



Adobe Stock

Making pie filling is a great way to keep an excess of fruit from going to waste.

Food Preservation: Preserving Pie Fillings

Christine Kendle, Educator and Area Leader; Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences; Ohio State University Extension

Katharine Shumaker, Educator, Family and Consumer Sciences, Ohio State University Extension

Pie fillings are an excellent way to preserve an abundance of fruit. The following fruit fillings are excellent and safe products. Each canned quart makes one 8-inch to 9-inch pie. Additionally, the filling may be canned in pints for use as a dessert topping or pastry filling.

Because different varieties of fruit may alter the flavor of the fruit pie, it is suggested that you first make a single quart, make a pie with it, and serve. Then, adjust the sugar and spices in the recipe to suit your personal preferences. The amount of lemon juice should not be altered, as it aids in controlling the safety and storage stability of the fillings.



Adobe Stock

Make your fillings in individual quarts so not to alter the taste.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

go.osu.edu/fcsfoodpreservation

Ohio State University Extension is part of The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.

A Note About Thickeners

“Clear Jel®” is a chemically modified corn starch that produces excellent sauce consistency even after fillings are canned and baked. There are other chemically modified corn starch products on the market; however, Clear Jel® is the only one tested in these recipes. Traditional corn starch, flour, tapioca, and other thickeners may break down when used in these pie fillings, causing a runny consistency. You also must use Clear Jel®—not Instant Clear Jel®.

Apple Pie Filling

Quality: Use firm, crisp apples. Stayman, Golden Delicious, Rome, and other varieties of similar quality are suitable. If apples lack tartness, use an additional ¼ cup lemon juice for each 6 quarts of apple slices.

Yield: 1 quart or 7 quarts.

Procedure: Assemble ingredients, using Table 1 as a guide. Wash, peel, and core apples. Cut slices ½-inch wide, and then place them in a solution of ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid powder, or 3,000 milligrams vitamin C tablets, per 1 gallon of water to prevent browning.

Place 6 cups of apple slices at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch for one minute after the water returns to a boil.



Adobe Stock

Drain but keep the heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine sugar, Clear Jel®, and cinnamon in a large kettle with water and apple juice. If desired, add food coloring and nutmeg. Stir the mixture and cook on medium-high heat until the mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil for one minute, stirring constantly. Fold in drained apple slices immediately, and fill jars with the mixture without delay, leaving 1-inch headspace. Adjust the lids and process immediately (see Table 6 for processing times).

Table 1. Apple pie filling.

Ingredients	Quantities needed for 1 Quart	Quantities needed for 7 Quarts
Blanched, sliced fresh apples	3 ½ cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	¾ cup + 2 Tbsp	5 ½ cups
Clear Jel®	¼ cup	1 ½ cups
Cinnamon	½ tsp	1 Tbsp
Cold water	½ cup	2 ½ cups
Apple juice	¾ cup	5 cup
Bottled lemon juice	2 Tbsp	¾ cup
Nutmeg (optional)	⅛ tsp	1 tsp
Yellow food coloring (optional)	1 drop	7 drops

Blueberry Pie Filling

Quality: Select fresh, ripe, and firm blueberries. Unsweetened frozen blueberries may be used. If sugar has been added, rinse it off while the fruit is still frozen.

Yield: 1 quart or 7 quarts.

Procedure: Assemble ingredients using Table 2 as a guide.

For fresh fruit: Wash and drain blueberries. Place 6 cups of blueberries at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch for one minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain but keep the heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot.

Combine sugar and Clear Jel® in a large kettle. Stir. Add water and, if desired, food coloring. Stir and cook on medium-high heat until the mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice, and then boil for one minute, stirring constantly. Fold in drained berries immediately and fill jars with the mixture without delay, leaving 1-inch headspace. Adjust the lids and process immediately (see Table 6 for processing times).



Adobe Stock

Table 2. Blueberry pie filling.

Ingredients	Quantities needed for 1 quart	Quantities needed for 7 quarts
Fresh or thawed blueberries	3 ½ cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	¾ cup + 2 Tbsp	6 cups
Clear Jel®(for fresh fruit)	¼ cup + 1 Tbsp	2 ¼ cups
Cold water	1 cup	7 cups
Bottled lemon juice	3 ½ tsp	½ cup
Blue food coloring (optional)	3 drops	20 drops
Red food coloring (optional)	1 drop	7 drops

Cherry Pie Filling

Quality: Select fresh, very ripe, and firm cherries. Unsweetened frozen cherries may be used. If cherries have added sugar, rinse it off while the fruit is still frozen.

Yield: 1 quart or 7 quarts.

Procedure: Assemble ingredients using Table 3 as a guide.

For fresh fruit: Rinse and pit cherries, and then hold in cold water. To prevent stem end browning, place in a solution of ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid powder, or 3,000 milligrams vitamin C tablets, per 1 gallon water to prevent browning. Place 6 cups of cherries at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch for one minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain but keep the heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot

Combine sugar and Clear Jel® in a large saucepan and add water. If desired, add cinnamon, almond extract, and food coloring. Stir the mixture and cook over medium-high heat until the mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil for one



Adobe Stock

minute, stirring constantly. Fold in drained cherries immediately and fill jars with mixture without delay, leaving 1-inch headspace. Adjust the lids and process immediately (see Table 6 for processing times).

Table 3. Cherry pie filling.

Ingredients	Quantities needed for 1 quart	Quantities needed for 7 quarts
Fresh or thawed sour cherries	3 ½ cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	1 cup	7 cups
Clear Jel® (for fresh fruit)	¼ cup + 1 Tbsp	1 ¾ cups
Cold water	1 ⅓ cup	9 ⅓ cups
Bottled lemon juice	1 Tbsp + 1 tsp	½ cup
Cinnamon (optional)	⅛ tsp	1 tsp
Almond extract (optional)	¼ tsp	2 tsp
Red food coloring (optional)	6 drops	¼ tsp

Peach Pie Filling

Quality: Select ripe, firm, fresh, high-quality, yellow-flesh peaches. It is not safe to can white-flesh peaches.

Yield: 1 quart or 7 quarts.

Procedure: Assemble ingredients using Table 4 as a guide. Peel the peaches. To loosen their skins, submerge peaches in boiling water for approximately 30 to 60 seconds, and then place them in cold water for 20 seconds. Slip off the skins and cut slices ½ inch thick. Place in solution of ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid powder, or 3,000 milligrams of vitamin C tablets, per 1 gallon water to prevent browning.



Adobe Stock

Place 6 cups of peaches at a time in 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch one minute after the water returns to a boil. Drain but keep the heated fruit in a covered bowl or pot. Combine water, sugar, Clear Jel®, and, if desired, cinnamon and/or almond extract in a large kettle. Stir and cook over medium-high heat

until the mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil for one minute, stirring constantly. Fold in drained peach slices and continue to heat mixture for three minutes. Fill jars without delay, leaving 1-inch headspace. Adjust the lids and process immediately (see Table 6 for processing times).

Table 4. Peach pie filling.

Ingredients	Quantities needed for 1 quart	Quantities needed for 7 quarts
Sliced fresh peaches	3 ½ cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	1 cup	7 cups
Clear Jel®	¼ cup + 1 Tbsp	2 cups + 3 Tbsp
Cold water	¾ cup	5 ¼ cups
Cinnamon (optional)	⅛ tsp	1 tsp
Almond extract (optional)	⅛ tsp	¾ cup
Bottled lemon juice	¼ cup	1 ¾ cups

Green Tomato Pie Filling

Yield: About 7 quarts.

Procedure: Combine all ingredients listed in Table 5 in a large saucepan. Cook slowly, stirring often, until tender and slightly thickened (about 35 to 40 minutes). Fill jars with hot mixture, leaving ½-inch headspace. Adjust the lids and process according to the recommendations in Table 6.

Table 5. Green tomato pie filling.

Ingredients	Quantities needed for 7 quarts
Chopped green tomatoes	4 quarts
Peeled and chopped tart apples	3 quarts
Dark seedless raisins	1 lb
Golden seedless raisins	1 lb
Minced citron, lemon, or orange peel	¼ cup
Water	2 cups
Brown sugar	2 ½ cups
White sugar	2 ½ cups
Vinegar (5%)	½ cup
Bottled lemon juice	1 cup
Ground cinnamon	2 Tbsp
Ground nutmeg	1 tsp
Ground cloves	1 tsp

Table 6. Recommended process times for apply, blueberry, cherry, peach, or green tomato pie filling in a boiling water canner.

Pie Filling	Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time at Altitudes of 0-1,000 ft	Process Time at Altitudes of 1,001-3,000 ft
Apple	hot	Pints or quarts	25	30
Blueberry	Hot	Pints or quarts	30	35
Cherry	Hot	Pints or quarts	30	35
Peach Hot	Pints or quarts	Pints or quarts	30	35
Green Tomato	Hot	Quarts	15	20

Mincemeat Pie Filling

Yield: About 7 quarts.

Procedure: Assemble the ingredients using Table 7 as a guide. Cook meat and suet in water to avoid browning. Peel, core, and quarter apples. Put meat, suet, and apple quarters through a food grinder using a medium blade. Combine all ingredients in a large saucepan, and simmer for one hour or until slightly thickened. Stir often. Fill jars with mixture without delay, leaving 1-inch headspace. Adjust lids and process according to the recommendations in Table 8 or Table 9.



Adobe Stock

Table 7. Mince meat pie filling.

Ingredients	Quantities needed for 7 quarts
Finely chopped suet	2 cups
Ground beef or ground venison/sausage combination	4 lb beef or 4 lb venison plus 1 lb sausage
Chopped apples	5 quarts
Dark seedless raisins	2 lb
Golden seedless raisins	1 lb
Apple cider	2 quarts
Ground cinnamon	2 Tbsp
Ground nutmeg	2 tsp
Sugar	5 cups
Salt	2 Tbsp

Table 8. Recommended process time for mince mat pie filling in a dial gauge pressure canner.

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of 0-2,000 ft	Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of 2,001-4,000 ft
Hot	Quarts	90 minutes	11 lb	12 lb

Table 9. Recommended process time for mince meat pie filling in a weighted-pressure canner.

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of 0-1,000 ft	Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes above 1,000 ft
Hot	Quarts	90 minutes	10 lb	15 lb

Additional Resources

Note: This fact sheet uses language, recipes, procedures, and data from reliable sources such as the ones listed below. For the most part the original text has been preserved because safety around food preservation is especially important. For safe and healthy preserved foods, be sure to carefully follow directions.

- The National Center for Home Food Preservation (nchfp.uga.edu)
- USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning (nchfp.uga.edu/resources/category/usda-guide)
- University of Georgia Extension, So Easy to Preserve (extension.uga.edu/publications/detail.html?number=B989&title=so-easy-to-preserve)
- Purdue University Extension, USDA Canning Guide, 2015 (edustore.purdue.edu/aig-539.html)

Originally written in 1989 (no authors credited). Revised 2008 and 2016 by Christine Kendle and Katharine Shumaker, Educators, Ohio State University Extension.

No endorsement from The Ohio State University for products shown is intended or implied.

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information, visit cfaes.osu.edu/nondiscrimination. For an accessible format of this publication, visit cfaes.osu.edu/accessibility.

Find this fact sheet online at ohioline.osu.edu/factsheet/HYG-5355.

JUNE 2025