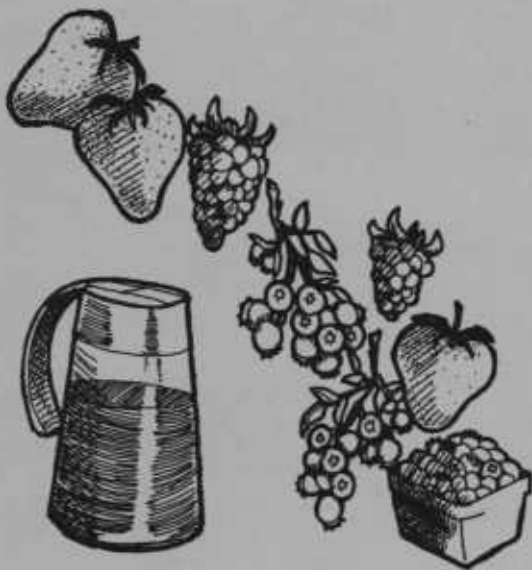


# Making Berry Syrups at Home



You can make berry syrups in your home by following the simple instructions in this circular. Table-ripe fruit, sugar, water, and paper tissues are the only ingredients required. The syrups can be stored indefinitely on the kitchen shelf after processing.

Your family will enjoy a variety of syrups on pancakes and ice cream. Use the syrups for flavoring fruit punches and icings, too. Plan to set aside a few jars each time you make syrup to give as gifts.

## Selecting the Fruit

Fully ripe strawberries, blackberries, blueberries, or raspberries can be used. Interesting flavors are possible by combining juice from several fruits. Be sure that at least half of the juice is from a tart berry.

Instructions are included for making a tasty grape syrup using commercially canned or frozen juice.

## Extracting the Juice

An easy and fast way to prepare the juice is by mixing crushed prepared fruit with cellulose pulp made from white facial tissue or an equivalent amount of similarly textured toilet tissue. This mixture is heated to the boiling point and drained through a jelly bag. The cellulose pulp acts like a chemical filter to help the jelly bag from clogging and to clarify the juice.

## Making the Cellulose Pulp

These directions are used with the permission of the Mutual Citrus Company which developed the original method:

2 quarts boiling water	10 unscented white facial tissues or toilet tissues
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Place the tissues in the boiling water. Allow to stand one minute. Beat the tissues with a fork until broken into small pieces. Pour the cellulose pulp into a strainer. Shake to remove excess water. Allow to drain while the fruit is prepared. Do *not* press out excess water.

## Preparing the Fruit

For every 2 cups of juice, use about 3 cups of fruit. Avoid underripe fruits. Their high content of natural pectin may cause the syrup to jell.

For every 3 cups of crushed fruit, add 1 cup of cellulose pulp. Stir well. Heat just to boiling, stirring constantly to prevent sticking. If the fruit

remains firm, simmer 1 or 2 minutes more. Avoid overcooking because it destroys the fresh fruit flavor.

## Draining the Heated Fruit

Place a jelly bag or several thicknesses of cheesecloth in a large collander or strainer. Set the collander or strainer in a large bowl so that the juice can drain from the bag through the strainer into the bowl beneath. Pour the heated berry mixture into the jelly bag and allow to drain until cool enough to handle. Extract the rest of the juice from the jelly bag by twisting the bag and pressing against the side of the strainer. Discard the dry pulp. You are now ready to make syrup or jelly.

## Making a Test Batch

It is difficult to give foolproof directions for making fruit syrups at home. The pectin, acid, and sugar content of fruit varies with the kind of fruit and the season. These directions will give satisfactory results under most conditions.

We recommend making a test batch and allowing it to cool thoroughly before testing for thickness desired. If the syrup is too thick, allow the rest of the prepared juice to stand in the refrigerator overnight. Some of the pectin will be destroyed and the syrup made from this juice will be thinner. If too thin, add corn syrup to the recipe. (See variations.)

Do not increase the amount of sugar or boil longer to concentrate the syrup. The syrup may jell if the concentration of the sugar is increased by either of these methods.

## Making Berry Syrups

### Basic recipe

1½ cups of prepared berry juice    1¾ cups sugar

Combine the juice and sugar in a large, heavy kettle. Bring to a rolling boil and boil for one

minute after the mixture comes to a boil that cannot be stirred down. Remove from heat and skim off any foam. Pour into clean, hot half-pint or pint canning jars. Adjust the lids according to manufacturer's directions. Place in hot water bath. Be sure the level of water covers the top of the jars by at least one inch. Bring to a boil and process for 10 minutes. Remove from water bath and cool. Check to see that the jars are sealed. Label and store on a cool, dark shelf.

### Variations

The basic recipe makes a fairly tart and thin syrup. If a more tart syrup is desired, add one tablespoon lemon juice to the basic recipe. For a thicker (but not sweeter) syrup use 1½ cups sugar and ¼ cup white corn syrup in place of the 1¾ cups sugar called for in the recipe. If desired, both the lemon juice and corn syrup may be used.

For grape syrups use unsweetened canned grape juice or frozen concentrated grape juice (diluted 2 parts water to 1 part concentrated frozen juice). Use these proportions:

1¼ cups grape juice	¼ cup corn syrup
1½ cups sugar	1 tablespoon lemon juice

Follow directions outlined for the berry juices.

## Storing Syrups

Unlike jellies, syrups must be processed before storing at room temperature because their sugar content is not high enough to act as a preservative. No refrigeration is needed until the seal is broken. After syrup is opened, store it in the refrigerator.

If freezer space is available, the syrup may be frozen instead of canned. Be sure to leave one inch of space between the lid and the syrup to allow room for expansion during freezing.

## Questions Frequently Asked

- Q. My syrup was too thin. What can I do about it?
- A. You may have added too much water during preparation of the fruit. Be sure to follow di-

rections for the cellulose pulp exactly. Try substituting corn syrup for part of the sugar to thicken your next batch.

Q. Can I use other fruits?

A. The basic recipe can be used for a variety of berries. Other tart fruits or small amounts of apple juice can be used. Such substitutions may affect texture. Be sure to try a small amount first and adjust the recipe if you choose to use other fruits.

Q. My syrup jelled. What can I do about it?

A. Oregon fruit is naturally high in pectin and acid. Adding substantial amounts of sugar will cause jelling if the syrup is concentrated by boiling longer than recommended. Time the boiling period very carefully.

Sometimes the syrups will jell on standing due to continued slow action of the natural pectins. The jell can be broken by vigorous stirring, or the jar can be placed in a pan of warm water and heated until the jell is dissolved.

Q. My syrup molded. Why?

A. Processing may not have been long enough to destroy mold spores or the jar may not have sealed. Perhaps you stored the opened jars on the cupboard shelf instead of in the refrigerator. Proper sealing and processing are essential for shelf storage.

Q. Can I use my own method of extracting juice?

A. Yes, but you may have to adjust the recipe. Other methods usually require more cooking time and result in a more concentrated, less flavorful product.

Q. Can these syrups be sealed in a tin can for gift items?

A. Yes, but it is best done by a custom cannery or other experienced personnel.

- Q. Should I store the syrups in my freezer?
- A. It is not necessary to store these syrups in the freezer if you process them in a water bath as recommended. However, if they do not seal, they should be frozen or refrigerated.
- Q. My syrups look faded after a while. Why and what can I do about it?
- A. Light makes many of the red pigments fade. Heat also affects the color. Keep syrups in a dark, cool place for best color and flavor.

Prepared by Extension nutrition specialists. Lois McGill, Oregon State University food technologist, headed the research in developing berry syrups.

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