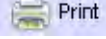


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Where you can find a pick-your-own farm near you!

Click on the printer icon that looks like this:  (at the top left, to the right of "save a copy") to print!

See [www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm](http://www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm) for many other canning directions and recipes



## How to Make and Can Elderberry Juice

**Yield:** 7 to 9 pint jars

Canning your own elderberry juice also quite easy. Here's how to make it, in 12 easy steps and completely illustrated. These directions work equally well for regular sugar, low sugar, no sugar, fruit

juice-sweetened and Stevia (in a prepared form like Truvia, it measures same as sugar; if you use another form, you'll need do your own conversion) - or Splenda, if you prefer, -sweetened jam.

For more information about elderberries, see [Elderberries](#).

## Ingredients

- **Fruit** - fresh elderberries - any quantity - the crunch down some, so you'll need about 1 and 1/4 pints raw per pint jar finished.
- **Lemon juice** - either fresh squeezed or bottled. Alternatively, Citric acid (brand name, fruit fresh).
- **Sugar or sweetener** - About 3 cups of dry, granulated (table) sugar. See step 6. It is possible to make low-sugar, fruit juice-sweetened, or Stevia (in a prepared form like Truvia, it measures same as sugar; if you use another form, you'll need do your own conversion) - or Splenda, if you prefer, -sweetened fig jam; I'll point out the differences below.



## Equipment

- **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:
- **1 large pot**; I prefer 16 to 20 quart Teflon lined pots for easy cleanup.
- **Large spoons and ladles**
- **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 \$7.50 per dozen pint ounce jars including the lids and rings)
- **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.
- **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:

- **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)

## Directions - Step by Step

### Step 1 - Pick the elderberries! (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.

If you want to pick your own, here is a list and links to the [pick your own farms](#).

### Step 2 - How much fruit?

An average of 25 pounds of fruit is typically needed per canner load of 7 quarts of fruit juice. Of course, this varies! Or to make 9 pints of juice, you'll need an average of 16 pounds of fruit. If you are buying in bulk, a "lug" weighs 26 pounds and yields 7 to 9 quarts of juice; which is an average of 3-1/2 pounds of fruit needed per quart of juice.



### 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; 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 juice.

### Step 3 -Wash the fruit!

I'm sure you can figure out how to wash the fruit in a large bowl under running plain cold water. The only tedious part is removing the berries from the stems! Remove the fruit from the stems and pick out any stems and leaves that became mixed in!



### Step 4 - Heat the fruit on the stove

Put the berries in a pot and add enough water to just cover the fruit. Put the crushed fruit 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. We just want to soften the skins to help release the juice and break down some of the fruit to help it pass through our juice strainer.



### Step 5 - Make and heat the syrup

While the berries are heating is a good time to make the syrup. Elderberries are too sour for most people to drink the juice without a sweetener. Depending upon which type of



sweetener you want to use (sugar, no-sugar, Stevia (but you will have to experiment with amount, each brand of Stevia is a different concentration), or Splenda, or a mix of sugar and Stevia (or Splenda) or fruit juice) you will need to use a different syrup from below. Adding syrup to canned fruit helps to retain its flavor, color, and shape. It does not prevent spoilage of these foods. Heat the syrup to near boiling in a pot. Most people prefer the medium syrup (highlighted) or elderberry juice with added sugar!

Sugar syrup proportions for 7 to 9-pint jars of elderberries (double it for 9 quart jars)					
Type of syrup (Choose ONE)	Water (cups)	Fruit juice (cups)	Sugar (cups)	Powdered Stevia (in a prepared form like Truvia, it measures same as sugar or Splenda, if you prefer it	
1 Plain water	7	0	0	0	
2 no calorie sweetener	7	0	0	1/4 cup	
3 Fruit juice (white grape or peach juice works well)	0	7	0		
4 Reduce calorie / fruit juice	4	3	0		
5 Fruit juice and Stevia (in a prepared form like Truvia, it measures same as sugar; if you use another form, you'll need do your own conversion) - or Splenda, if you prefer,	0	7	0	1/2 cup	
6 very low calorie	7	0	1/4	1/4 cup	
7 very light (10% sugar)	7	0	1	0	
8 light (20% sugar)	6	0	2	0	
9 <b>medium (30% sugar)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	

- Nutrasweet (aspartame) will NOT work - it breaks down during heating).



- Honey can be used, substituting 1 for 1 with sugar, but may separate.
- Stevia (in a prepared form like Truvia, it measures same as sugar; if you use another form, you'll need do your own conversion) - or Splenda, if you prefer, (sucralose) substitutes exactly with sugar BUT even the manufacturers of Splenda will tell you that you get best results if you just use a 50-50 mix; half regular sugar and half Stevia (in a prepared form like Truvia, it measures same as sugar; if you use another form, you'll need do your own conversion) - or Splenda, if you prefer, . Same goes for Stevia.
- Sugar not only affects the sweetness, but also the color and flavor. It does not affect the preserving or spoilage properties - that has to do with acid and the processing method.

### Step 6 - Sieve the cooked elderberries

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

Discard the dry pulp. The yield of the juice should be about 4 1/2 to 5 cups.

You may also want to run the crushed cooked fruit through a Foley food mill ([about \\$20 - see this page](#)) BEFORE the juice strainer - unless you ran the fruit through a juicer, the food mill would help to extract **more** juice and separate the seeds, stems and skins that will clog the strainer. It's not necessary, but helps you get the most out of the fruit.



If you need a stopping point and want to finish up the next day, this is a good place. Sometimes, fruit juice gets crystals, called tartrate crystals, forming in the juice. They're not harmful and don't affect the taste, but some people don't like the appearance. I rarely even see them! But if you do, let juice stand in a in the fridge overnight, then strain through two thicknesses of damp cheesecloth to remove any crystals that have formed.

There is also a VERY nice, versatile strainer pictured at far right! Click on the links there or see the bottom of this page for more information and to order! The VillaWare model can handle higher volumes than a Foley food mill (without giving you cramps!)

To see a greater variety of [strainers in other types, sizes, and prices, click here!](#)

## Step 7 - Polishing and further filtering

If you read the USDA's guide, they have additional steps to polish the juice so it is crystal clear. I don't bother with these as it adds a day or two to the process and most people like the natural look, anyway!

But if you do want the polished look, here what to do:

- Refrigerate juice from step 6 for 24 to 48 hours.
- Without mixing, shaking or disturbing it, carefully pour off clear liquid and save; discard the sediment.
- If desired, you may now strain through a paper coffee filter for a clearer juice.
- Continue to step 8.

## Step 8 - Get the lids warming in hot (but not boiling) water

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 9 - Sweeten (if desired) and bring to a boil

I find that homemade elderberry juice, made using sweet fresh fruit, rarely needs any additional sweetness. However if you have a sweet tooth or are using very tart fruit, this is the time to add your sweetener (sugar, Stevia (in a prepared form like Truvia, it measures same as sugar; if you use another form, you'll need do your own conversion) - or Splenda, if you prefer, , honey, etc.). Bring the juice to a boil.



## Step 10 - Fill the jars and put the lid and rings on

Fill them to within 1/4-inch of the top, wipe any spilled juice off the top, seat the lid and tighten the ring around them. Then put the filled jars into the canner!

This is where the jar tongs come in really handy!





## Step 11 - Process the jars in the boiling water bath

Keep the jars covered with at least 2 inches of water. Keep the water boiling.

See the table below for the length of time to process the jars recommended for your altitude and size of jars used.



**Recommended process time for Fruit Juice in a boiling-water canner.**

Jar Size	Process Time at Altitudes of		
	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Pints or Quart jars	5 min	10 minutes	15 minutes
Half-Gallon jars	10min	15 minutes	20 minutes

## Step 12 - 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 if kept in a cool dark place, like a basement..

### 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



## Summary - Typical Cost of Making Homemade Elderberry Juice - makes 6 jars, 16 oz (pint) each\*\*

Item	Quantity	Cost in 2020	Source	Subtotal
Fruit	4 lbs	\$2.00/lb	Pick your own	\$8.00
Canning jars (pint size), includes lids and rings	12 jars	\$8.50/dozen	Grocery stores, like Public, Kroger, Safeway and sometimes, Big Lots, local hardware stores and big box stores	\$8.50
Sugar	4 cups	\$3.00	Grocery stores, like Public, Kroger, Safeway and sometimes, Big Lots, local hardware stores and big box stores	\$3.00
Total				\$19.50 total or about \$3.25 per jar

\*\* - 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)!