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## How to Make Homemade Muscadine or Scuppernong Jelly - Easily!



Making and canning your own muscadine or scuppernong jelly is also quite easy. Here's how to do it, in 12 easy steps and completely illustrated. These directions work equally well for other types of fruit jelly: grape, raspberry, blackberry, boysenberry, dewberry, gooseberry, loganberry, tayberry, marionberry, youngberry, etc.; by themselves or mixed berry jelly. Any variations will be spelled out in the directions inside the pectin.

### Related directions:

- [apple jelly](#)
- [grape jelly](#)
- [jam](#)
- [applesauce](#)
- [apple butter](#)

## Ingredients and Equipment

- **Muscadine or Scuppernong Grapes** - 5 lbs of fresh muscadines or scuppernongs, preferably fresh, but if you want to start with grape juice (5 cups bottled or reconstituted from frozen, without sugar), you can skip to step 7.
- **Pectin** (it's a natural product, made from apples and available at grocery stores (season - spring through late summer) and in Wal-mart, grocery stores, etc. It usually goes for about \$2.00 to \$2.50 per box. [See here for more information about how to choose the type of pectin to use.](#)
- **Large spoons and ladles**
- **Jar funnel** (\$2 at WalMart, Target, and sometimes at grocery stores) or order it as part of the kit with the jar grabber.
- **Sugar** - About 4.5 cups of dry, granulated (table) sugar. For the [no-sugar recipe, click here](#)
- **Jar grabber** (to pick up the hot jars)- WalMart carries it *sometimes* - or order it here. It's a tremendously useful to put cars 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:
- **At least 1 large pot**; I prefer 16 to 20 quart Teflon lined pots for easy cleanup.
- **Jelly strainer** - see step 6 - or a colander and cheesecloth.
- **1 Canner** (a huge pot to sterilize the jars after filling (about \$30 to \$35 at mall kitchen stores, sometimes at WalMart (seasonal item). Note: [we sell canners and supplies here, too - at excellent prices](#) - and it helps support this web site!
- **Ball jars** (Publix, WalMart carry them - 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.

### Optional stuff:



- **Foley Food Mill** (\$25) - not necessary; useful to mush up the fruit or if you want to remove seeds (for example, from blackberries) or [make applesauce](#).
- **Lid lifter** (has a magnet to pick the lids out of the boiling water where you sterilize them. (\$2 at WalMart or it comes in the kit at left)

## Muscadine or Scuppernong Jelly-making Directions

This example shows you how to make either muscadine or scuppernong jelly. (What is a muscadine? It's a large type of grape, with large seeds and a stronger flavor. They're more common in the deep South), 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 - Pick the muscadines! (or buy them already picked)



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

I prefer to grow my own; which is really easy - but that does take some space and time. Select grapes that are in the just ripe stage.

As mentioned in the Ingredients section; you may use either 4 lbs of fresh muscadines or 5 cups of grape juice (either bottled or reconstituted from frozen concentrate) without added sugar. Using grape juice is especially useful if you want to make some grape jelly

<http://www.pickyourown.org/muscadinejelly.htm>

in December to give away at Christmas! Above and below are muscadines 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](#).

## Step 2 - How much fruit?

Muscadine or Scuppernong jelly can ONLY be made in rather small batches - about 6 cups at a time - like the directions on the pectin say, DO NOT increase the recipes or the grape jelly won't "set" (jell, thicken). It takes about 5 lbs of raw, unprepared grapes per batch.

## Step 3 - 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, the water bath processing will sterilize them as well as the contents! If you don't have a dishwasher, you can wash the containers in hot, soapy water and rinse, then sterilize the jars by boiling them 10 minutes, and keep the jars in hot water until they are used.

NOTE: If unsterilized 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 sterilized the jars.

Put the lids into a pan of boiling water 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 4 - Wash the muscadines!

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

Pick out any stems and leaves that became mixed in!



#### Step 5 - Crush the muscadines



Then you just mush them up. A potato masher is useful to help crush them. Even easier is to use a food processor, with the slicing blade.



Either way, to make jelly, we'll need to crush them well so we can extract the juice. You'll need about 6 cups of juice.

#### Step 6 - Measure out the sugar

Check the directions with the pectin; typically, with regular pectin, it is 7 cups of sugar to 5 cups of grape juice and one box of pectin. If you use the low-sugar or no sugar pectin, you can reduce or eliminate sugar. Personally, I find that using about 4 cups of sugar with the no-sugar pectin works best for flavor, calorie reduction and appearance. The precise measurements are found in each and every box of pectin sold. Remove 1/4 cup of sugar from this and mix the dry pectin with it. Keep this separate from the rest of the sugar.



### Step 7 - Heat the crushed muscadines on the stove



We just want to bring the muscadines to a boil to help release the juice and break down some of the fruit to help it pass through our jelly strainer. Put the crushed muscadines in a big pot on the stove over medium to high heat (stir often enough to prevent burning) for until it starts to boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes.

### Step 8 - Sieve the cooked muscadines



You can either put the soft cooked muscadines through a jelly strainer (about \$9.00, see ordering at right) which results in the most clear jelly and is easiest to use, or pour them through cheesecloth in a colander. Or if you don't mind chunky jelly, just let the juice stand for 20 minutes, and decant (pour off) the clear liquid to use and leave the solids behind.

You may also want to run the crushed cooked muscadines through a Foley food mill ([about \\$20 - see this page](#)) BEFORE jelly strainer - it helps to extract more juice and get out the large skins that will clog the strainer.



If you need a stopping point and want to finish up the next day, this is a good place. Sometimes, jelly gets crystals, called tartrate crystals, forming in the jelly. They're not harmful and don't affect the taste, but some people don't like the appearance. If so, pour the cool juice into glass containers and set in refrigerator. The next day strain the juice through the cloth jelly bag. Do not squeeze the bag.

### Step 9 - Add the pectin to the hot strained juice and bring to a full boil

<http://www.pickyourown.org/muscadinejelly.htm>

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 can not be stirred away).



**Notes about pectin:** I usually add about 20% 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 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 have never had success with the No-sugar pectin. It always turned out runny and bland. You might want to try using the low sugar recipe with a mixture of sugar and Splenda; that could work.



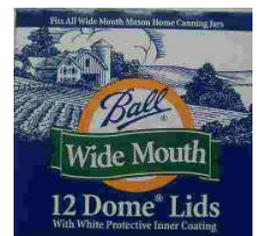
Is your jelly too runny? Pectin enables you to turn out perfectly set jelly every time. Made from natural apples, there are also low-sugar pectins that allow you to reduce the sugar you add by almost half!

[Get it here at BETTER prices!](#)



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[Get them all here, delivered direct to your home, at the best prices on the internet!](#)



### Step 10 - Get the lids sterilizing

Lids: 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 11 - 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 (about 7 cups of sugar per 5 cup batch of grape juice; 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 12 - Testing for "jell" (thickness)

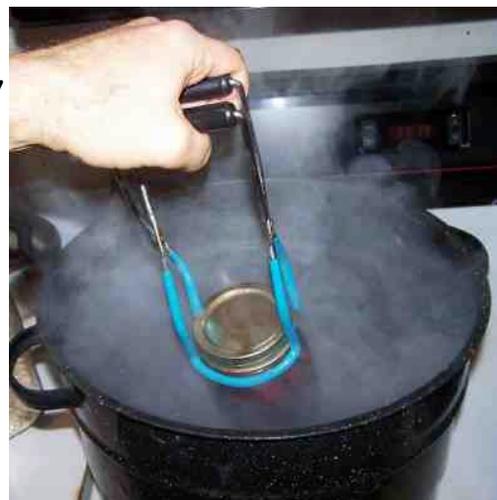
I keep a metal tablespoon sitting in a glass of ice water, then take a half spoonful of the mix and let it cool to room temperature on the spoon. If it thickens up to the consistency I like, then I know the jelly is ready. If not, I mix in a little more pectin (about 1/4 to 1/2 of another package) and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



### Step 13 - Fill the jars and put the lid and rings on



Fill them to within 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 14 - Process the jars in the boiling water bath

Keep the jars covered with at least 1 inch 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 sterilize 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!

**Table 1. Recommended process time for Muscadine 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 15 - 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.

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



You can get all of the tools in a kit here:

### Summary - Typical Cost of Making Homemade Grape Jelly - makes 12 jars, 8 oz each\*\*

Item	Quantity	Cost in 2005	Source	Subtotal
Grapes	4 lbs	\$1.00/lb	Pick your own	\$4.00
Canning jars (8 oz size), includes lids & rings	12 jars	\$7.00/dozen	WalMart, BigLots, Publix, Kroger	\$7.00
Sugar	4 cups	\$2.00	WalMart, BigLots, Publix, Kroger	\$2.00
Pectin (low sugar, dry)	1 and a third boxes *	\$2.00 per box	WalMart, BigLots, Publix, Kroger	\$2.70
Total				\$15.70 total or about \$1.30 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)!

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## 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 juice instead of fresh?**  
Yep! Raspberries can be particularly hard to find fresh and are expensive! Juice works just fine, just start with step 7. Just be sure to get unsweetened juice. You can use frozen concentrate; just follow the directions on the package in terms of how much water to add.
- **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](#)