Syrups for Canning Fruit

Adding syrup to canned fruit helps to retain its flavor, color, and shape. It does not prevent spoilage of these foods. The guidelines for preparing and using syrups (Table 4) offer a new "very light" syrup, which approximates the natural sugar content of many fruits. The sugar content in each of the five syrups is increased by about 10 percent. Quantities of water and sugar to make enough syrup for a canner load of pints or quarts are provided for each syrup type.

Procedure: Heat water and sugar together. Bring to a boil and pour over raw fruits in jars. For hot packs, bring water and sugar to boil, add fruit, reheat to boil, and fill into jars immediately.

Other sweeteners: Light corn syrups or mild-flavored honey may be used to replace up to half the table sugar called for in syrups.

Table 4. Preparing and using **syrups.**

		Measures of Water and Sugar				
Syrup Type	**Approx. % Sugar**	**For 9-Pt Load (1)**		**For 7-Qt Load**		**Fruits Commonly Packed in syrup (2)**
		Cups Water	**Cups Sugar**	**Cups Water**	**Cups Sugar**	
Very Light	10	6½	¾	10½	1¼	Approximates natural sugar levels in most fruits and adds the fewest calories.
Light	20	5¾	1½	9	2¼	Very sweet fruit. Try a small amount the first time to see if your family likes it.
Medium	30	5¼	2¼	8¼	3¾	Sweet apples, sweet cherries, berries, grapes
Heavy	40	5	3¼	7¾	5¼	Tart apples, apricots, sour cherries, gooseberries, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums
Very Heavy	50	4¼	4¼	6½	6¾	Very sour fruit. Try a small amount the first time to see if your family likes it.

1. This amount is also adequate for a 4-quart load.
2. Many fruits that are typically packed in heavy syrup are excellent and tasteful products when packed in lighter syrups. It is recommended to try lighter syrups as they contain fewer calories from added sugar.

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Maintaining Color and Flavor in Canned Foods

Follow these guidelines to ensure that your canned foods retain optimum colors and flavors during processing and storage.

◊ Use only high-quality foods which are at the proper maturity and are free of diseases and bruises.

◊ Use the hot-pack method, especially with acid foods to be processed in boiling water.

◊ Don't unnecessarily expose prepared foods to air. Can them as soon as possible.

◊ While preparing a canner load of jars, keep peeled, halved, quartered, sliced, or diced apples, apricots, nectarines, peaches, and pears in a solution of 3 grams (3,000 milligrams) ascorbic acid to 1 gallon of cold water. This procedure is also useful in maintaining the natural color of mushrooms and potatoes, and for preventing stem-end discoloration in cherries and grapes.

You can get ascorbic acid in several forms:

Pure powdered form - seasonally available among canners' supplies in supermarkets. One level teaspoon of pure powder weighs 3 grams. Use 1 teaspoon per gallon of water as a treatment solution.

Vitamin C tablets - economical and available year-round in many stores. Buy 500-miligram tablets; crush and dissolve six tablets per gallon of water as a treatment solution.

Commercially prepared mixes of ascorbic and citric acid - seasonally available among canners' supplies in supermarkets. Sometimes citric acid powder is sold in supermarkets, but it is less effective in controlling discoloration. If you choose to use these products, follow the manufacturer's directions. One product is Fruit Fresh™.

Pears-Halved

Quantity: An average of 17½ pounds is needed per canner load of 7 quarts; an average of 11 pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints. A bushel weighs 50 pounds and yields 16 to 25 quarts - an average of 2½ pounds per quart.

Quality: Choose ripe, mature fruit of ideal quality for eating fresh or cooking.

Procedure: Wash and peel pears. Cut lengthwise in halves and remove core. A melon baller or metal measuring spoon is suitable for coring pears. To prevent discoloration, keep pears in an ascorbic acid solution. Prepare a very light, light, or medium syrup or pack pears in apple juice, white grape juice, or water. Raw packs make poor quality pears. Boil drained pears 5 minutes in syrup, juice or water. Fill jars with hot fruit and cooking liquid, leaving ½-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process. Processing directions for canning pears in a boiling-water, a dial, or a weighted-gauge canner are given in Table 1, Table 2, and Table 3.

Table 1. Recommended process time for **Pears, halved** in a boiling-water canner.

		Process Time at Altitudes of			
Style of Pack	**Jar Size**	**0 - 1,000 ft**	**1,000 - 3,000 ft**	**3,001 - 6,000 ft**	**Above 6,000 ft**
Hot	Pints or	**20 minutes**	25 minutes	30 minutes	35 minutes
	Quarts	**25 minutes**	30 minutes	35 minutes	40 minutes

Table 2. Recommended process time for **Pears, halved** in a dial-gauge pressure canner.

		Process Time at Altitudes of			
Style of Pack	**Jar Size**	**0 - 2,000 ft**	**2,001 - 4,000 ft**	**4,001 - 6,000 ft**	**6,000 - 8,000 ft**
Hot	Pints or	**6 minutes**	7 minutes	8 minutes	9 minutes
	Quarts	**6 minutes**	7 minutes	8 minutes	9 minutes

Table 3. Recommended process time for **Pears, halved** in a weighted-gauge pressure canner.

			Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of	
Style of Pack	**Jar Size**	**Process time**	**0 - 1,000 ft**	**Above 1,000 ft**
Hot	Pints or	10 minutes	**5 minutes**	10 minutes
	Quarts	10 minutes	**5 minutes**	10 minutes