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## How to Make Homemade Canned Peach Pie Filling

Making and canning your own homemade peach pie filling is easy! There is a just a couple of tricks to it. Here's how to do it, complete instructions in easy steps and completely illustrated.

Prepared this way, the jars have a shelf life of 18 months to 2 years, and require no special attention.

**Ingredients and Equipment to make 1 quart of peach pie filling  
(just double to make 2 quarts, etc.) or 7 quarts**

Ingredients for Peach Pie Filling		
	Quantities of Ingredients Needed For	
	1 Quart	7 Quarts
Sliced fresh peaches	3-1/2 cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	1 cup	7 cups
<a href="#">Clear Jel®</a> see below	1/4 cup + 1 tbsp	2 cups + 3 tbsp
Cold water	3/4 cup	5-1/4 cups
Cinnamon (optional)	1/8 tsp	1 tsp
Almond extract (optional)	1/8 tsp	1 tsp
Bottled lemon juice	1/4 cup	1-3/4 cups

- **ClearJel®** starch
- Jar grabber (to pick up

- 1 Water Bath Canner (a huge pot with a lifting rack to sterilize the jars of peach pie filling after filling (about \$30 to \$35 at mall kitchen stores, Wal-Mart) You CAN use a large pot instead, but the canners are deeper, and have a rack top make lifting the jars out easier. If you plan on canning every year, they're worth the investment.
- the hot jars)
- Lid lifter (has a magnet to pick the lids out of the boiling water where you sterilize them. (\$2 at Wal-Mart)
- Jar funnel (\$2 at Wal-Mart)
- At least 1 large pot
- Large spoons and ladles
- Ball jars (Publix, Wal-Mart carry them - about \$8 per dozen quart jars including the lids and rings)

## Recipe and Directions

### Step 1 - Selecting the peaches

You can use fresh or even frozen peaches, but obviously you'll get the best price and freshest taste if you go pick your own. Typically, peaches are in season in the US and Europe in June through August - check the harvest calendar for your state!



## Step 2 - Wash the jars and lids

Now's a good time to get the jars ready, so you won't be rushed later. The dishwasher is fine for the jars; especially if it has a "sterilize" cycle, the water bath processing will sterilize them as well as the contents! If you don't have a dishwasher with a sterilize cycle, you can wash the containers in hot, soapy water and rinse, then sterilize the jars by boiling them 10 minutes, and keep the jars in hot water until they are used. Leave the jars in the dishwasher on "heated dry" until you are ready to use them. Keeping them hot will prevent the jars from breaking when you fill them with the hot peach pie filling.



Put the lids into a pan of hot, but not quite boiling water (that's what the manufacturer's recommend) for 5 minutes, and use the magnetic "lid lifter wand" to pull them out.

## Step 3 -Wash the fruit and sort!



I'm sure you can figure out how to wash the fruit in a colander of plain cold water.

Then you need to pick out and remove any bits of stems, leaves and soft or mushy fruit. It is easiest to do this in a large bowl of water and gently run your hands through the fruit as they float. With your fingers slightly apart, you will easily feel any soft or mushy fruit get caught in your fingers.

Then just drain off the water!

#### Step 4 - Peeling the Peaches

Peaches and nectarines should be peeled, as their skins can be tough / chewy in jam. Peaches have such thin skins, you really don't need to peel them.

For those you want to peel, here's a great trick that works with many fruits and vegetables with skins (like tomatoes): just dip the fruit in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds.



Remove from the water using a slotted spoon and put into a large bowl or pot of cold water and ice.







The skins will easily slide off now IF the peaches are ripe! The more unripe they are, the longer you'll need to heat them.

**Step 5 - Cut up the peaches**



Cut out any brown spots and mushy areas. Cut the peaches in half, or quarters or slices, as you prefer! Remove pits!



### Step 6 - Prevent the fruit from darkening!



Now, to keep the fruit from turning brown, when you get a bowlful, sprinkle 1/4 cup lemon juice or Fruit-Fresh (which is just citric acid, vitamin C, perfectly natural). Then stir the peaches to make sure all the surfaces have been coated.

### Step 7 - Make the liquid for the filling

Combine water, sugar, Clear Jel®, and, if desired, cinnamon and/or almond extract in a large kettle. Stir and cook over medium high heat until mixture thickens and begins to bubble.



	1 Quart	7 Quarts
Granulated sugar	1 cup	7 cups
<a href="#">Clear Jel®</a> see below	1/4 cup + 1 tbsp	2 cups + 3 tbsp
Cold water or peach juice	3/4 cup	5-1/4 cups
Cinnamon (optional)	1/8 tsp	1 tsp
Almond extract (optional)	1/8 tsp	1 tsp
Bottled lemon juice	1/4 cup	1-3/4 cups

Note: I use peach juice instead of water to add the flavor and natural sweetness, but you can just use cold water, as the peach juice can be hard to find.

Add the lemon juice and **boil the sauce 1 minute more**, stirring constantly.

### Why use ClearJel?

ClearJel® is a corn starch that has been modified to give it special and unique characteristics when used in food products. It is recommended by the USDA for making pie fillings because it does not break down in the acid food mixtures and does not thicken enough during heat processing to interfere with the intended effect of the heat on killing bacteria during canning. In other words it reduces spoilage and is safer than corn starch. It is preferred for thickening canned pie fillings as well as other foods over other corn starches because it has less or no aftertaste, the thickened juices are smooth and clear, and foods thickened with ClearJel® may be frozen.

### Step 8 - Combine the liquid with the fruit

Add in the drained peach slices and continue to heat mixture for 3 minutes. (see photo at right)



### Step 9 - Fill the jars with the peach mixture



Pretty self explanatory, but this is the toughest step. The pie filling is very, very gooey and sticky. A jar funnel helps. Gently jostle the jar to help it settle in the jar and reduce the amount of air space. Fill the quart jars to within 1 inch of the top, wipe any spilled peach pie filling of the top, seat the lid and tighten the ring around them.



### Step 10 - Process the filled jars in the water bath

Put the filled jars in the canner and keep them cover with at least 1 inch of water and boiling. if you are at sea level (up to 1,000 ft) boil pint and/or quart jars for 30 minutes.

If you are at an altitude of 1,000 feet or more, see this chart.



USDA-Recommended process time for Hot Pack Pint or Quart Jars of Peach Pie Filling in a boiling-water canner.

#### Process Time at Altitudes of

0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 3,000 ft	3,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
30 min	35	40	45

### Step 11 - Remove and cool the jars - Done

Lift the jars out of the water and let them cool without touching or bumping them in a draft-free place (usually takes overnight) You can then remove the rings if you like. Once the jars are cool, you can check that they are sealed verifying that the lid has been sucked down. Just press in the center, gently, with your finger. If it pops up and down (often making a popping sound), it is not sealed. If you put the jar in the refrigerator right away, you can still use it. Some people replace the lid and reprocess the jar, then that's a bit iffy. If you heat the contents back up, re-jar them (with a new lid) and the full time in the canner, it's usually ok.



### Other Equipment:

From left to right:

1. Jar lifting tongs to pick up hot jars
2. Lid lifter - to remove lids from the pot of boiling water (sterilizing )
3. Lid - disposable - you may only use them once
4. Ring - holds the lids on the jar until after the jars cool - then you don't need them.
5. Canning jar funnel - to fill the jars and keep the rims clean.

