Crush peaches in saucepan. Stir in sweetener, fruit
pectin, lemon juice, and ascorbic acid. Bring to a boil:
boil 1 minute. Remove from heat. Continue to stir 2
minutes. Pour into freezer containers, leaving 1/2-inch
head space. Cover. Store in freezer or refrigerator.

1 tablespoon equals 10 calories.

Berry Jam with Pectin
(Makes 2 cups)

1 quart raspberries, strawberries, or blackberries
3 to 4 teaspoons liquid artificial sweetener
1 1/2-ounce package powdered fruit pectin
1 tablespoon lemon juice

Crush berries in saucepan. Stir in artificial sweet-
ener, powdered fruit pectin, and lemon juice. Bring
to a boil; boil 1 minute. Remove from heat. Continue
to stir 2 minutes. Pour into freezer containers, leaving 1/2-inch
head space. Cover. Store in freezer or refrigerator.

1 tablespoon equals 5 calories.

Jellies

When making jelly, the right combination of sugars,
pectin, and heat are necessary. Artificial sweeteners can
be substituted for the taste of sugar, but it will not make
a jelly. Low-calorie jellies can be purchased as-
jelled by a special pectin that is generally not available
in the grocery store. Adding unflavored gelatin will
ensure a jelly in the absence of sugar. Two such jellies follow and other juices may be substituted with small
adjustments.

Follow instructions given in regular jelly-making
publications or use those that accompany pectin packages
for recommendations on extracting and clarifying the
jams.

Apple Jelly with Gelatin
(Makes 2 pints)

2 tablespoons unflavored gelatin powder
1 quart unsweetened apple juice
2 tablespoons unsweetened lemon juice
2 tablespoons liquid sweetener
Food coloring, if desired

In a saucepan soften gelatin in apple juice and lemon
juice. Bring to a rolling boil, dissolving gelatin; boil 1
minute. Remove from heat. Stir in liquid sweetener
and food coloring. Pour into hot sterilized jars. Seal.
Store in refrigerator.

1 tablespoon equals 8 calories.

Grape Jelly with Gelatin
(Makes 1 1/2 pints)

2 tablespoons unflavored gelatin powder
1 bottle (1 pt., 8 oz.) unsweetened grape juice
2 tablespoons unsweetened lemon juice
2 tablespoons liquid sweetener

In a saucepan, soften gelatin in grape juice and
lemon juice. Bring to a rolling boil, dissolving gelatin; boil 1
minute. Remove from heat. Stir in liquid sweetener
and food coloring. Pour into hot sterilized jars. Seal.
Store in refrigerator.

1 tablespoon equals 11 calories.