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## How to Make Homemade Blueberry Pie Filling



You think making and canning your own blueberry pie filling or jam is difficult or expensive? Not at all! Here's how to do it, complete instructions in easy steps and completely illustrated. The blueberry pie filling will taste MUCH better than that over-sugared tasteless glop in the can from the grocery store, and by using fresh blueberries, the flavor will be much stronger!

Prepared this way, the jars have a shelf life of 18 months to 2 years, and require no special attention.

Ingredients and Equipment to make 1 quart of blueberry pie filling  
(just double to make 2 quarts, etc.)

- Blueberries (see step 1)  
4 cups of fresh blueberries
- Sugar - 3/4 cup (0.75 cup)
- ClearJel® starch - 1/4 cup  
plus 1 tablespoon - If you  
can't get it, corn starch  
will work (not as well, but  
it will do)
- Cold water and/or  
blueberry juice: 1 cup
- Lemon juice - 3 and 1/2  
(3.5) teaspoons (fresh or  
bottled)
- Jar grabber (to pick up  
the hot jars) Lid lifter  
(has a magnet to pick the  
lids out of the boiling  
water where you sterilize  
them. (\$2 at Wal-Mart)
- At least 1 large pot
- Jar funnel (\$2 at Wal-  
Mart)
- Large spoons and ladles
- Ball jars (Publix, Wal-Mart  
carry them - about \$8 per  
dozen quart jars including  
the lids and rings)
- 1 Water Bath Canner (a  
huge pot with a lifting  
rack to sterilize the jars  
of blueberry pie filling  
after filling (about \$30 to  
\$35 at mall kitchen  
stores, Wal-Mart) You  
CAN use a large pot  
instead, but the canners  
are deeper, and have a  
rack top make lifting the  
jars out easier. If you plan  
on canning every year,  
they're worth the  
investment.

## Recipe and Directions

### Step 1 - Selecting the blueberries

You can use fresh or even frozen blueberries, but obviously you'll get the best price and freshest taste if you go pick your own. Typically, blueberries are in season in the US and Europe in June and July - check the harvest calendar for your state!



### Step 2 - 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. 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 blueberry pie filling.



Put the lids into a pan of boiling water for 5 minutes, and use the magnetic "lid lifter wand" to pull them out.

### Step 3 - Wash the berries and sort!



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

Then you need to pick out and remove any bits of stems, leaves and soft or mushy berries. It is easiest to do this in a large bowl of water and gently run your hands through the berries as

they float. With your fingers slightly apart, you will easily feel any soft or mushy berries get caught in your fingers.

Then just drain off the water through a colander! A number of people have written to ask where to get the conical metal colanders that our grandmothers used - here's where:



#### Step 4 - Heat/Blanch the Blueberries

It's pretty simple: place the blueberries (up to 8 cups at a time) in a large pot with at least 1 gallon of boiling water. Boil each batch 1 minute after the water returns to a boil. You're not really "cooking" the blueberries - just blanching them. Blanching means heating them at high temperature for a brief time to stop the enzymes that can cause the flavor to degrade during storage.

Drain and keep the hot cooked fruit in a covered bowl or pot.

Photo is coming!!!

#### Step 5 - Make the liquid for the filling

Mix 1/4 cup plus 1 tablespoon of ClearJel starch with the 3/4 cup of sugar in a large pot. Add the 1 cup of water or blueberry juice and heat on the stove until the mixture thickens and begins to bubble.



Then add the 3 and 1/2 teaspoons of lemon juice, stirring constantly.

Note: I use blueberry juice to add the flavor and natural sweetness, but you can just use cold water, as the blueberry juice can be expensive and hard to find.

### Why use ClearJel?

ClearJel® is a corn starch that has been modified to give it special and unique characteristics when used in food products. It is recommended by the USDA for making pie fillings because it does not break down in the acid food mixtures and does not thicken enough during heat processing to interfere with the intended effect of the heat on killing bacteria during canning. In other words it reduces spoilage and is safer than corn starch. It is preferred for thickening canned pie fillings as well as other foods over other corn starches because it has less or no aftertaste, the thickened juices are smooth and clear, and foods thickened with ClearJel® may be frozen.

Step 6 - Combine the liquid with the berries

Fold the berries into the hot liquid. Stir gently.

Step 7 - Fill the jars with the blueberry mixture



Pretty self explanatory. A jar funnel helps. Gently jostle the jar to help it settle in the jar and reduce the amount of air space. Fill the jars to within 1/2 inch of the top, wipe any spilled blueberry pie filling of the top, seat the lid and tighten the ring around them.



Step 8 - Process the filled jars in the water bath

Put the filled jars in the canner and keep them cover with at least 1 inch of water and boiling. if you are at sea level (up to 1,000 ft) boil pint and/or quart jars for 30 minutes.



If you are at an altitude of 1,000 feet or more, see this chart.

USDA-Recommended process time for Hot Pack Pint or Quart Jars of Blueberry Pie Filling in a boiling-water canner.

Process Time at Altitudes of

0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 3,000 ft	3,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
30 min	35	40	45

Step 9 - Remove and cool the jars - Done



Lift the jars out of the water 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.