

Jams and Jellies

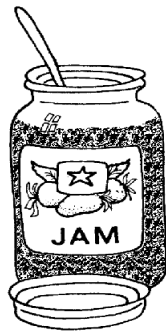
For an overview of the canning process see page 225.

Making jams, jellies, and preserves is relatively easy, resulting in delicious products that can be used in desserts or on bagels, toast, waffles, etc. Here we need to distinguish between the products. *Jam* is made of crushed or chopped fruit and contains pulp and sometimes seeds. *Jelly* is made from fruit juice with neither pulp nor seeds included and results in a clearer and firmer product. *Preserves* are made of whole or chopped fruit suspended in a sweet syrup.

An essential component of jam or jelly making is pectin, a natural soluble fiber derived from plant cells which aids in the jelling process. Some fruits such as apples and plums are naturally high in pectin and are easy to make jams and jellies from. Other fruits like cherries and strawberries are fairly low in pectin. Making jams and jellies with these fruits is easier if commercial pectin is added or if they are blended with other pectin-containing fruits.

Although fruits that are low in pectin will eventually jell, they require extended cooking times. This causes them to lose more volume due to evaporation and results in a smaller quantity of finished product. The loss of volume is especially significant when the value of the fruit and sugar are considered. Low-pectin fruits will jell faster and with more volume if a commercial pectin product is added. Various pectin

products can be found in the canning section of many grocery stores. Each comes with directions that tell how to use it for making jams or jellies with specific fruits. (This section includes only recipes using fruits which have a sufficient amount of pectin to make a quality product without the addition of a commercial pectin.)



Fruits generally considered to contain adequate pectin for a good jell include apples, blackberries, grapes, plums, and