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Cherries – Food Preservation Series
Michigan State University Extension Service
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CHERRIES

AVAILABILITY

July and August

TRIM LOSS

About 16 percent from pitting, stemming and sorting;
13 percent from pitting and sorting (without purchased stems).

YIELD

1 pint (3/4 pound)	2 cups
1 quart (1 1/2 pounds)	4 cups
11 pounds	Canner load of 9 pints
17 1/2 pounds	canner load of 7 quarts
1 lug (25 pounds)	8 to 12 quarts canned (2 1/2 pounds per quart)
1 bushel (56 pounds)	38 to 44 pints frozen

NOTE: yields are lower when fruits are pitted.

RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

Most cherry varieties are excellent for canning, freezing or making jam, jellies or pies. Montmorency and North Star are tart cherries. Bing, Royal Anne, Lambert and Tartarian are sweet cherry varieties

FREEZING

Freeze pitted or unpitted cherries. If cherries are pitted, add 1/2 teaspoon of ascorbic acid to each quart of syrup used.

Tart cherries

Whole: Select bright red, tree-ripened cherries. Stem, sort and wash thoroughly. Drain and pit. Use one of the following methods.

Syrup pack is best for cherries to be served uncooked.
Sugar pack is preferable for cherries to be used for pies or other cooked products.

Syrup pack: Pack cherries into containers and cover with cold medium or heavy syrup (see directions on next page), depending on the tartness of the cherries. Leave 1/2 inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

Sugar pack. To 1 quart (1 1/3 pounds) of cherries, add 3/4 cup sugar. Mix until sugar is dissolved. Pack into containers, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

Sweet cherries: Pack cherries into containers and cover with cold heavy syrup (see directions on next page). Leave 1/2 inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

Pectin pack: This alternative uses pectin and less sugar than syrup pack and retains the fresh cherry flavor, color and texture. Combine 1 box of powdered pectin (1 3/4 ounces) with 1 cup of water in a saucepan, stir and boil 1 minute. Stir in 1/2 cup sugar and dissolve. Remove the pan from heat, add cold water to make 2 cups of syrup. Chill. Put cleaned and prepared fruit in a 4- to 6-quart bowl; add enough pectin syrup to glaze the fruit with a thin film. Gently fold fruit to coat each piece with syrup. Pack into freezer bags or containers, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

Freeze no more than 2 pounds of food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day. A cubic foot will hold 7.4 gallons.

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CANNING

Sweet or sour cherries: Select bright, uniformly colored cherries that are mature (of ideal quality for eating fresh or cooking).

Stem and wash cherries. Remove pits, if desired. Place pitted cherries in water containing ascorbic acid (see directions below) to prevent stem-end discoloration. Prick skins of unpitted cherries on opposite sides with a clean needle to prevent splitting. Cherries may be canned in water, apple juice, white grape juice, or medium or heavy syrup (see directions, below).

Preventing discoloration-ascorbic acid solution:

While preparing cherries for canning, keep pitted cherries in a solution of ascorbic acid and cold water.

Ascorbic acid can be purchased in several forms:

Pure powdered form: Seasonally available among canning supplies in supermarkets. Use 1 teaspoon per gallon of water as a treatment solution.

Vitamin C tablets: Buy 500-milligram tablets; crush and dissolve six tablets per gallon of water as a treatment solution. Also try commercially prepared mixes of ascorbic and citric acid. They are seasonally available among canning supplies in supermarkets. Sometimes citric acid powder is sold in supermarkets, but it is less effective in controlling discoloration. Be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions.

Drain cherries before packing.

Syrup: Measure and mix quantities of sugar and water necessary to make desired syrup. Bring sugar and water mixture to a boil and pour over fruit in jars.

Measures of Water and Sugar

Syrup type	Approx. % sugar	cups water	For 9-pt. Load*		For 7-qt. load	
			cups sugar	cups water	cups sugar	cups water
Medium	30		5 1/4	2 1/4	8 1/4	3 3/4
Heavy	40		5	3 1/4	7 3/4	5 1/4

Hot pack: In a large saucepan, add 1/2 cup of water, juice or syrup for each quart of drained fruit and bring to a boil. Fill hot jars with cherries and cooking liquid, leaving 1/2 inch headspace.

Raw pack: Add 1/2 cup of hot water, juice or syrup to each hot jar. Fill hot jars with drained cherries, shaking down gently as you fill. Add more hot liquid, leaving 1/2 inch headspace.

Adjust lids and process.

Whole Cherries, In a Boiling- Water Canner

Recommended Process Times

Style of pack	Jar size	Process times at altitudes of			
		0- 1,000	1001- 3,000ft.	3,001- 6,000ft.	Over 6,000ft.
Raw	Pints	25 min.	30 min.	35 min.	40 min.
Raw	Quarts	25	30	35	40

Whole Cherries, in a Weighted- Gauge Pressure Canner

Recommended Process Times

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of	
			0-1,000ft.	Above 1,000 ft.
Raw	Pints	10 min.	5 lb.	10 lb.
Raw	Quarts	10	5	10
Hot	Pints	8	5	10

Whole Cherries, In a Dial-Gauge pressure Canner

Recommended Process Times

Style of pack	Jar size	Process time	Canner pressure (PSI) at altitudes of			
			0-2,000ft.	2,000- 4,000ft.	4,001- 6,000ft.	6,001- 8,000ft.
Raw	Pints	10 min.	6 lb.	7 lb.	8 lb.	9 lb.
Raw	Quarts	10	6	7	8	9
Hot	Pints	8	6	7	8	9
Hot	Quarts	10	6	7	8	9

Cherry Syrup (about 9 half-pints)

Juices from fresh or frozen cherries can be easily made into toppings for use on ice cream and pastries.

Select 6 1/2 cups of fresh or frozen fruit of your choice. Wash, pit and stem fresh fruit and crush in a saucepan. Heat to boiling and simmer until soft (5 to 10 minutes). Strain hot through a colander and drain until cool enough to handle. Strain the collected juice through a double layer of cheesecloth or a jelly bag. Discard the dry pulp. The yield of the pressed juice should be about 4 1/2 to 5 cups. Combine the juice with 6 3/4 cups of sugar in a large saucepan, bring to a boil, and simmer 1 minute. To make a syrup with whole fruit pieces, save 1 or 2 cups of the fresh or frozen fruit, combine these with the sugar, and simmer as in making regular syrup. Remove from heat, skim off foam, and fill hot, clean half-pint or pint jars, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Adjust lids and process.

Cherry Syrup, In a Boiling- Water Canner

Recommended Process Times

Style of pack	Jar size	Process times at altitudes of		
		0-1,000 ft	1,001 -6,000 ft	Over 6,000 ft
Hot	Half-pints	10 min.	15 min.	20 min.
Hot	Pints	10	15	20

Cherry Freezer Jam (8 half-pints)

3 cups pitted, ground cherries

5 cups sugar

1 box (1 3/4 ounces) powdered pectin and 1 cup water

OR

1 pouch (3.175 ounces) liquid pectin

Mix cherries and sugar. Let stand about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. If powdered pectin is used, combine it with water and boil 1 minute, stirring constantly. Add pectin to cherries and sugar mixture and mix. Pour jam into freezer containers, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Let stand at room temperature for 24 hours to set. Freeze or store in the refrigerator up to four weeks.

Cherry Pie Filling (1 or 7 quarts)

Each canned quart makes one 8-inch to 9-inch pie. The filling may be used as a topping on desserts or pastries. "Clear Jel A" is a chemically modified starch made from waxy maize that produces excellent sauce consistency even after fillings are canned and baked. Other starches may break down when used in these pie fillings, causing sauce to be runny. Ask your county Extension home economist how to order "Clear Jel A."

Because the variety of fruit may alter the flavor of the fruit pie, first prepare a single quart of filling, make a pie with it, and serve. Then adjust the sugar and spices in the recipe to suit your preferences. The amount of lemon juice SHOULD NOT BE ALTERED because it affects the safety and storage stability of the filling.

Frozen cherries: When using frozen sour cherries, select unsweetened fruit. If sugar has been added, rinse it off before fruit is thawed. Collect, measure and use juice from thawing fruit to partially replace the water specified in the recipe. Use only 1/4 cup "Clear Jel A" per quart, or 1 3/4 cups for 7 quarts.

Quantities of Ingredients Needed for

	1 quart	7 quarts
Fresh sour cherries	3 1/3 cups	6 quarts
Granulated sugar	1 cup	7 cups
"Clear Jel A"	1/4 cup + 1 Tbl.	1 3/4 cups
Cold water	1 1/3 cups	9 1/3 cups
Cinnamon (optional)	1/8 teaspoon	1 teaspoon
Almond extract (optional)	1/4 teaspoon	2 teaspoons
Red food coloring (optional)	6 drops	1/4 teaspoon
Bottled lemon juice	1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon	1/2 cup

Fresh Cherries: Rinse and pit cherries, and hold in cold water. To prevent stem end browning, use ascorbic acid solution (see directions given previously). Combine sugar, "Clear Jel A" and cinnamon in a large saucepan. Add water, food coloring and almond extract, if desired. Stir mixture and cook over medium high heat until mixture thickens and begins to bubble. Add lemon juice and boil 1 minute, stirring constantly. Fold in cherries immediately and fill hot jars with mixture without delay, leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Adjust lids and process immediately.

Cherry Pie Filling, In a Boiling- Water Canner

Recommended Process Times

Style of pack	Jar size	Process times at altitudes of			
		0-1,000ft.	1,001- 3,000ft.	3,001- 6,000ft.	6,001- 8,000ft.
Hot	Pints	30 min.	35 min.	40 min.	45 min.
Hot	Quarts	30	35	40	45

Cherry Crisp (8 servings)

1/3 cup flour
1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch
3/4 cup rolled oats
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup margarine
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon
2/3 cup sugar, divided
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
1 16-ounce can pitted
1 tablespoon lemon juice
tart cherries

Combine flour and rolled oats. Cut in margarine until the mixture is crumbly. Add 1/3 cup sugar to mixture. Set aside for topping.

Drain cherries reserving the juice. Combine the remaining sugar with cornstarch, salt, spices and lemon juice; slowly blend in cherry juice. Cook over low heat stirring constantly until sauce is thick and clear. Add cherries. Pour into a greased 8-inch square pan. Sprinkle with topping. Bake at 375 degrees F for 30 minutes.

Pork Chops with Cherries (4 servings)

4 pork chops
2 cups canned pitted sweet cherries (reserve cherry juice)
1/4 cup slivered almonds
6 whole cloves
1 tablespoon cider vinegar

Brown pork chops in a small amount of oil. Season with salt and pepper, if desired. Combine cherries, cherry juice, almonds, cloves and vinegar. Pour over chops and simmer, covered, for 30 minutes.

Cherry Kuchen (8 servings)

1 egg (or two egg whites), beaten well	1/4 cup flour
1/2 cup sugar	1/2 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup lowfat milk	1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon vanilla	3 tablespoons margarine
1 1/2 cups biscuit mix	1/4 cup chopped nuts, optional
1 1/2 cups drained, chopped red cherries	

Combine beaten egg, sugar, milk and vanilla. Add biscuit mix and stir until smooth. Pour into a greased 8-inch square pan. Sprinkle drained chopped cherries evenly over batter. Mix flour, brown sugar and cinnamon well; cut in margarine until mixture resembles coarse cornmeal. Add nuts to mixture and sprinkle over cherries. Bake at 375 degrees F for 30 minutes.

Cherry Rum Sauce (1 quart)

1 1/2 cups water	2 teaspoons rum extract
1/2 cup sugar	2 cups dark sweet cherries
1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch	3 drops red food color, optional
1 teaspoon lemon juice	

Combine sugar and cornstarch. Add to cold water. Heat mixture to thicken. Add cherries and heat, but do not boil. Stir in lemon juice, rum extract and food coloring.

Cherry Almond Sauce (1 quart)

1 1/2 cups water	1 teaspoon lemon juice
3/4 cup sugar	2 teaspoons almond extract
1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch	3 drops red food color, optional
2 cups red tart cherries	

Combine sugar and cornstarch. Add to cold water. Heat mixture to thicken. Add cherries and heat, but do not boil. Stir in lemon juice, almond extract and food coloring.

Cherry Soup (8 servings)

1 1-pound can pitted sweet cherries
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 10-ounce package frozen raspberries, thawed
2 cups fresh (or frozen) whole strawberries
1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch
plain or flavored lowfat yogurt

Drain fruits reserving syrup. Add enough water to syrup to make 2 1/2 cups. Blend cornstarch and syrup. Cook and stir until thick and bubbly. Add lemon juice. Stir in fruits. Chill. Spoon into sherbet dishes; top with yogurt.

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