



Simple Peach (or Nectarine) Preserves

Recipe and method borrowed from Camilla Wynne's essential Jam Bake.

SERVINGS MAKES 4 TO 5 HALF-PINT JARS PER 1000G OF FRUIT

Peaches

Sugar or honey (40% of the weight of the peaches, or 400g per 1000g)

Lemon juice (60mL per 1000g)

1 Peel, pit, and cube as many peaches (or nectarines) as you want to hang onto.

2 Weigh the pieces and combine them with 40% their weight in sugar or honey (*honey pairs wonderfully with peaches, but it is noticeably sweeter-tasting, so keep that in mind*) in a covered container, and transfer it to the fridge for at least a day and up to a 10 days. (*This, by the way, is an excellent way to capture ripe/over-ripe peaches that you cannot eat right away, or even those recalcitrant ones that refuse to ripen. As long as you keep track of the weight and add enough sugar to maintain the necessary 10:4 ratio of fruit to sweetener, you can just add new ones to the container whenever you want.*)

3 If planning to can the fruit, heat your oven to 250°F (121°C) and then place your recently rinsed jars upside down on a baking sheet and bake them for at least 20 minutes. (*You can leave them in the oven while the jam cooks.*) Have new bands and clean lids at the ready, but there's no need to heat them.

4 Add 60mL lemon juice per 1000g fruit to the container and then transfer the mixture to a heavy, wide, and non-reactive pot. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to maintain a vigorous simmer and cook, stirring frequently, until the mixture turns fully translucent, 15 to 25 minutes, depending upon how ripe your peaches were to begin with. (*Don't over-reduce it here, because we want a slightly loose jam for use as a filling. Once all the pieces are translucent and soft, you should be good to go.*)

5 While the jam is still hot (at least 200°F/94°C), carefully ladle it into the jars, filling to within 1/4 to 1/8 inch of the rim. Using a clean, wet cloth or paper towel, wipe the rims to remove any drips.

6 Cover each jar tightly with a lid and band. Invert each jar for 2 minutes, then turn right-side up and allow to cool to room temperature. Check the seal on each jar by removing the band and lifting the jar up from the edges of the lid. Transfer any jars that did not seal to the fridge and store the remainder in a cool, dark spot.