

To freeze with artificial sweetener: Mix artificial sweetener and ascorbic acid with 1 or 2 tablespoons of water. Sprinkle over sliced peaches and mix well, covering each slice.



Canning Peaches

For 7 quarts:

- About 18 lbs. of firm-ripe peaches
- Light syrup (2 to 3 cups sugar in 9 cups water) or 3½ cups sugar

Wash and peel peaches, and drop into a mild salt solution. Cut peaches in half, or slice as desired. Drain when ready to pack. Prepare enough syrup using the proportions above. Heat to boiling. Peaches may be packed cold or hot, but you get a much better product if you pack them hot.

Hot Pack – Cook peaches in boiling syrup about 3 minutes, or mix ½ cup sugar per quart of peaches and heat to boiling. Peaches make their own syrup. Pack in hot jars in overlapping layers, pit side down. Cover with boiling syrup to ½-inch of top. Remove air bubbles, wipe jar mouths and adjust lids. Process in boiling water bath canner: pints, 20 minutes; quarts, 25 minutes.

Raw Pack – Pack soft raw peaches into clean hot jars to within ½-inch of top. Pack in hot jars as directed above. Cover with boiling syrup to 1 ½ inches of top (juice cooks out and fills jar). Remove air bubbles by running a small plastic spatula or table knife gently between fruit and jar. Wipe jar mouth and adjust lids. Process in boiling water bath canner: pints, 25 minutes; quarts, 30 minutes.

Without sugar – Cook in a small amount of water for juice to cover or use apple juice or white grape juice. Pack hot using hot pack instructions.

Low-acid peaches – Use hot-pack method. When jars are filled, add ¼ teaspoon citric acid or 2 teaspoons lemon juice per pint. Process as indicated in hot pack instructions.



Peach Preserves (Quick and Easy)
 9 c. sliced peaches ¾ cup water
 6 c. water 1 T. lemon juice

Scald, peel and slice peaches. Put peaches and two pits in water in a large saucepan and cook until barely tender. (Watch them—they cook quickly!) Keep heat low so peaches will not scorch. Put peaches in colander to drain juice. Mix sugar and juice in saucepan. Stir while heating to dissolve sugar. Boil until syrup spins a thread (about 2 or 3 minutes). Add peaches and lemon juice; boil rapidly 10 to 12 minutes. Remove from heat, skim with a metal spoon. Pour into sterilized jars to within ½ inch of top. Remove air bubbles with table knife. Wipe jar clean, adjust lids and process in boiling water bath 10 minutes. Yield: 4 pints.



Selected References

1. Walsh, Beth M. **Using Florida Fruits-Peaches and Nectarines.** Extension Home Economics Bulletin 113. Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Gainesville, Florida.
2. Puls, Earl, J. Suggested Fruit Varieties for Louisiana. Pub. 1855, Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service.

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Ways With Peaches



Peaches have been grown successfully in north Louisiana for years. New peach varieties adapted to the warmer climate of south Louisiana have been developed recently at Idlewild Research Station. New “low-acid” peach varieties have also been developed. These low-acid peaches, both white and yellow, are best eaten fresh or frozen. Special precautions must be taken to acidify them for canning. Wildrose variety for north Louisiana and La White for south Louisiana are the best two low-acid, white-fleshed peaches. They ripen in mid-June.

Louisiana peaches are available from mid-May to early August, with the peak season from mid-June until mid-July. The national peak period is July through August.

Kinds of Peaches

Peaches are classed as clingstone (flesh clings to the stone), freestone (flesh pulls away from the stone easily) and semi-freestone. Freestone varieties are generally preferred except for peach pickles, commercial canning or preserves.

Most early season peaches are clingstone varieties. Peach flesh may be yellow or white. Yellow-fleshed varieties are preferred for commercial use.



Nutritive Value

Peaches are sweet and tasty, yet a medium fresh peach has only 38 calories. A cup of fresh, sliced peaches has 65 calories. Yellow-fleshed varieties, both raw and canned, are a good source of carotene or vitamin A value; white-fleshed varieties contain almost none. Peaches are a good source of niacin and potassium and contain small amounts of iron, other minerals and vitamins.

Selecting Peaches

Ripeness is the clue to good peaches. Select peaches that are firm-ripe or becoming a bit soft.

Look for the “ground” or general base color of the skin between the red areas. Generally it is yellow or creamy on firm-ripe fruit, although there is a difference between skin colors in varieties. There should be a bright red over color (or “blush”) over a portion of the surface, but the amount of “blush” varies, depending on variety. Hard peaches with a green background are immature and will not ripen; they shrivel instead. High quality fruit should have a tight, fresh-looking skin free of bruises, disease and insect damage. Size does not indicate quality. Early season peaches are generally smaller.

Storage


Keep firm-ripe peaches at room temperature away from direct sunlight until fully ripe. Spread peaches, uncovered, in a single layer in a cool place. They will become full-ripe and soft in three or four days. Refrigerate soft peaches, and use within three days for best quality.


Amounts to Buy


1 pound fresh peaches = 3 to 4 medium peaches
 1 pound fresh peaches = 2 cups sliced peaches
 1 to 1½ pounds fresh peaches = 1 pint frozen peaches
 2 ½ pounds fresh peaches = about 2 pints or 1 quart, canned


1 lug = 20 pounds
 1 bushel = 48 pounds; yields 16 to 24 quarts


Helpful Hints in Preparation


 To prepare peaches, dip in boiling water 30 to 60 seconds, then immediately in cold water. Skins slip off easily. Hand peeling, however, gives a more attractive frozen product.


 To prevent darkening during preparation of large amounts, place peeled fruit in a mild salt solution (1½ teaspoons salt to a quart of water).


 An effective, but more expensive, solution is 1½ tablespoons commercial ascorbic acid mixture in 1 quart water.


 Ascorbic acid, commercial mixtures of fruit fresh or fruit preserver and lemon juice keep the color of peaches fresh and bright when serving fresh and in frozen storage. Natural enzymes in the fruit react with oxygen to give a brown color unless peaches are treated with one of the above antioxidants or cooked.

 When fruit is blender-chopped with peel on, the peel combines with flesh in a flaky puree for an interesting flavor variation.

 A little lemon enhances the peach flavor in most recipes.

 Two or three pits add extra flavor when cooked with preserves or jams. Remove pits to pack.

 For thickening pies and puddings, 1 tablespoon of cornstarch equals 2 tablespoons of flour.

 It's best to freeze the newly developed, low-acid peaches, but if you do can them, add ¼ teaspoon citric acid or 2 teaspoons lemon juice per pint before processing.



Freezing Peaches

- Ripe peaches
- Sugar or medium sugar syrup
- Ascorbic acid or commercial mixture of ascorbic acid

Select well-ripened fruit, and handle carefully to keep from bruising.

Drop peeled fruit into a mild salt solution. Drain and slice. Freeze with sugar, in a medium sugar syrup, without sugar or with an artificial sweetener. Sugar helps protect color, flavor and texture.

To freeze with sugar: Add ¼ teaspoon ascorbic acid or 1 teaspoon of commercial color control to each cup sugar.

Mix ½ to 1 cup sugar with 4 to 5 cups sliced peaches; stir gently. Allow to stand 10-15 minutes until sugar is dissolved and syrup covers peaches. Package in moisture-vapor-proof freezing containers. Leave ½-inch headspace. Place a piece of crumpled waxed paper or freezer paper on top in the rigid containers to keep peaches under juice. For bags, fill and push out as much air as possible. Seal airtight, label and freeze immediately at 0 degrees F.

To freeze in sugar syrup: Dissolve 1 cup sugar in 2 cups water for a medium syrup or 1 cup sugar to 3 cups water for a light syrup. Add ¼ teaspoon ascorbic acid or 1 teaspoon of a commercial color control to each cup of syrup. Fill freezing container ¼ full of syrup. Slice peaches directly into syrup. Fill container, cover with syrup, leaving ½-inch headspace. Place a piece of crumpled waxed paper on top. Seal airtight, label and freeze immediately.

To freeze without sugar: Dissolve ascorbic acid or color control in a smaller amount of water. Sprinkle over peaches and stir, being sure they are well-covered with the ascorbic-acid solution. Package as above.