

Best method for canning peaches

Bring back the freshness of summer during the cold winter by canning Ontario peaches.

Begin by selecting peaches that are just ripe. A 6.8 litre (six quart) basket or 3.6 kilograms to 4.5 kilograms (eight pounds to 10 pounds) of peaches will yield 4.5 litres to 5.7 litres (four qt. to five qt.) of peaches canned. The following canning procedure is precise and easy:

Wash mason jars and lids, processor, rack and lid and rinse well. Half fill processor with hot water. Suspend rack in processor. Half fill jars with hot water. Place on suspended rack. Lower rack and jars. Heat water to boiling point. Lower heat and keep water hot.

Fill medium-size saucepan half full of water. Bring to boil. Lower heat and keep water hot. (This water will be used to drop the lids and screw bands into five minutes before the jars are to be closed).

Prepare syrup. Use about 175 millilitres to 250 millilitres (3/4 cups to one cup) syrup for each 500 mL (about one pint) or 375 mL to 500 mL (1-1/2 cups to two cups) syrup for each 1.1 L (one qt.) jar to be used.

For each 500 mL (two cups) of required syrup, measure 250 mL (one cup) sugar and 375 mL (1-1/2 cups) water in saucepan. Heat to boiling, stirring until sugar dissolves. Keep hot until ready to use.

To can without sugar, replace sugar with boiling water. You will need about 1.5 L to 2.5 L (six cups to 10 cups) syrup for 6.8 L (six qt.) basket of peaches.

Wash peaches carefully in cold water. To remove skins, dip peaches in boiling water for 30 seconds. Immediately dip in cold water. Slip off skins. Cut in halves or slices. Remove pits. Bring peaches to boil in syrup. Simmer three minutes. Place lids and screw bands in saucepan of boiling water (see above).

Take one jar from processor. Empty the hot water from the jar. Immediately pack the simmering fruit and syrup into the hot jar. Leave 1.25 cm (1/2 inch) space at the top of the jar. Insert the blade of a table knife down the side of the jar. Move it around the jar to release air bubbles. Wipe rim of jar carefully with a clean towel to remove any food or syrup particles. (Food particles left on the rim will prevent a good seal).

Immediately remove one flat lid from boiling water. Apply to rim of jar with sealing compound next to glass. Remove a screw band from boiling water and screw on very tightly by hand. This type of closure is self-sealing. Do not tighten after processing. Repeat this procedure for each jar of peaches.

Carefully lower the filled jars onto the rack in the processor. Leave about a 2.5 cm (one in.) space between jars. Be sure water covers the jars by at least five cm (two in.) otherwise the food may not cool evenly and may discolor.

Cover the processor with a lid. Bring water to a vigorous boil. When water begins to boil rapidly, begin to

count processing time: for 500 mL jars (pint jars) allow 15 minutes and for 1.1 litre jars (quart jars) allow 15 minutes.

When processing time is completed, turn off heat. Remove processor from element if you are using an electric stove. To avoid getting steam burn, remove lid carefully, lifting far side of lid first.

Lift each jar from the processor and place right side up, on a thick towel. Leave room between jars for air to circulate.

Leave jars in an upright position and out of drafts. Do not cover. Let jars cool for at least 12 hours.

Test the seal by tapping the flat metal portion with a spoon. If a clearing is heard and the lid is slightly concave (curved down), a good seal is assured. If a jar leaks, refrigerate and use contents within a few days.

Wipe jars with a damp cloth. Dry and label jars, indicating contents and date of processing. Store in a cool, dark, dry place. Storing at room temperature and in a lighted room will cause more rapid loss of vitamins.

