

## Strawberries

### Recommended Varieties

Allstar, Cabot, Chandler, Earliglow, and Jewel and are usually excellent-quality berries for freezing. Most other varieties are suitable, especially for making jams and eating fresh. Locally grown strawberries are best for making jams and freezing.

### Quantity

An average of 1 pound makes 1 pint of frozen berries. One pound of fresh berries is approximately 1 quart of fresh berries.

### Quality

Freeze strawberries or preserve them on the day they are harvested for best quality. They should be picked when they reach an ideal maturity for eating fresh. Select berries with fresh, sweet flavor; deep, uniform color; and firm texture. Smaller, misshapen, and seedy berries may be used to make jam and jelly.

### Berry Preparation

Remove caps. Wash 1 to 2 quarts at a time and drain. Do not soak berries.

### Freezing Procedure

Don't freeze more than 2 pounds of food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day. Whole berries may be packed in syrup or dry sugar or frozen without sugar. Sliced or crushed berries should be made with a dry sugar pack.

- To make a syrup pack: Dissolve 3 cups of sugar in 4 cups of water. Add 1 cup of this syrup per quart of prepared fruit.
- To make a dry sugar pack: Mix  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup of dry sugar per quart of prepared fruit. Stir until most of the sugar is dissolved or let stand for 15 minutes.
- To make a dry pack: Omit sugar.
- To package: Fill plastic freezer containers, freezer jars, or zip-type freezer bags; remove air; seal; and label. Sealed bags may be frozen flat on a tray and stacked when completely frozen. If using rigid containers, allow  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of headspace for dry pack and 1 inch of headspace for syrup pack berries in quarts.
- Whole berries can also be individually frozen on a tray until frozen solid, then packed into containers. These berries may be used partially thawed as a snack.



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### Strawberry Jam

Strawberry jam can be made from several commercial pectin products. To make jam with added pectin, follow the instructions of the pectin manufacturer to ensure obtaining a desirable mixture. Pectin products are available for making jam and jelly containing sugar (traditional style), with less sugar, and no-sugar. Be sure to follow manufacturers directions as these products are not interchangeable.

### Uncooked Strawberry Jam from Fresh Fruit\*

- 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  cups crushed strawberries (about 1 quart fresh)
- 4 cups sugar
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 pouch liquid pectin (3 oz)

Yields approx. 4 half-pint jars

**PROCEDURE.** Measure 1 $\frac{3}{4}$  cups of crushed strawberries. Place in an extra-large bowl. Add sugar, mix well, and let stand for 10 minutes. Measure lemon juice into a small bowl. Add liquid pectin and stir well. Stir into fruit and continue stirring for 3 minutes. Pour jam into freezer containers or canning jars, leaving  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch of headspace. Cover containers. Let stand at room temperature until set (up to 24 hours). Freeze for up to 1 year or refrigerate for up to 3 weeks.

\*Source: Address, Elizabeth L., and Judy A. Harrison, *So Easy to Preserve*, 6th ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, 2014).

Select strawberries with fresh, sweet flavor; deep, uniform color; and firm texture.



## Strawberry-Rhubarb Jelly

- 1½ lb rhubarb
- 1½ qt strawberries
- Jelly bag or cheesecloth
- ½ tsp butter
- 6 cups sugar
- 6 oz (2 pouches) liquid pectin

Yields 7 half-pints

**PROCEDURE.** Wash and cut rhubarb into 1-inch pieces and blend or grind. Wash, stem, and crush strawberries, one layer at a time, in a saucepan. Place both fruits in a jelly bag or double layer of cheesecloth and gently squeeze out juice. Put 3½ cups of juice into a large saucepan. Add butter and sugar, thoroughly mixing into juice. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring constantly. Immediately stir in liquid pectin. Bring to a full, rolling boil and boil hard for 1 minute.

Quickly skim off any foam and immediately place in sterile jars, leaving ¼ inch of headspace. Wipe sealing edge of jars with a clean, damp paper towel. Add lids, tighten screw bands, and process jars in boiling water or atmospheric steam according to Table 1. See “Let’s Preserve: Basics of Home Canning” for detailed instructions.

After processing is complete, turn off heat and remove canner lid. Wait 5 minutes. Remove jars from canner with a jar lifter and place on a towel or rack. Do not retighten screw bands. Air-cool jars for 12 to 24 hours. Remove screw bands and check lid seals. If the center of the lid is indented, wash, dry, label, and store jar in a clean, cool, dark place. If the lid is unsealed, examine and replace jar if defective, use new lids, and reprocess as before. Wash screw bands and store separately. Jellies are best if consumed within a year and are safe as long as the lids remain vacuum sealed.



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**Table 1.** Recommended process times for strawberry-rhubarb jelly in a boiling water or atmospheric steam canner.

| Jar size             | Process times (in minutes) at altitudes of |                |                |
|----------------------|--|----------------|----------------|
|                      | 0–1,000 ft                                 | 1,001–2,000 ft | Above 2,000 ft |
| Half-pints or pints* | 5  | 10             | 15             |

\*Use sterile jars. Place clean, empty jars in a boiling water canner, cover jars with water, and boil for 10 minutes.

For additional information about food preservation, visit the Penn State Extension Home Food Preservation website at [extension.psu.edu/food/preservation](https://extension.psu.edu/food/preservation) or contact Penn State Extension in your county.

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