

Organic Strawberry Jam

I've made jam only a couple of times in my life – and the jam I made was actually strawberry freezer jam. Does that count as real jam? This year, after making a second trip to Kelly's Strawberry Patch I decided to make the real stuff, the kind that can be stored on the shelf. That way I will have more room in the freezer for our garden veggies!



I wanted to make jam and use those adorable little jars because I plan to give jam and bread as gifts later on. I got a case of 12 ¼ pint jars at Wally World for around 7\$. I really didn't want to shell out that much cash, but considering this would allow me to give 12 gifts later – I bought them. I also purchased a couple of boxes of SURE JELL and 5 pounds of sugar.

Here's the shopping list for one batch of jam – but I doubled it because we LOVE it ☺

- Fresh Strawberries – 4 pints = 2 quarts = ½ gallon (Organic if possible)
- 1 box SURE JELL (I did NOT use the sugar free variety)
- 8 cups sugar (organic if possible)

First wash berries and cap them. I love to use my Pampered Chef tool to do this. The tip of a carrot scraper works well to cap the berry and remove that white pipe cleaner thingy from the middle (those things can give your strawberry dishes a bitter taste sometimes).

Next crush the berries using a potato masher, leaving some chunks. The recipe says NOT to puree the berries. So I nearly pureed my berries in the food processor ☺. I don't like chunky jam. I also don't like being told how finely I can chop my berries. I'm such a rebel so there! You will need precisely 5 cups of crushed or nearly pureed strawberries.

The proper way to prepare the jars and lids for canning is to boil everything, lids, jars, and rings and keep all items very hot until the jam is ready to pour into the jars. I loaded the jars in the dishwasher and ran the sanitize cycle with the high temp dry option. I kept the door closed until the jam was ready to pour. Meanwhile, I had boiled the rings and lids in water for a couple of minutes. I turned off the heat and left the rings and lids in the water until time to seal the jars. The lids and rings were still so hot; I had to use tongs to remove them from the pot!

In large bowl measure EXACTLY 8 cups sugar, and set aside.

Measure EXACTLY 5 cups of mashed fruit and pour into a 6-8 quart pot. Add a couple of tablespoons of lemon juice to the fruit if you like extra tanginess. Then stir in 1 box of SURE JELL into fruit and add ½ teaspoon butter to reduce foaming. Bring mixture to a full rolling boil on high heat STIRRING CONSTANTLY.

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When fruit reaches a full rolling boil, QUICKLY ADD SUGAR, RETURN TO A FULL ROLLING BOIL, AND BOIL FOR EXACTLY 1 MINUTE, STIRRING CONSTANTLY. Remove from heat and skim off any foam.

Quickly ladle jam into prepared jars, filling to within 1/8 " from the top of jar. Wipe any excess from jars and threads with a clean cloth or paper towel. Cover jars with lids and screw bands on tightly.

Place jars on an elevated rack in a canner. Lower the rack into canner. Water must cover jars by 2 inches. Add boiling water if needed. Cover, bring water to gentle boil. Process jam 10 minutes. Remove jars and place upright on a towel to cool. After jars cool check the seal of each jar by pressing middle of lid with finger. If lid springs or pops back up, it is not sealed and needs to be stored in fridge right away. Let jars stand at room temp for 24 hours. Store them in a cool dry dark place for up to a year. Refrigerate any opened jam for up to 3 weeks.

I must confess a few things. I got confused on the instructions and added my sugar to the fruit from the beginning. I also used ½ TABLESPOON butter instead of teaspoon. My eyes aren't behaving, what can I say? I also don't own a canner. So I boiled water in my largest stock pot and I used tongs to place the jars in the boiling water and to remove them. I was really pleased and a little surprised that my jam turned out the right consistency and tasted pretty good in spite of me and my mistakes.