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## How to Make Homemade FROG Jam (Fig-Raspberry-Orange-Ginger Jam) !

Yield: 6-8 half pints (8-ounce each) of jam

FROG Jam (or F.R.O.G. jam) isn't made from real frogs... it actually tastes delicious and is easy to make; from figs, raspberries, oranges and ginger. You can easily "can" it to make your own shelf-stable preserves to give away as gifts. Here's how to do it, in 10 easy steps and completely illustrated. The fig and strawberry combination is a perfect match: the sweetness of figs coupled with the tartness and aromatic flavor of raspberries, oranges and ginger is ideal, allowing you to use much less sugar or even go sugarless! This recipe is all-natural, using fresh or frozen raspberries and figs. Fresh oranges and ginger are always available. Some other FROG recipe I've seen call for Jell-O instead of real fruit or pectin!



### Ingredients

- **5 cups fresh figs** - You'll need about 3 cups of prepared figs, so you'll start with about 4 or 5 cups of fresh figs, any variety (Brown Turkey, Kadota, Peter's Honey, Italian, Black Mission, Celeste, Alma, etc.) You can use frozen figs.
- **1/2 cup orange juice** - best with lots of pulp
- **4 cups fresh raspberries** - preferably fresh raspberries, but frozen (without added sugar or syrup) works, too. You'll need about 2 to 3 cups, in total, of prepared raspberries, so you may need 4 to 5 cups of fresh berries, after removing hulls, stems and bad berries. And more if you want to make seedless, as you lose about 40% when removing seeds. I prefer to remove the seeds using a Foley food mill or a sieve.
- **1 teaspoon fresh peeled, pureed ginger** - available at farm markets and grocery stores, especially Asian markets. You can buy it already pureed.
- **Sugar** - About 2 and 1/4 cups of dry, granulated (table) sugar. You could use 1.5 cups of Agave or honey instead, but honestly, the quality will suffer. You can omit the sugar and just add 1 cup of juice (white grape or peach work best), or if you are diabetic, even just use 1 cup Splenda (or about 1/3 that if you use Stevia).
- **Pectin** - 4 Tablespoons of low-sugar (or no-sugar needed) pectin. If you like the jam very thick, use 6 or 7 tablespoons of pectin. I do not recommend the "regular" pectin. It only works reliably under ideal conditions, and loads of added sugar.
- **1/4 cups lemon juice**

### Equipment

- **1 Canner** (a huge pot to sanitize the jars after filling (about \$30 to \$35 at mall kitchen stores, sometimes at big box stores and grocery stores.). Note: [we sell canners and supplies here, too - at excellent prices](#) - and it helps support this web site!
- **Ball jars** (Grocery stores, like Publix, Kroger, Safeway carry them, as do some big box stores - about \$7 per dozen 8 ounce jars including the lids and rings)
- **Lids** - thin, flat, round metal lids with a gum binder that seals them against the top of the jar. They may only be used once.
- **Rings** - metal bands that secure the lids to the jars. They may be reused many times.

[http://pickyourown.org/FROG\\_jam\\_recipe.htm](http://pickyourown.org/FROG_jam_recipe.htm)

- **Jar funnel** (\$2 at Target, other big box stores, and often grocery stores; and available online - see this page) or order it as part of the kit with the jar grabber.
- **At least 1 large pot**; I prefer 16 to 20 quart Teflon lined pots for easy cleanup.
- **Large spoons and ladles**
- **Jar grabber** (to pick up the hot jars)- Big box stores and grocery stores sometimes carry them; and it is available online - see this page. It's a tremendously useful to put jars in the canner and take the hot jars out (without scalding yourself!). The kit sold below has everything you need, and at a pretty good price:

## Optional stuff:

- **Lid lifter** (has a magnet to pick the lids out of the boiling water where you sanitize them. (\$2 at big box stores or it comes in the kit at left)

## FROG Jam-making Directions

### Step 1 - Pick the figs and berries! (or buy them already picked)

It's fun to go pick your own and you can obviously get better quality ones!

At right is a picture I took of Brown Turkey figs - they are plentiful in late August throughout the South. Other types of figs are fine, too. Raspberries are usually in season in May or June in most areas, so you may want to pick and freeze your raspberries (without sugar) and make this jam when the figs come in season. [See this page on freezing raspberries.](#)

I prefer to grow my own; which is really easy, especially for figs, raspberries can more challenging - but growing anything does take some space and time. That's why we have pick-your-own farms!

As mentioned above; you may use frozen berries (those without syrup or added sugar); which is especially useful if you want to make some jam in December to give away at Christmas!

Above and at left are raspberries that I picked at a pick-your-own farm. If you want to pick your own, here is a list and links to the [pick your own farms](#).

### How much fruit?

Jam can ONLY be made in rather small batches - about 6 cups of prepared fruit at a time - like the directions on the pectin say, DO NOT increase the recipes or the jam won't "set" (jell, thicken). (WHY? Alton Brown on the Food Channel says pectin can overcook easily and lose its thickening properties. It is easier and faster to get an even heat distribution in smaller batches. It takes about 4 cups of raw, unprepared berries and 4 cups of raw, whole, fresh figs per batch.

### Step 2 - Wash the jars and lids

Canning jars in the dishwasher. Now's a good time to get the jars ready, so you won't be rushed later. The dishwasher is fine for the jars; especially if it has a "sanitize" cycle, the water bath processing will sanitize them as well as the contents! If you don't have a dishwasher with a sanitize cycle, you can wash the containers in hot, soapy water and rinse, then sanitize the jars by boiling them 10 minutes, and keep the jars in hot water until they are used.



NOTE: If a canning recipe calls for 10 minutes or more of process time in the canner, then the jars do not need to be "sanitized" before filling them. But really, sanitizing them first is just good hygiene and common sense! [See this page for more detail about cleaning and sanitizing jars and lids.](#)

Put the lids into a pan of hot, but not quite boiling water (that's what the manufacturer's recommend) for 10 minutes, and use the magnetic "lid lifter wand" to pull them out. Leave the jars in the dishwasher on "heated dry" until you are ready to use them. Keeping them hot will prevent the jars from breaking when you fill them with the hot jam.

### Step 3 -Wash the raspberries!

I'm sure you can figure out how to wash the fruit in plain cold water.

### Step 4 -Remove the raspberry seeds (optional)

I usually remove the seeds because they are a size that get stuck in my teeth. The easiest way to do this is to use a food mill; a Villaware (manual or motorized) or a Roma mill; not a Foley\*. I find the seeds separate more easily if I



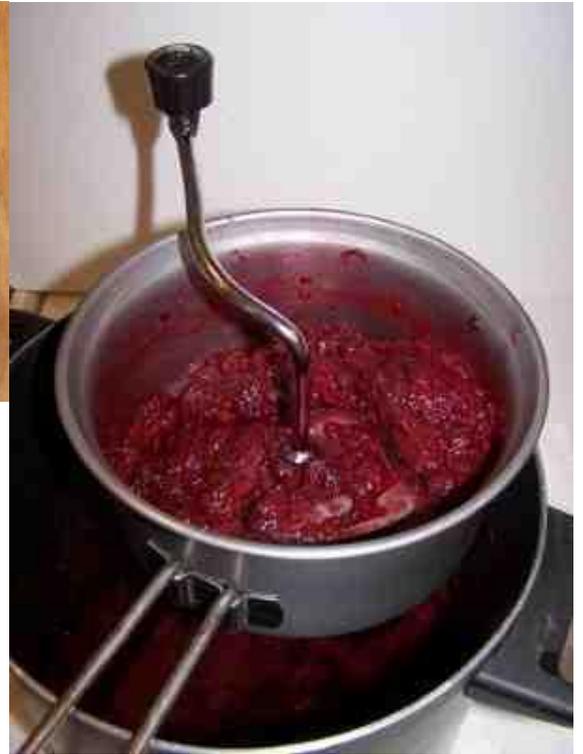
heat the raspberries up until almost boiling, in a pan with about 1 cup of added apple juice.

As you can see, it is really effective at removing just the seeds:



ASIDE: Here's how the Foley food mill (below) works on BLACKBERRIES - not raspberries. They cost about \$30.

It works well for blackberries, not so well for raspberries, and no one tries to remove strawberry seeds (they're so small). I suppose you could train monkeys to pick them out, but they'd probably form a trade labor union. But I digress..



### Step 5 - Peel and chop the figs

You need to cut off the stems and the bottom of the fig, but you do not need to peel them - you CAN peel them if you want to. I only peel the grody\* looking ones (example photo below) or those with thick skins.

(\* knarly, gross, yucky)

At left, sample figs with unappealing peels (skins). If the skin looks fine, I chop it up, but if the skins are tough, think or unappealing like these...

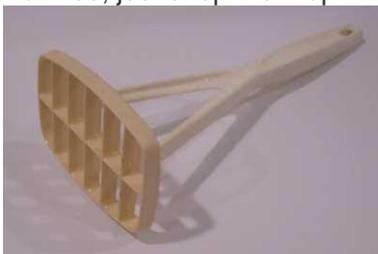


At left is a sample slice of a perfectly ripe but not over-ripe fig. It depends on the variety, but generally, they should be pink/yellowish and not brown inside....

I peel ----->



Some recipes call for the figs to sit in boiling water for 5 to 15 minutes to "check or tenderize the skins. Since the skins have no flavor, I'd rather remove them if they are thick or tough... otherwise, just chop them up along with the rest of the fig. I do remove any stems and bruised spots.



You'll need 3 cups of the prepared (chopped) figs. You can chop them up more, if you like, but I find they soften and break up during cooking, and if I want smaller pieces, I just use a sharp-edged plastic potato masher (shown at right) to mash them while cooking)



You should now have 2 or 3 cups of sliced raspberries and 3 to 4 cups of chopped figs!

## Step 6 - Puree or blend?

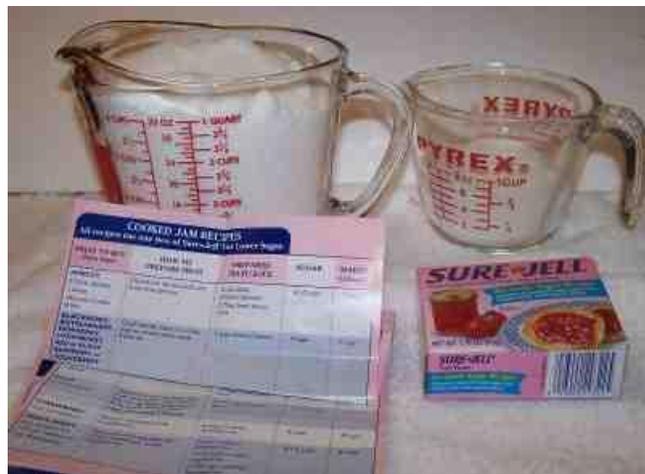
If you like a very, very smooth FROG jam you can run the figs and raspberries through a blender, chopper or food processor. I like to see chunks of real fruit in the jam, so I don't.

If you have prepared ginger puree, it's all ready. If you have fresh ginger root, you need to peel it and crush it. I prefer to use the blender on the peeled ginger root.

## Step 7 - Measure out the sugar and set aside

If you are using low or no-sugar pectin, you should only need 2 and 1/4 cups of sugar. With regular pectin, about 4 cups of sugar. Mix the dry pectin with about 1/4 cup of sugar and keep this separate from the rest of the sugar. If you are not using sugar, you'll just have to stir more vigorously to prevent the pectin from clumping. This helps to keep the pectin from clumping up and allows it to mix better!

If you would rather try to make jam with no added sugar, just substitute 1 cup of white grape or peach juice for the sugar. You could also use 1 cup Splenda (or about 1/3 that if you use Stevia, which is my preference) instead of the sugar! Or, as pointed out in the ingredients section, Agave or Honey.



## Step 8 - Mix the raspberries and figs with the pectin and cook to a full boil

If you haven't already, combine the berries and figs in a large pot. Stir the lemon juice, ginger and pectin into the berry/fig mixture. Hold off on the sugar - that goes in after the mix comes to a boil, in step 10.

Put the pot on the stove over medium to high heat (stir often enough to prevent burning). It should take about 5 to 10 minutes to get it to a full boil (the kind that cannot be stirred away).

**Why use pectin?** You may run into grandmotherly types who sniff "*I never used pectin!*" at you. Well, sure, and their generation took a horse and buggy to work, died of smallpox and ate canned meat and green beans that tastes like wet newspapers. Old fashioned ways are not always better nor healthier. Pectin, which occurs naturally in fruit, is what makes the jam "set" or thicken. The pectin you buy is just natural apple pectin, more concentrated. Using pectin dramatically reduces the cooking time, which helps to preserve the vitamins and flavor of the fruit, and uses much less added sugar. But, hey, if you want to stand there and stir for hours, cooking the flavor away, who am I to stop you! :) Having said that, there are some fruits that have naturally high amounts of pectin ([see this page for a list](#)) and they simply don't need much or even any padded pectin.



## Step 9 - Get the lids warming in hot (but not boiling) water

If you haven't done so already, put the lids into a pan of hot water (barely simmering) for at least several minutes; to soften up the gummed surface and clean the lids.



## Step 10 - Add the remaining sugar and bring to a boil

When the berry-pectin mix has reached a full boil (photo at right), add the rest of the sugar (about 2 cups of sugar per 6 cup batch of berries - OR the 1 cup of fruit juice OR the 1 cup Splenda (or about 1/3 that if you use Stevia, which is my preference)) and then



## Step 11 - Return to a full, hard boil for 1 minute

... bring it back to a boil and boil hard for 1 minute.

Remove from the heat.

## Step 12 - Skim any excessive foam

Foam... What is it? Just jam with a lot of air from the boiling. But it tastes more like, well, foam, that jam, so most people remove it. It is harmless, though. Some people add 1 teaspoon of butter or margarine to the mix in step 6 to reduce foaming, but food experts debate whether that may contribute to earlier spoilage, so I usually omit it and skim.

But save the skimmed foam! You can recover jam from it to use fresh! See this page for directions!



## Step 13 - Testing for "jell" (thickness)

I keep a metal tablespoon sitting in a glass of ice water, then take a half spoonful of the mix and let it cool to room temperature on the spoon. If it thickens up to the consistency I like, then I know the jam is ready. If not, I mix in a little more pectin (about 1/4 to 1/2 of another package) and bring it to a boil again for 1 minute.

**Notes about "set" (thickening or jell):** It takes 3 ingredients for jams and jellies to set: pectin, sugar and acidity, heated uniformly for the right amount of time. The amount of pectin that is naturally occurring in the fruit varies from one type of fruit to another and by ripeness (counter intuitively, unripe contains more pectin).

[See this page](#) for more about pectin in fruit. It takes the right balance, and sufficient amounts of each of pectin, sugar and acidity to result in a firm jam or jelly. Lastly, it takes a brief period (1 minute) of a hard boil, to provide enough heat to bring the three together. Generally speaking, if your jam doesn't firm up, you were short in pectin, sugar or acidity or didn't get a hard boil. That's ok - you can "remake" the jam; see [this page](#)!



## Step 14 - Optional: Let stand for 5 minutes and stir completely.

Why? Otherwise, the fruit will often float to the top of the jar. This isn't a particular problem; you can always stir the jars later when you open them; but some people get fussy about everything being "just so", so I've included this step! Skipping this step won't affect the quality of the jam at all. I usually don't bother.

You'll also notice that the less sugar you use, the more the fruit will float (chemists will tell you it is due to the decreased density of the solution!)



## Step 15 - Fill the jars and put the lid and rings on

Fill them to within 1/4-inch of the top, wipe any spilled

jam off the top, seat the lid and tighten the ring around them. Then put the filled jars into the canner!



## Step 16 - Process the jars in the boiling water bath

This is where the jar tongs come in really handy!

Keep the jars covered with at least 2 inches of water. Keep the water boiling. In general, boil them for 10 minutes, which is what SureJell (the makers of the pectin) recommend. I say "in general" because you have to process (boil) them longer at higher altitudes than sea level, or if you use larger jars, or if you did not sanitize the jars and lids right before using them. The directions inside every box of pectin will tell you exactly. The directions on the pectin tend to be pretty conservative. Clemson University says you only need to process them for 5 minutes. I usually hedge my bets and start pulling them out after 5 minutes, and the last jars were probably in for 10. I rarely have a jar spoil, so it must work. But you don't want to process them too long, or the jam will turn dark and get runny. See the chart below for altitude adjustment to processing times, if you are not in the sea level to 1,000ft above sea level range.

Note: Some people don't even boil the jars; they just ladle it hot into hot jars, put the lids and rings on and invert them, but putting the jars in the boiling water bath REALLY helps to reduce spoilage! To me, it makes little sense to put all the working into making the jam and then not to process the jars to be sure they don't spoil!



Recommended process time for jams in a boiling water canner.				
		Process Time at Altitudes of		
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Half-pints or Pints	5 min	10	15



## Step 17 - Remove and cool the jars - Done!

Lift the jars out of the water with your jar lifter tongs and let them cool without touching or bumping them in a draft-free place (usually takes overnight) You can then remove the rings if you like, but if you leave them on, at least loosen them quite a bit, so they don't rust in place due to trapped moisture. Once the jars are cool, you can check that they are sealed verifying that the lid has been sucked down. Just press in the center, gently, with your finger. If it pops up and down (often making a popping sound), it is not sealed. If you put the jar in the refrigerator right away, you can still use it. Some people replace the lid and reprocess the jar, then that's a bit iffy. If you heat the contents back up, re-jar them (with a new lid) and the full time in the canner, it's usually ok.



Once cooled, they're ready to store. I find they last up to 12 months. But after about 6 to 8 months, they get darker in color and start to get runny. They still are safe to eat, but the flavor and texture aren't as good. So eat them in the first 6 months after you prepare them! Another trick is to keep the uncooked berries or other fruit in the freezer and make and can the jam as needed, so it's always fresh.

## FAQS

- **A visitor writes on June 09, 2014:** "I would like to convert it to a jelly recipe. I know how to strain out the juices for the jelly making, but how can I determine how much sugar, pectin & lemon juice is needed? I can look at various recipes on this site, but I'm still guessing how much of each would be needed. Any helpful hints/tips on this?"

**Answer:**

To make it into a jelly... I'll tell you that is tough, due to the viscosity of figs and the seeds in raspberries. Usually, a jelly strainer or cheesecloth is use, but you will lose so much pulp, that it would cost a fortune. I would suggest, instead, it is more practical to just run it through a sieve or better, a Foley food mill (about \$22) and then through a blender or food processor to make it really smooth.

- **Comments from a visitor on July 08, 2013:** "I used your recipe last year for FROG jam. I am down to the last two jars and just canned some fresh filling. I noticed that the color of last years is more brown than red. Is it still good? I LOVE your website and refer to it constantly! Robin Howard

**Answer:**

Yes, over time, the color usually darkens and the jam gets a bit more runny, but if it is still sealed and no other signs of spoilage are present, it's safe to eat!

Summary - Typical Cost of Making Homemade Jam - makes 8 jars, 8 oz each**				
Item	Quantity	Cost in	Source	Subtotal
Figs	5 cups	\$3	Pick your own, or grow your own (figs are EASY to grow)	\$3
Berries	4 cups (prepared)	\$5	Pick your own	\$5.00
Ginger	1 teaspoon	\$0.25	Market or grocery store	\$0.25
Orange juice	1/2 cup	\$0.25	Grocery store	\$0.25
Canning jars (8 oz size), includes lids and rings	8 jars	\$/dozen 8 oz jars	Grocery stores, like Public, Kroger, Safeway and sometimes, Big Lots, local hardware stores and big box stores	\$10.00
Sugar	4 cups	\$2.00	Grocery stores, like Public, Kroger, Safeway and sometimes, Big Lots, local hardware stores and big box stores	\$2.00
Pectin (low sugar, dry)	1 and a third boxes *	\$2.00 per box	Grocery stores, like Public, Kroger, Safeway and sometimes, Big Lots, local hardware stores and big box stores	\$2.70
Total				\$23.20 total or about \$2.90 per jar (If you have jars to re-use, it's only \$1.65 per jar)

\*\* - This assumes you already have the pots, pans, ladles, and reusable equipment. Note that you can reuse the jars; just buy new lids (the rings are reusable, but the flat lids are not)!

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## FAQs - Answers to Common Questions

- **Why should cooked jelly be made in small batches?**  
If a larger quantity of juice is used, it will be necessary to boil it longer thus causing loss of flavor, darkening of jelly, and toughening of jelly. It really doesn't work. Trust me; I've tried many times!
- **Can I use frozen berries instead of fresh?**  
Yep! Raspberries can be particularly hard to find fresh and are expensive! Frozen berries work just fine, and measure the same. Just be sure to get the loose, frozen whole fruit; not those that have been mushed up or frozen in a sugar syrup!
- **Should jelly be boiled slowly or rapidly?**  
It should be boiled rapidly since long, slow boiling destroys the pectin in the fruit juice.
- **What do I do if there's mold on my jellied fruit product?**  
Discard jams and jellies with mold on them. The mold could be producing a mycotoxin (poisonous substance that can make you sick). USDA and microbiologists recommend against scooping out the mold and using the remaining jam or jelly.
- **Why did my jellied fruit product ferment, and what do I do?**  
Jellied fruit products may ferment because of yeast growth. This can occur if the product is improperly processed and sealed, or if the sugar content is low. Fermented fruit products have a disagreeable taste. Discard them.
- **What happens if my jam or jelly doesn't gel?**  
[Remaking cooked runny jam or jelly instructions can be found on this page](#)