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How to Make Homemade Grape Jelly from Bottled Grape Juice - Easily!

Making and canning your own grape jelly from grape juice (either bottled, frozen or fresh) is also quite easy. Here's how to do it, in a few easy steps and completely illustrated. You can use bottled white grape juice, red, Concord or any other variety; or even frozen juice concentrate. You can make the jelly sugarless, or add sugar, honey or even Stevia, my preference (or if you prefer, Splenda), depending upon your own needs and tastes. These directions work equally well to make other types of jelly from other juice, such as raspberry, blackberry, etc.; by themselves or mixed berry jelly, or [see this page for directions about making other types of jelly from bottled or frozen juice](#). Any variations will be spelled out in the directions inside the pectin package.



Related pages: See this page for [How to make muscadine or scuppernong jelly](#) or [this page for Jam-making directions](#) and [this page for apple jelly](#) directions!

For easy [applesauce](#) or [apple butter](#) directions, click on these links.

Ingredients

Yield: about 12 eight-ounce jars (which is the same as 6 pints).

- **Grape juice** - 6 cups bottled, without sugar added or reconstituted from frozen, without sugar
- **Pectin** - 2 boxes needed (it's a natural product, made from apples and available at grocery stores (season - spring through late summer) and local "big box" stores. It usually goes for about \$2.00 to \$2.50 per box. You'll get best results with no-sugar needed pectin, whether you choose to add sugar or not! [See here for more information about how to choose the type of pectin to use.](#)
- **Sugar** - About 4.5 cups of dry, granulated (table) sugar, if you use the no-sugar-needed pectin (the only type I recommend) or low sugar pectin. If you use regular pectin, you'll need 7 cups of sugar. Of course, you can substitute honey, agave, stevia or Splenda; see the [no-sugar recipe, click here.](#)

Equipment

- **At least 1 large pot**; I prefer 16 to 20 quart Teflon lined pots for easy cleanup.
- **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.

- **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)
- **Large spoons and ladles**
- **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.
- **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:



Grape Jelly-from-Juice Directions

This example shows you how to make grape jelly. You can use this recipe to make almost any type of jelly from the fruit juice; where there is a difference, I will point it out! The yield from this recipe is about 12 eight-ounce jars (which is the same as 6 pints).

Step 1 - Wash the jars and lids

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 unsanitized jars are used, the product should be processed for 5 more minutes. However, since this additional processing can result in a poor set (runny jelly), it's better to sanitize the jars.

Put the lids into a pan of hot, but not quite boiling water (that's what the manufacturer's recommend) for 5 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 jelly.

Step 2 - Measure out the sugar

Check the directions with the pectin; typically, it is 7 cups of sugar for regular pectin (4.5 cups for no-sugar pectin) to 5 or 6 cups of grape juice and one box of pectin; but I add about another 1/2 box of pectin to get a firmer set. The precise measurements are found in each and every box of pectin sold. 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.

Again, if you use regular pectin, you'll need 7 cups of sugar, which is a LOT of sugar, so I recommend using the no-sugar-needed pectin, which halves the sugar. Of course, you can substitute honey, agave, stevia or Splenda; see the [no-sugar recipe, click here](#).

Step 3 - Add the pectin to the hot juice and bring to a full boil

Stir the pectin into the grape juice and put the mix in a big 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).

Notes about pectin: I usually add about 30% to 50% more pectin (just open another pack and add a little) or else the jelly is runnier than I like. With a little practice, you'll find out exactly how much pectin to get the thickness you like.

Another tip: use the low sugar or no-sugar pectin. It cuts the amount of sugar you need from 7 cups per batch to 4 cups. And it tastes even better! On the other hand; I still add some sugar, even with the No-sugar pectin. With no added sugar, the batches always turned out runny and bland. You might want to try using the low sugar recipe with a mixture of sugar and Stevia, my preference (or if you prefer, Splenda); that could work.



Is your jelly too runny? Pectin enables you to turn out perfectly set jelly every time. Made from natural apples, there are also natural no-sugar pectins that allow you to reduce the sugar you add by half or even eliminate sugar.!

Step 4 - Get the lids warming

If you didn't do so already, put the lids into a pan of hot water for at least several minutes; to soften up the gummed surface and clean the lids.

Step 5 - Add the remaining sugar and bring to a boil

When the grape-pectin mix has reached a full boil, add the rest of the sugar (for regular pectin; about 6 and 3/4 cups of sugar per 6 cup batch of grape juice; or 4 cups of sugar if you are using the low or no-sugar pectin) and then bring it back to a boil and boil hard for 1 minute.



Step 6 - 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 jelly 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.



Step 7 - Fill the jars and put the lid and rings on

Fill them to within $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch of the top, wipe any spilled jelly off the top, seat the lid and tighten the ring around them. Then put them into the boiling water canner!



This is where the jar tongs come in really handy!



Step 8 - Process the jars in the boiling water bath

Keep the jars covered with at least 2 inches of water. Keep the water boiling. In general, boil them for 5 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 - and see the Table



below for altitude differences. The directions on the pectin tend to be pretty conservative. 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 jelly and then not to process the jars to be sure they don't spoil!

Recommended process time for Grape Jelly 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 9 - 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!

Other Equipment:

From left to right:

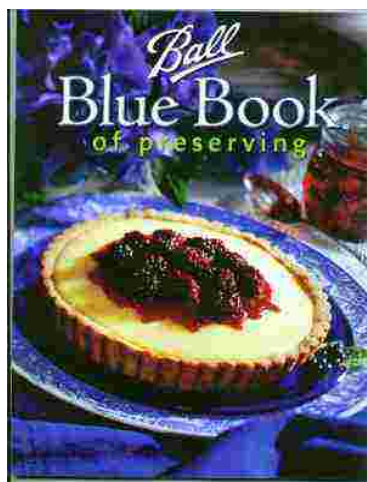
1. Jar lifting tongs to pick up hot jars
2. Lid lifter - to remove lids from the pot of boiling water (sterilizing)
3. Lid - disposable - you may only use them once
4. Ring - holds the lids on the jar until after the jars cool - then you don't need them
5. Canning jar funnel - to fill the jars



Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I was reading the instructions on making grape jelly from fresh grapes. We have a super-duper juicer that we can run the grapes through and skip the grape-food processor/ crushing steps, but is that a suitable thing to do?

A. Sure, that ought to work great!



The Ball Blue Book of Preserving

This is THE book on canning! My grandmother used this book when I was a child. It tells you in simple instructions how to can almost anything; complete with recipes for jelly, jellies, pickles, sauces, canning vegetables, meats, etc. If it can be canned, this book likely tells you how! Click on the link below for more information and / or to buy (no obligation to buy)

[Click here for more information from Amazon.com about the Ball Blue Book of Preserving](#)

Summary - Typical Cost of Making Homemade Grape Jelly - makes 11 to 13 jars, 8 oz each**

Item	Quantity	Cost in 2013	Source	Subtotal
Grape juice	1.5 quarts (a quart and a half)	\$3.00/quart	Grocery stores	\$4.50
Canning jars (8 oz size), includes lids and rings	12 jars	\$7.00/dozen	Grocery stores, like Publix, Kroger, Safeway, sometimes, Big Lots, local hardware & big box stores	\$7.00
Sugar	4 cups	\$2.00	Grocery stores, Publix, Kroger, Safeway and sometimes, Big Lots, local hardware & big box stores	\$2.00
Pectin (low sugar, dry)	1 and a third boxes *	\$2.00 per box	Grocery stores, like Publix, Kroger, Safeway and sometimes, Big Lots, local hardware & big box stores	\$2.70
Total				\$16.20 total or about \$1.35 per jar

* pectin use varies - blackberry jelly needs very little, raspberry a little more, grape the most.

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

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!
- **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.
- **I just finished making my second batch of grape jelly. The first one came out perfect; the second one is not clear like the first. It's not as transparent as the first, almost like bubbles. What would of caused this? I did everything the same I thought. I'm sure the taste is fine, it's just the appearance.**
You can clarify the juice more next time. Try filtering it through several layers of cheesecloth or muslin - or even coffee filters. Also try avoiding any contact with metals - use plastic, glass and/or Teflon coated bowls and cookware - acids in the juice may react with the metals to become cloudy!
- **What happens if my jam or jelly doesn't gel?**
[Remaking cooked runny jam or jelly instructions can be found on this page!](#)