

Jams and Jellies
By Ora Emmerich
UCCE El Dorado County Master Food Preservers

So, the first class offered this year by the Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County went well. Everyone attending learned about safe food handling and how to correctly use a water bath canner. This will be handy for the next class, Jams and Jellies. What, missed the first class? Do not worry. On Thursday, July 12, the inaugural class on Food Safety and Basic Water Bath Canning repeats at the UCCE offices at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Come and get the basics of safe food handling and be ready to jump into Jams and Jellies, presented on Saturday, July 14 from 10:00 a.m. to noon, with a repeat class on Thursday, July 19 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. Both sessions will be held at the UCCE offices.

Jams and jellies combine fruit with sugar and pectin to produce a delicious spread filled with the flavors of summer. Several manufacturers provide quality pectin along with tested recipes for making a variety of jams and jellies. Most tested recipes rely on regular, granular, white sugar. This sugar not only helps prevent molding, it also adds flavor and aids in gelling. The best part of the jam or jelly, however, remains the fruit. Use good quality fruit, discarding any that may have spoiled or bruised.

Among the methods of preserving used for jams and jellies, freezing allows for a quick and easy processing of many types of fruits. Find pectin that specifies in the instructions that it may be used for freezer jam or jelly, like the one in the following recipe from the UC Davis Extension:

FRESH STRAWBERRY FREEZER JAM

4 Cups crushed strawberries
1 ½ Cups sugar (Splenda may be substituted)
1 Pkg. Ball “Freezer Jam Pectin”

1. Thoroughly wash your hands, utensils and work surfaces, and then prepare the ingredients.
2. Wash fully ripe strawberries-remove stems and caps. Crush berries.
3. Mix sugar and pectin in large bowl.
4. Measure crushed berries and add to sugar/pectin mixture.
5. Stir for 3 minutes.
6. Ladle jam into clean jars or freezer containers, leaving ½ inch headspace. Cover with airtight lid.
7. Let stand at room temperature until thickened (about 30 minutes).

8. Store in freezer (for up to 1 year), or in refrigerator if to be used within 3 weeks.

For questions about safe home food preservation, or to schedule a speaker for organizations or clubs on the topics of food safety or food preservation, call the Master Food Preservers at (530) 621-5506. For more information, be sure to go to the Master Food Preserver website at http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Master_Food_Preservers/. Sign up to receive our new Master Food Preservers E-Newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mfpnews/>.