

Strawberries



Quantity

A 24-quart crate weighs 36 pounds and yields 12 to 16 quarts. An average of 1 pound makes 1 pint of frozen berries.

Quality

Freeze the strawberries or preserve them on the day they are harvested for the best quality. They should be picked when they reach an ideal maturity for eating fresh. Select berries with a fresh sweet flavor, deep uniform color, and firm texture. Smaller, misshapen and seedy berries make good-quality jams.

Berry preparation

Remove the caps. Wash 1 to 2 quarts at a time and drain. Do not soak the berries.

Freezing

Freeze only up to 2 pounds of food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day.

To make a syrup pack: Mix and dissolve 2¾ cups of sugar in 4 cups of water. Add 1 cup of this syrup per quart of prepared fruit.

For a sugar pack: Mix ¾ cup of dry sugar per quart of prepared fruit.

For dry or tray pack: Simply spread a single layer of strawberries on shallow trays and freeze. When frozen, promptly package the berries and return them to the freezer.

To package, fill pint- or quart-sized freezer bags to a level of 3 to 4 inches from the top, squeeze out the air, leave 1 inch of head space, seal, label, and freeze. Before freezing, the bags may be inserted into reusable, rigid-plastic freezer containers for added protection against puncture and leakage. Dry packs need ½-inch headspace.

To use: Thaw the berries at room temperature in the original package. For faster thawing, use a microwave or submerge the berries in cool or lukewarm water.

Nutrition per ½ cup

	Syrup pack	Sugar pack	Dry pack
Calories	73.0	97.0	25.0
Carbohydrate	18.0 g	24.5 g	5.8 g
Fat	0.3 g	0.3 g	0.3 g
Vitamin C	47.0 mg	47.0 mg	47.0 mg
Dietary Fiber	2.0 g	2.0 g	2.0 g

Strawberry Jam

Yield: About 8 half pints

2 quarts crushed strawberries

6 cups sugar

Sterilize the canning jars. Wash and crush the berries. Combine the berries and sugar in a large sauce pot. Bring slowly to boil, stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves. Cook rapidly to the gelling point, about 40 minutes. As the mixture thickens, stir frequently to prevent sticking. Remove from the heat. Pour the hot jam into hot jars, leaving ¼-inch head space. Wipe the jar rims and adjust the lids. Process for 5 minutes in a boiling-water bath for altitudes 0 to 1,000 feet, 10 minutes for 1,001 to 6,000 feet.

Nutrition per 1 tablespoon

Calories	Carbohydrate	Fat	Vitamin C	Dietary fiber
39.0	10.1 g	0.0 g	5.8 mg	0.3 g

Strawberry-Rhubarb Jelly

Yield: 7 half pints

1½ pounds red stalks of rhubarb (6 cups)

1½ quarts ripe strawberries (fresh or previously frozen, unsweetened)

6 cups sugar

2 3-oz.-pouches liquid pectin

To prepare juice: Wash and cut the rhubarb into 1-inch pieces. Wash, stem and crush the strawberries. Puree the fruits in a blender or food processor. Pour the puree into a jelly bag or four layers of cheesecloth and gently squeeze out the juice.

To make jelly: Sterilize the canning jars. Measure 3½ cups of juice into a large saucepan. Add sugar and mix well. Bring to a boil over high heat, stirring constantly. Immediately stir in the pectin. Bring to a full rolling boil and boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; quickly skim off the foam. Pour the jelly immediately into hot canning jars, leaving ¼-inch head space. Wipe jar rims, adjust lids and process for 5 minutes in a boiling-water bath for altitudes 0 to 1,000 feet, 10 minutes for 1,001 to 6,000 feet.

Nutrition per 1 tablespoon

Calories	Carbohydrate	Fat	Vitamin C	Dietary fiber
47.0	12.0 g	0.0 g	5.5 mg	0.8 g

Strawberry Jam - No Sugar Needed

Yield: 6 half-pints

2 quarts strawberries

1 cup water

1 package no sugar needed powdered pectin

Wash strawberries; drain. Stem and crush strawberries; measure 5 cups. Combine strawberries and remaining ingredients in a large saucepot, stirring to dissolve pectin. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Add sweetener according to pectin package guidelines, if desired. Boil 1 minute, stirring constantly. If gel starts to form before 1 minute boil is complete, remove from heat. Ladle hot jam into hot

jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Clean jar rim with a damp towel. Adjust two-piece caps. Process in a boiling-water canner for 10 minutes at altitude 0 to 1,000 feet, 15 minutes for altitude 1,001 to 3,000 feet, or 20 minutes at altitude 3,001 to 6,000 feet.

Nutrition per 1 tablespoon

Calories	Carbohydrate	Fat	Vitamin C	Dietary fiber
4.47	1.07g	0.0 g	8.22 mg	0.6 g

Storage of jams and jellies

After the processing is completed, remove the jars from the canner with a jar lifter and place on a towel or rack. Do not retighten the screw bands. Air-cool the jars for 12 to 24 hours. Remove the screw bands and check the lid seals. If the center of the lid is indented, wash, dry, label, and store the jar in a clean, cool, dark place. If the lid is unsealed, examine and replace the jar if defective, use new lids and reprocess as before. Wash the screw bands and store separately. Jams and jellies are best if consumed within a year and are safe as long as the lids remain vacuum sealed.

Problems and Solutions

Why do strawberry pieces float to the top of jam?

The fruit was either not ripe enough, not crushed into small pieces, not cooked long enough, or not packed properly into the jars.

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Adapted from *Preserving Strawberries* by Karen P. Penner, Ph.D., Foods and Nutrition, and Jeanne Dray, Extension Assistant, Foods and Nutrition, April 1995; *Complete Guide to Home Canning*, USDA AIB No. 539, 2009, and *So Easy to Preserve*, 5th ed., The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.

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Karen Blakeslee, et al., *Preserving Strawberries*, Kansas State University, October 2010.