

Cherry Jam

Learn to make delicious homemade cherry jam with just 3 ingredients! No pectin needed. Perfect for breakfast, desserts, and savory dishes.

30 min

PREP

1h

COOK

1h 30min

TOTAL

4

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Ingredients

- 2.5 lb sour cherry
- 2.5 lb granulated sugar
- 1 lemon
- 1 tsp lemon salt

Instructions

1 Prepare the Cherries

Remove stems from 2.5 lb cherries and wash thoroughly under cold running water. Remove pits using a cherry pitter or by cutting cherries in half, reserving any juices that escape.

2 Macerate the Fruit

Layer the pitted cherries and 2.5 lb sugar alternately in a heavy-bottomed, non-reactive saucepan. Cover and let sit at room temperature for 8-12 hours or overnight until the sugar dissolves and juices form.

3 Start Cooking the Jam

Place the saucepan over low heat and bring the cherry mixture to a gentle simmer, stirring occasionally until the sugar completely dissolves, about 5-8 minutes.

4 Increase heat to medium and bring to a rolling boil. Cook, stirring frequently to prevent sticking, until the jam begins to thicken, about 35-40 minutes.

5 Skim off any foam that rises to the surface with a spoon. Add 1 tsp lemon juice and continue cooking for 10-15 minutes until the jam coats the back of a spoon and drops slowly when lifted.

6 Test for Setting Point

Test jam doneness by placing a small plate in the freezer for 2 minutes, then dropping a small amount of jam on it. The jam is ready when it wrinkles and holds its shape when pushed with your finger.

7 Prepare Jars

While jam finishes cooking, sterilize 4-6 canning jars and lids by placing them in a 200°F (93°C) oven for 10 minutes or boiling in water for 10 minutes.

8 Fill and Seal

Remove jam from heat and immediately ladle into hot sterilized jars, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ inch headspace. Wipe jar rims clean with a damp cloth and apply lids finger-tight.

9 Process for Storage

Process filled jars in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes to ensure proper sealing. Remove jars and cool completely on a towel-lined counter for 12-24 hours.

10 Check that jar lids have sealed properly by pressing the center - they should not flex. Store sealed jars in a cool, dark place for up to 1 year.

Tips

Layer cherries and sugar in the pot and let them macerate overnight. This draws out the natural juices and creates a better texture in the finished jam.

Use a heavy-bottomed, non-reactive pan (stainless steel or enameled cast iron) to prevent hot spots and metallic flavors that can occur with aluminum or copper.

Stir with a wooden spoon rather than metal to avoid any potential reactions with the fruit acids that could affect flavor.

Test for doneness using the cold plate method: keep a plate in the freezer and drop a small amount of jam on it. If it wrinkles when pushed and doesn't run back together, it's ready.

Skim foam regularly during cooking for a clearer, more professional-looking final product. The foam won't hurt anything, but removing it improves appearance.

Fill jars while the jam is still hot, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ inch headspace. This helps create a proper seal and prevents air bubbles that could lead to spoilage.

Don't double the recipe - larger batches take longer to cook and may not set properly due to the extended cooking time required.

Add lemon juice at the end of cooking rather than the beginning to preserve its pectin content and bright flavor.

