

Using Clear Jel®



GENERAL:

Clear Jel®, a corn starch derivative, is a commercial thickening product used by bakeries and for frozen food. This product is used the same as flour or corn starch.

There are two types of Clear Jel® available, “instant” and “regular”. “Instant” does not require heat to thicken. The product will thicken once the liquid is added. “Regular”, on the other hand, must be heated. This is generally the preferred type to use in products to be canned.

To use Clear Jel® in a hot dish such as gravy, first mix a small amount in cold water, then add gradually to the hot liquid, mixing constantly. Or, mix everything together while cold, and then heat and stir to thicken.

Pies and fillings which have been prepared with Clear Jel® and frozen need to be cooked or baked before serving. If the fillings become “thin” during baking, increase the oven temperature, and shorten the baking time to prevent what is called “oven boil out”. This usually is caused by excessive baking at a temperature too low.

Advantages:

- It is clear in color when cooked.
- It has excellent stability.
- It remains smooth.
- It prevents liquid separation and curdling after foods have been frozen.
- Cream sauces, custard, and puddings may be frozen with excellent results.

JAMS:

Advantages:

- It is less expensive than pectin.
- The amount of sugar may be adjusted without losing the jelling capacity.
- Recipes may be doubled, tripled or halved.
- The jam may be frozen or processed in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes.

Hints:

- Using Clear Jel® in making jams and jellies is not an exact science. Many factors influence the quality of the product. It is best to try a small batch and make adjustments before making larger batches.
- Use pint or 1/2 pint jars.
- Any fruit jam or jelly recipe may be used as long as the product is processed for 10 minutes or frozen. Substitute 7 tsp of Clear Jel® for the pectin in cooked jams and jellies and 3-4 tsp of Clear Jel® for the pectin in freezer jam recipes.
- For freezer jam follow the jam recipes on this sheet.
- Clear Jel® does not dissolve easily in liquid. To help dissolve the product mix the Clear Jel® with a little sugar before adding to the fruit or juice.

Problem solving:

Jam is too stiff: To make softer, heat the product and add a little more juice or water, then reprocess.

Jam is too thin: To make stiffer, heat the product and add more Clear Jel® mixed with a few tsp of sugar and dissolved in 1/2 cup of the product.

Cherry Jam

4 cups pitted chopped cherries
1/4 cup lemon juice
4 tablespoons Clear Jel®
Sugar to taste (approximately 1 cup)
Add lemon juice to cherries. Combine Clear Jel® with 1/4 cup of the sugar. Add to cherries. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Pour into jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Process 10 minutes in boiling water bath or freeze.

Apricot and Pineapple Jam

5 cups ground apricots
1 20-oz. can crushed pineapple, drained
1/4 cup lemon juice
7 tablespoons Clear Jel®
Sugar to taste (approximately 3 cups)
Add lemon juice to apricots. Combine Clear Jel® with 1/4 cup of the sugar. Add to apricots. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Add rest of sugar. Boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Pour into jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Process 10 minutes in boiling water bath or freeze.

Berry Jam

4 cups crushed berries or juiced
1/4 cup lemon juice

Add lemon juice to berries. Combine Clear Jel® with 1/4 cup of the sugar. Add to berries. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Add rest of sugar. Boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Pour into jars, leaving 1/4" headspace. Process 10 minutes in boiling water bath or freeze.

Apricot Jam

3 1/2 cups apricots
2 tablespoons lemon juice
3 1/2 tablespoons Clear Jel®
Sugar to taste (approximately 2 cups)
Add lemon juice to apricots. Combine Clear Jel® with 1/4 cup of the sugar. Add to apricots. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Add rest of sugar. Boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Pour into jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Process 10 minutes in boiling water bath or freeze.

Peach Jam

3 3/4 cups peaches
1/4 cup lemon juice
7 tablespoons Clear Jel®
Sugar to taste (approx. 1 1/2 cups)
Add lemon juice to peaches. Combine Clear Jel® with 1/4 cup of the sugar. Add to peaches. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Add rest of sugar. Boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Pour into jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Process 10 minutes in boiling water bath or freeze.

7 tablespoons Clear Jel®
Sugar to taste (approximately 1 1/2 cup)

The WSU Skagit County Extension office has a list of places to get Clear Jel®.

**HANDOUT DEVELOPED BY:
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More home canning info: <http://skagit.wsu.edu/FAM/MFP.htm>