

Preparing Soft Fruits for Canning or Freezing



Preparing Soft Fruits for Canning

If you are like me, when you see a good deal on fresh produce, sometimes you will buy it and later realize that you really don't have time in your schedule to can it all. Rather than lose all the fresh goodness to the compost pile or chicken yard, here are some alternatives that will buy you some time. You can always go back and can the produce later, if you wish. As canning regains its popularity, we need to juggle it along with our busy lifestyles. Mary, from [Homegrown on the Hill](#) writes, "Canning is in full swing in our part of the world and it seems to me that a lot more people are taking an interest in canning. Or I should say, more younger people, are taking an interest. I'm amazed that we'll be talking about canning at my children's sports practices or maybe at a

Cubscout event over the summer. It's just not something you would think that would be talked about. You know? "

Yet, more and more, the younger generation is looking into canning. But they are also juggling full time jobs and families, along with possible homeschooling, kids sports and activities, and housekeeping chores. Knowing some ways to break up the job into multiple days, may be the only way some people can successfully home can their produce. I have a friend who had to call someone to come to her house and wait for the canning process to finish and take the jars out of the canner because she ran out of time and had to be somewhere. But this does not have to be your experience.



So, here are some steps you can take to preserve the season's goodness and not lose your sanity in the process.

First step and one of the most laborious parts of preserving peaches, tomatoes and other soft fruits is to blanch the fruit and remove the skin.

Step one is to wash the fruit in cold water.

Step two –

Set a large pot of water on the stove and bring to a boil.



Drop a few peaches at a time into the boiling water so that all the fruit is covered with water. Let boil a few minutes, 3 minutes is usually enough time.

Meanwhile, fill a large bowl or stock pot with cold water. Add some ice cubes to get the water nice and chilly.

Step three

Using a slotted spoon, remove the peaches from the boiling water and drop into the ice water.



Let the fruit sit in the ice water to cool it down. Once you can handle it safely, the skins will slip right off.



And those skins you removed from the peaches? Well don't be quick to toss them in the compost pile. The skins can still yield some delicious jelly or syrup. This year for the first time, I have started using the skins from tomatoes to make additional tomato sauce. With peaches, [The Homesteading Hippy](#) recently wrote, " As I was canning peaches recently, I held back the peels and pits to make some [jelly](#) and thought, ?Why not just leave some as syrup?? And, peach simple syrup was ?born?! It?s such a simple idea, I can?t figure out why I

hadn't done it before!".

I have tried a similar tactic with tomatoes. You can read more about making tomato sauce from the tomato skins [here](#).

Storing the Fruits in the Freezer

Step four

After you have repeated the process for all the fruit, slice the fruit, or in the case of tomatoes, core them. Discard the peach pits, but you can freeze the tomato skins and cores as I just stated, to make a rich tomato sauce.

***After slicing your peaches, toss about three tablespoons of real **lemon juice** per 6 cups of fruit. This will prevent the peaches from browning.



Grab some freezer bags and begin filling them with the prepared fruit. I usually put about 6-8 cups of fruit in a bag. This amount seems to be the needed amount for many recipes, that I use.

I store the freezer bags flat in the freezer. The bags don't take up that much room and I can stack a few bags on top of each other. Now, if I want to make a batch of Peach Jam, or Hot Tomato Salsa in the depths of winter, all I have to do is grab a bag from the freezer and get cooking.

This method will work with any soft skinned fruit, such as peaches, nectarines and tomatoes. Preparing soft fruits for canning ahead of time takes a lot of the stress and exertion out of canning day.

More Tips for Preparing Food for Canning

If you have an abundance of **green beans**, you could snap off the ends, bag them in freezer bags and freeze them. I prefer the beans canned, but this will preserve the beans until I have time to deal with the pressure canner.

Corn on the cob can be blanched by putting the ears in boiling water for 3 minutes. Remove to a pan of cold water. Take each ear and cut the kernels off the cob. If you don't have time to pressure can the corn, you can put it in freezer zip lock bags and freeze it.

Less Stressful Food Storage

Now that you have taken care of keeping the produce from going bad, you can plan a time to do the canning. And the best part of this is you won't be tired or stressed because you had too much to do at one time. Knowing some ways to break up the job into multiple days, may be the only way some people can successfully home can their produce.

When you are ready to tackle the long term storage of canning, remove your produce from the freezer and thaw it in a pan of cool water. Heat your fruit to boiling and simmer for about 10

minutes. Now you are ready to finish the canning procedure.

Hope that these tips will help you manage your abundance of produce.