

Myrna's Blackberry Jelly

There are some foods that Mom can make better than anyone else. I've never had a biscuit that came close to rivaling my Mom's home made ones. I've never had fried chicken that was better than hers either. And I've yet to meet anyone who went to all the trouble to pick, seed, and can home made black berry jelly – other than Mom. So it is no surprise that the thought of blackberry jelly brings back happy memories and puts a smile on my face. We ALWAYS had blackberry jelly in the pantry growing up. And hardly a week ever went by that my lips and blackberry jelly weren't together in harmony with Mom's home made biscuits.



I've wanted to give blackberry jelly a try for a few years now. This year, I decided to put on my big girl panties and just GO FOR IT! I'll admit that I didn't brave the wild, the chiggers, and the July heat and humidity to go pick my own. I cheated by purchasing the tame blackberries from the Mennonites. But the berries and I came to understand each other, and I was so pleased how the jelly turned out. I don't necessarily expect anyone to rush out and pick berries to make jelly, but I am recording the process here for posterity's sake. I hope Mom will be proud of me for passing along this tasty tradition to future generations. I give you Myrna's Blackberry Jelly:

Probably the hardest step in the blackberry jelly process is removing the seeds from the berries. Mom used to gently boil the berries with just a little water, and then strain the juice through a large strainer. This step could also be done using cheesecloth. However, I was able to shortcut this step by running the whole berries through our juicer. I had 4 containers of berries and the whole process only took a couple of minutes. I also doubled the recipe below.

The recipe:

- 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups blackberry juice
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon butter
- 1 box SURE JELL
- 5 cups sugar – measure and set aside to add to boiling juice

Prepare lids rings and jars according to manufacturer's instructions. I like to sterilize my jars in the dishwasher on SANITIZE/HIGH TEMP cycle. I place the rings and lids in a steaming pot of water for a few minutes, and leave them in the hot water until ready to seal the jars.

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Next, prepare fruit juice by removing the seeds as mentioned above. Measure the EXACT amount of juice liquid in an 8 quart pot. Up to ½ cup water may be added to the juice to reach the exact amount of liquid. Add lemon juice and butter. Bring mixture to a full rolling boil (a boil that doesn't stop when stirred) on high heat, stirring constantly. When mixture reaches a full rolling boil, quickly add sugar and continue stirring constantly for one minute. Remove from heat. Skim off any foam.

Ladle jelly mixture quickly into prepared jars to within 1/8 inch from jar top. Wipe jar and threads. Cover with lid and ring. Screw bands tightly. Place jars on elevated rack in a ready water canner (a ready water canner has steaming water in it— enough to cover jars by 1-2 inches when rack is lowered. More boiling water may be added if needed). Lower rack and cover canner, and bring water to a gentle boil. Process the jelly for 5 minutes. Higher altitudes require different processing times. Remove jars and place upright on a towel to cool completely. After jars cool, check seals by pressing middle of lid with finger. If lid springs back, jar is not properly sealed and refrigeration is required. Let jelly stand at room temperature for 24 hours. Store unopened jelly in a cool, dry, dark place for up to a year. Refrigerate opened jelly for up to 3 weeks.