

Preserve It: Canning Basics



Fruit Float

WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT?

Fruit Float is the term used when produce separates and floats to the top of the jars.

There are a few things that can be done to avoid or reduce fruit float when canning fruit:

- **Use Firm Ripe Fruit.** Firm fruit has less air trapped in it than ripe fruit. It also absorbs less liquid during the canning process. You may see a little fruit float when you take the jars out of the canner; do not despair. Over time, as the fruit absorbs the sugar syrup, the fruit will sink in the jar.
- **Use a Hot Pack Method.** Heating the fruit forces air out of the cell walls of the fruit. A hot pack also produces a better textured product.
- **Use Light or Medium Syrup.** Fruit is lighter than sugar, so a lighter syrup will help reduce fruit float. Pack fruit as closely as possible without crushing it, then be sure to use a debubbler or a non-metallic tool such as a chopstick to remove any air bubbles in the jar.

Here are a few more hints for avoiding fruit float in soft spreads:

- **Use Frozen Fruit.** The liquid in produce will expand when frozen and the cell walls will burst. This is why we see a lot of liquid when we thaw produce. Since the cell walls have burst, air is released from the fruit. Always thaw fruit before using and always use the juice that has seeped out of the fruit.
- **Crush the Fruit.** This also releases some air from the cells in the fruit. Chopped fruit does not absorb as much sugar as crushed fruit, and the fruit may not separate as it cools in the jar.
- **Let Jam Cool Slightly.** Allow jam to sit in the pot for about 5 minutes. Stir to distribute fruit, then fill the jars.

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