

Processing Jams, Jellies and Sweet Preserves

The only method of sealing sweet preserves for long-term shelf storage that is recommended by the USDA as sure to prevent mold growth and spoilage is **BOILING WATER BATH** processing. Regardless of the method of sealing recommended in traditional or older recipes, this method should be used. The following procedure, with a 5 minute processing, also results in better color and texture.

Follow these steps for all sweet preserves that do not have a processing method, that recommend using paraffin, or that recommend using the inversion (turning the filled jars upside down) method.

Steps:

1. Wash and rinse jars to be used. Inspect rims and discard any with chips or cracks.
2. Set jars upright on a rack in water deep enough to cover the tops by at least 1 inch.
3. Bring water to boil and boil jars for 10 minutes. Leave in water until ready to use.
4. Prepare the jam, jelly or sweet spread as directed.

When sweet preserve is ready to be processed, reheat water to just below simmering and proceed as follows:

5. Put lid flats in pan with water to cover and heat to a simmer. Keep in hot water until used.
6. Remove jars from hot water. Return most of water to canning kettle and turn up heat under canner.
7. Ladle hot product into jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace.
8. Wipe rims of jarw with damp clean cloth or paper towel to remove any drips.
9. Place warmed lid flats on jars. Add rings and screw down snugly. (Adequate tightness is achieved as follows: Tighten ring snugly with just thumb and two fingers. Then grasp ring with palm of hand and twist a quarter turn more. This is as tight as necessary.) Do not over-tighten.
10. Return filled and closed jars to canner of boiling water. (from step 6)
11. As soon as water returns to full boil set timer and boil jars for 5 minutes.
12. At end of 5 minutes remove jars from canner, tilting as little as possible, and set on rack or towel to cool. Set jars so they are not touching each other in a place protected from draft.
13. Allow jars to cool undisturbed for 8-12 hours. Check for seal by touching center of lid. If lid doesn't move up and down the jar is sealed.
14. Remove rings, wipe jars, label and store. Store without rings in a cool, dark location for best quality.
15. Enjoy your homemade product!

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