Freezing

Freeze pitted or unpitted cherries. If cherries are pitted, add ½ 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 ½ inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

**Sugar pack**: To 1 quart (1 ½ pounds) of cherries, add ¾ cup sugar. Mix until sugar is dissolved. Pack into containers, leaving ½ inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

**Sweet cherries**: Pack cherries into containers and cover with cold heavy syrup (see directions on next page). Leave ½ 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 ½ ounces) with 1 cup of water in a saucepan, stir and boil 1 minute. Stir in ½ 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 ½ 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.
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.

JUICES

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 6½ 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 4½ to 5 cups. Combine the juice with 6½ 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 ½ inch headspace. Adjust lids and process.

CHERRIES

FOOD PRESERVATION SERIES
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### Cherry Freezer Jam (8 half-pints)

- 3 cups pitted, ground cherries
- 5 cups sugar
- 1 box (1/4 ounces) powdered pectin and 1 cup water

OR

- 1 pouch (0.175 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.

**Fresh Cherries:** When using fresh 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 1/4 cups for 7 quarts.

### Cherry Pie Filling (1 or 7 quarts)

- **3 cups pitted, ground cherries**
- **5 cups sugar**
- **1 box (1/4 ounces) powdered pectin and 1 cup water**

OR

- **1 pouch (0.175 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 Crisp (8 servings)

- **1/2 cup flour**
- **1/4 cup rolled oats**
- **1/4 cup margarine**
- **7/4 cup sugar, divided**
- **1 16-ounce can pitted tart cherries (reserve cherry juice)**

Combine flour and rolled oats. Cut in margarine until the mixture is crumbly. Add 1/4 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  
1/2 cup sugar  
1/4 cup lowfat milk  
1/2 teaspoon vanilla  
1/2 cups biscuit mix  
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 Almond Sauce (1 quart)

1/2 cups water  
1 teaspoon lemon juice  
1/4 cup sugar  
2 teaspoons almond extract  
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 Rum Sauce (1 quart)

1/2 cups water  
2 teaspoons rum extract  
1/2 cup sugar  
2 cups dark sweet cherries  
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 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  
1/2 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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