

VINTAGE WORDS OF WISDOM

Mrs Beeton's

Jam-Making and Preserves

Including:

Preserves, Marmalades, Pickles and Home-Made Wines

400 Recipes



PREPARING THE FRUIT.

The fruit should be quite sound and not over-ripe, and must be carefully wiped and cleaned. Each recipe gives precise details, showing how the specific fruit must be prepared.



SKIMMING THE JAM.

The jam should be skimmed frequently. Allow the jar of scum which has been taken from the jam to stand for about 24 hours; remove the top layer and the remainder will be quite good to eat.



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CONTENTS

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION TO THE VINTAGE WORDS OF WISDOM SERIES

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF RECIPES

I THE ART OF PRESERVING

II RECIPES FOR JAMS AND PRESERVES

III RECIPES FOR MARMALADES

IV RECIPES FOR FRUIT JELLIES

V PRESERVED AND CRYSTALLIZED FRUITS

VI BOTTLING FRUIT

VII FRUITS IN BRANDY

VIII FRUIT PASTES AND CURDS

IX SYRUPS AND FRUIT JUICES

X PICKLES

XI MISCELLANEOUS PRESERVES AND PICKLES

XII STORE OR CONDIMENT SAUCES

XIII HOME-MADE WINES AND FRUIT SYRUPS

XIV LIQUEURS

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

This useful recipe book from the 1920s includes 400 recipes for jams, jellies, pickles, chutneys, and wines. It also provides detailed guidance on all aspects of preserving, bottling, sterilising, drying and crystallising fruits. The recipes are based on those by Mrs Beeton (including the now famous carrot jam) and they have been updated to include advances in techniques that were common in the early twentieth century. Familiar recipes are included alongside more exotic preserves like Harvey Sauce, Cucumber Ketchup, Hawthorn Liqueur and Maidenhair Syrup, making this an entertaining and exciting preserving adventure!

Mrs Beeton's Jam-making and Preserves provides a fascinating insight into skills and methods that were in use before the invention of the food processor and electric hob, and before the presence of a refrigerator in every home. Among other methods, jars of jam are sealed with paper brushed with the white of an egg and some vegetable preserves are topped with clarified mutton fat to create an air-tight seal, the preparation of some ingredients takes many days, and the quantities of sugar, for example, many surprise the modern jam-maker. However, all these recipes can be adapted to suit modern tastes and to take advantage of modern technology. Though perhaps not for the beginner, this book offers a wealth of preserving challenges for the confident cook. From recipes for ingredients not commonly used today to unusual combinations and preserves that, quite frankly, sound disgusting and/or positively dangerous (have a look at the Mustapha Ketchup recipe – try at your own risk!), this collation is an enjoyable exploration of the history of preserving and a rare opportunity to experience the tastes that a previous generation enjoyed.

ADVICE AND SAFETY FIRST

Weights and measures conversions

There are plenty of useful conversion charts available online (see, for example, <http://www.deliciousmagazine.co.uk/articles/cooking-conversion-tables> or, for a more historical guide, see <http://gwydir.demon.co.uk/jo/units/volume.htm>) and in other recipe books so we won't go into a great deal of detail, but here is a brief guide. Ingredients in this book are measured in old British Imperial units:

Ounces (oz) – 1 oz. is 25 gms.

Pounds (lb.) – 1 lb. is 450 gms.

Saltspoons – a saltspoon is a $\frac{1}{4}$ of a teaspoon or 1.2 ml.

Mustardspoons – the only reference I can find to this quantity suggests that it is about 200 mg. However, the internet informs me that it is a surprisingly common measurement, used for everything from (obviously) mustard to medicines. Therefore, I can only assume that more people have mustard spoons than I would imagine!

Teaspoons - 1 teaspoon is 5 ml. In one recipe it refers to an eighth of a teaspoonful, which is a definitely just a pinch!

Dessertspoons - 1 dessertspoonful is 10 ml. or 2 teaspoons.

Tablespoons - 1 tablespoon is 15 ml (or 3 teaspoons).

Gill - 1 gill is 5 fluid ounces or 1.42 ml. There are 4 gills to the pint. The Imperial gill is 1.2 US gills.

Pints - 1 pint is an eighth of a gallon, 20 Imperial fluid ounces or 568 ml. (please note that a US pint is 16 fluid ounces or 473 ml.). The other way round, I remember the conversion of litres to pints as 'a litre of water is a pint and three-quarters' - it sticks in my brain this way.

Quarts - 1 quart is 2 pints (a 'quart' er of a gallon) or 1.14 litres.

Gallons - 1 gallon is 8 pints or 4.55 litres. The US gallon is 3.79 litres.

Glossary

Baysalt - this is sea salt (e.g. Maldon sea salt) - i.e. salt from the bay.

Capillaire - a syrup or infusion of the Maidenhair fern (for more details visit <http://www.theoldfoodie.com/2008/05/on-capillaire.html>).

Capsicum - these are sweet peppers.

Clary - the flowers of the clary sage plant (for more details visit, for example, <http://theherbgardener.blogspot.co.uk/2011/05/how-to-grow-clary-sage.html>)

Cowslips - remember that, while not illegal, it is not advisable to pick great quantities of wild flowers. Cowslips are not as common as they were when this book was written (though I don't think that cowslip wine makers are to blame!) so they should be allowed to flower in peace so that they can disperse their seeds far and wide. It is illegal in the UK to uproot wild flower plants in order to transfer them to your own garden.

Gum arabic - also known as acacia gum, this is used today by the food industry as a stabiliser (E414). It is used as an edible glue and binder, an emulsifier and thickening agent. It is available to buy online.

Isinglass - made from the dried swim bladders of fish, this is a form of collagen used for the clarification of wine and beer. Drinks made using isinglass are therefore not acceptable to many vegetarians and all vegans, but there are vegan alternatives such as Bentonite and Irish moss.

Racking - siphoning off wine from the lees (sediment) into another vessel. There are plenty of websites on wine-making that provide more details.

Radish pods - if radish plants are allowed to bolt they produce seed pods. These seed pods are edible - they taste like radishes, crunchy and delicious. In Indian cuisine they are known as mogri or moongre.

Equipment

Sugar (candy) thermometer – this is a vital piece of equipment for many of the recipes in this book. It should be clean and dry before it is put into a pot of hot syrup or it might make the syrup spit. Hot sugar is flammable and sugar burns are nasty.

Preserving pan – this book recommends a copper or brass preserving pan. These are fine if used carefully but the book quite rightly gives a clear warning about not using vinegar in a copper or brass pan and you will notice that it recommends using earthenware vessels to macerate fruit and vegetables. Copper pans react with fruit acid and vinegar to produce toxins. Also, copper pans must be cleaned and dried very carefully or they will develop verdigris – a green pigment composed of various toxic copper compounds. For more information visit, for example, <http://hitchhikingtoheaven.com/2010/06/is-it-safe-to-make-jam-in-a-copper-pan.html> The safest option these days is to use a stainless steel preserving pan. Aluminium is also OK as current research shows that earlier warnings about aluminium and Alzheimer's disease were probably exaggerated. However, there are plenty of good quality stainless steel preserving pans available at reasonable prices, and they are much easier to clean than the older copper or brass pans, though they perhaps have less vintage glamour.

A silver knife – this book was written before stainless steel was in common use. Old steel knives would become stained after exposure to fruit acids and the knife could also taint the fruit. Silver doesn't react to fruit acids so fruit knives were made of silver or silver-plated. However, remember that stain-less doesn't mean stain-proof so, while stainless steel knives are fine for most fruit and vegetables, if they come into contact with very acidic fruit like lemons then they should be cleaned immediately to avoid staining.

Bottles and jam-jars – these days you can buy a wide-variety of glass jars for bottling and for jams, jellies and chutneys. My mother reuses all sorts of glass jars for her jam-making and preserving. As long as they are washed, sterilised and dried properly, and as long as the lids provide an effective air-tight seal, they can be used again and again.

Useful links

One key skill that is required in order to make many of the recipes in this book successfully is the boiling of sugar and the creation of syrups. Here are some useful web links that provide illustrated advice and detailed information on the different degrees of syrup strength.

<http://candy.about.com/od/candybasics/a/candytemp.htm>

<http://baking911.com/quick-guide/how-to-az/candy-sugar-syrup-temperature-chart>

<http://www.joyofbaking.com/StagesOfCookedSugar.html>

<http://www.food-info.net/uk/colour/caramel.htm>

<http://thebakingpan.com/sugar-and-caramel-stages/>

VINTAGE WORDS OF WISDOM

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Lillie London's Needlework Book

The Cottage Farm Month by Month

Mrs Beeton's Jam-making and Preserves

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CHAPTER I

THE ART OF PRESERVING

THE FRUIT

FRUIT intended for preserving should be gathered in the morning, in dry weather, with the morning sun upon them if possible; they then have their fullest flavour, and keep in good condition longer than when gathered at any other time. Until fruit can be used, it should be placed in a refrigerator or in the dairy. Fruit gathered in wet or foggy weather will soon mildew, and be of no service for preserves unless it is used immediately and very thoroughly boiled, when it may be made into preserve or jam that will keep, though of course of inferior quality. There is no mistake more common than to suppose that any half ripe or over-ripe fruit is good enough for jam.



PREPARING THE FRUIT

The fruit should be quite sound and not over-ripe, and must be carefully wiped and cleaned. Each recipe gives precise details, showing how the specific fruit must be prepared.

SUGAR FOR PRESERVING

Of the various kinds of sugar in common use, the white refined lump is generally sold for preserving, and, indeed, is the only kind admissible for the more delicate kinds of preserves. Coarse brown sugar conceals the flavour of fruit, and the whiter moist sugar has little sweetening power. Crystallized Demerara makes good preserves, is very sweet, seldom adulterated, and is less expensive than lump sugar, so that for common preserves it is very suitable. To help to neutralize the acidity of fruit, and yet use less sugar, successful experiments have been made by using only 8 oz. of sugar to the pound of soft fruit, such as strawberries, to this a level teaspoonful of salt is added. By this means the flavour of the fruit is better retained. The sugar should be warmed before use.

SYRUP FOR PRESERVING

Having secured the most important contributions to the manufacture of preserves, the fruit and the sugar, the next consideration is the preparation of the syrup in which the fruit is to be suspended; and this requires much care. In the confectioner's art there is a great nicety in proportioning the degree of concentration of the syrup very exactly to each particular case; this they know by signs, and express it in certain technical terms. But to distinguish these properly requires very great attention and considerable experience. The principal thing to be acquainted with is the fact that, in proportion as the syrup is longer boiled, the water contained in it will become evaporated, and the consistency of the syrup thickened. Care must be taken in the management of the fire, that the syrup does not boil over, and that the boiling is not carried to such an extent as to burn the sugar. If the preserving-pan is greased with good salad oil or butter, the jam will not be likely to burn. A solution of sugar prepared by dissolving 2 parts of double-refined sugar in 1 of water, and boiling this a little, affords a syrup of the right degree of strength, which neither ferments nor crystallizes. This appears to be the degree called **small** or **large thread** by the confectioners (215°-217° F.). The syrup employed should sometimes be clarified, which is done in the following manner: dissolve 2 lb. of loaf sugar in 1 pint of water; add to this solution the white of an egg, and beat it well. Put the preserving-pan upon the fire with the solution, stir it with a wooden spatula, and, when it begins to swell and boil up, throw in some cold water to damp the boiling, for, as it rises suddenly, should it boil over it would take fire, being of a very inflammable nature. Let it boil up again; then take it off, and remove carefully the scum that has risen. Boil the solution again, throw in a little more cold water, remove the scum, and so on for three or four times successively, then strain it. It is sufficiently boiled when some taken up in a spoon pours out like oil.

Although sugar passes so easily into the state of fermentation, yet it will not ferment at all if the quantity be sufficient to constitute a very strong syrup; hence, syrups are used to preserve fruits and other vegetable substances from the changes they would undergo if left to themselves.

FRUIT FIT FOR PRESERVATION IN SYRUP

The fruits that are the most fit for preservation in syrup are apricots, peaches, nectarines, apples, greengages, plums of all kinds, and pears. As an example, take some apricots, not too ripe, make a small slit at the stem end, withdraw the stone, simmer them in water until about half-cooked, and afterwards throw them into cold water. When they have cooled, take them out and drain them. Put the apricots into the preserving-pan with sufficient syrup to cover them; boil up three or four times, and then skim well; remove them from the fire, pour them into an earthen pan, and let them cool till next day. Boil them up three days successively, skimming each time, and they will soon be finished and in a state fit to be put into pots for use. After each boiling the consistency of the syrup should be noted; if too thin, it will bear additional boiling; if too thick, it may be lowered with more syrup of the usual standard. The reason why the fruit is emptied out of the preserving-pan into an earthen pan is, that the acid of the fruit acts upon the copper of which the preserving-pans are usually made. From this example the process of preserving fruits by syrup will be easily comprehended.

JAMS AND MARMALADES

Marmalades and jams differ little from each other: they are preserves of half liquid consistency, made by boiling the pulp of fruits, and sometimes part of the rinds, with sugar. The term marmalade is applied to those confitures which are composed of the firmer fruits, as

pineapples or the rinds of oranges; whereas jams are made of the more juicy berries, such as strawberries, raspberries, currants, mulberries, etc. Jams require the same care and attention in the boiling as marmalade; the slightest degree of burning communicates a disagreeable empyreumatic taste, and if jams are not boiled properly they will not keep.

UTENSILS NECESSARY FOR PRESERVING

To make marmalades and jams successfully a properly constructed preserving-pan or maslin-kettle is necessary. Formerly these were composed of solid brass or copper, and formed one of the careful housewife's most cherished possessions. Enamelled iron ones may now be obtained at a comparatively trifling cost,