

LAⁱⁿ BLOOM

HOME CANNING

Peach Jam

Yields 3 ½-pint jars

.....

One bright spot to the end of summer is the abundance of fresh produce at killer prices. Last September, I found ripe and juicy peaches for \$1 a pound at the Hollywood Farmer's Market. My friend Jen Smith had recently taught me how to make peach jam, so I bought ten pounds of peaches and spent the afternoon preserving them. This is such a great recipe and you can use it as a blueprint for preserving any fruit (plums with rosemary is my new favorite). If you're thinking about tackling this project, I suggest purchasing a canning kit, which might include a jar rack, a funnel and jar tongs. It will make your life a whole lot easier.

2 ½ pounds peaches, peeled, pitted and cut into ½-inch wedges

1 ½ cups sugar

2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice & zest of ½ a lemon

Sterilize 3 half-pint sized mason jars by submerging them in boiling water for 10 minutes. Boil new lids for a few minutes (while the rings and jars are reusable, to insure sterilization and a proper seal, the lid needs to be used only once when canning).

Combine all of the ingredients in a nonreactive saucepan (stainless steel or enamel-lined cast iron - think Le Creuset). Bring to a boil, while stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Simmer over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until the fruit is glassy and the liquid runs off the side of a spoon in thick, heavy drops, approximately 20 to 25 minutes. Skim off any foam that rises to the surface.

Once the consistency has thickened from that of a light syrup to a golden gel, spoon the jam into the jars, leaving 1/4 inch of space at the top. Carefully wipe off the tops of the jars and loosely seal with lids and rings.

Place jars in canning rack and carefully submerge in rapidly boiling water for ten minutes. Pull from the water and allow to cool for 24 hours. Make sure the lid is vacuum sealed (there will be a victorious popping sound shortly after the jars come out of the water). Store jam in the refrigerator for up to 3 months.