

PickYourOwn.org

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

Click on the printer icon that looks like this:  Print (at the top left, to the right of "save a copy") to print!
See www.pickyourown.org/allaboutcanning.htm for many other canning directions and recipes

How to Make Homemade Spiced Peaches - Easily!



You think making and canning your own spiced peaches is difficult? Nope! Here the traditional southern spiced peaches recipe, made easy!

Prepared this way, the jars have a shelf life of 18 months to 2 years, and require no special attention. A side benefit is that your house will smell wonderful while it is cooking - much better than potpourri!

Directions for Making spiced peaches

Ingredients and Equipment

Yield: about 6 pints

- 6 lbs Peaches (about 2 dozen medium sized peaches)
- 8 cups sugar
- 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ c cider vinegar (5% strength)
- 4 Cinnamon sticks
- 4 teaspoons whole cloves
- 1-1/3 cups water
- Jar grabber (to pick up the hot jars)
- Lid lifter (has a magnet to pick the lids out of the boiling water where you sanitize them. (\$2 at Target, other big box stores, and often grocery stores; and available online - see this page)
- Jar funnel (\$2 at Target, other big box stores, and often grocery stores; and available online - see this page)

- Large spoons and ladles
- 1 Canner (a huge pot to sanitize the jars of spiced peaches after filling (about \$30 to \$35 at mall kitchen stores, sometimes at big box stores and grocery stores.))
- 6 pint canning jars (Grocery stores, like Publix, Kroger, Safeway carry them, as do some big box stores - about \$8 per dozen pint jars including the lids and rings)

Spiced Peaches Recipe and Directions

Step 1 - Selecting the peaches, plums, cherries or nectarines

The most important step! You need peaches that are sweet, and to make the work easier, cling-free (also called freestone). This means that the peach separates easily from the pit! Same with nectarines, and this doesn't apply to cherries or plums.



Choose ripe, mature fruit. They should not be mushy, but they also should not be rock hard: just as ripe as you would eat them fresh. Green, unripe peaches will soften but will not ripen, nor have the flavor of tree-ripe peaches.

After this step, I'll just refer to "peaches" but it applies to plums, cherries and nectarines.

Step 2 - How many peaches and where to get them

You can pick your own, or buy them at the grocery store. For very large quantities (more than a few bushels), you'll find that real* farmer's markets, like the Farmer's Market in Forest Park, Georgia have them at the best prices.

It takes about 24 medium sized peaches or nectarines (or about 30 plums) to make 3 quarts of prepared spiced peaches.

Step 3 - Wash the peaches!

I'm sure you can figure out how to wash the peaches in plain cold or lukewarm water.



Step 4 - Peeling the Peaches

Nope, we're not going to peel them by hand; that's way too much work. Instead, here's a great trick that works with many fruits and vegetables with skins (like tomatoes): just dip the fruit in boiling water for 30 to 60 seconds. Remove from the water using a slotted spoon and put into a large bowl or pot of cold water and ice. The skins will easily slide off now!

In boiling water for 60 seconds, then in cold water for 2 min.



Nectarines do not need to be peeled, if you don't mind the skins.



Step 5 - Cut up and blend the peaches

Cut out any brown spots and mushy areas. Cut the peaches in half, or quarters or slices, as you prefer! Remove pits!

NOTE: the traditional Southern style is to leave the peaches whole (and stick the cloves into them) You can do this and follow the rest of the directions. Some folks don't even peel the peaches (it's up to you: I like them peeled, pits removed and sliced; they're just less messy to eat!)



Step 6 - Mix the sugar, water and vinegar in a pot and get it heating

Put

- 8 cups sugar
- 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ c cider vinegar (5% strength)
- 1-1/3 cups water

in a medium sized pot (6 quarts or bigger). and get it heating over medium heat. Stir until sugar is dissolved.

NOTE: The sweetener can be sugar, Stevia (or if you prefer, Splenda), fruit juice (peach juice or white grape juice work well) or none at all! Generally, spiced peaches is a fairly sweet concoction, so you might want to add some sweetening. I usually add about 4 cups of sugar and 4 cups Splenda (or about 1/3 that if you use Stevia, which is my preference), so it's sweet, but not loaded with sugar.

Step 7 - Put the spices in cheesecloth and add them

Put the

- 4 Cinnamon sticks and
- 4 teaspoons whole cloves

Tie the cinnamon sticks and whole cloves in a double thickness of cheesecloth and add them to the pot. For spicier peaches, use additional cloves and cinnamon sticks.

Step 8 - Heat the mixture

Bring to boiling, cover the pot, and boil for five minutes.
remove the cover and boil for five minutes longer.

Step 9 - Add the peaches

Add peaches to hot syrup. Bring syrup to boiling again and simmer peaches for 10 minutes or until tender (covered with a lid or splatter guard).



Step 10 - 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.



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 spiced peaches.

Put the lids into a pan of hot, but not quite boiling water (that's what the manufacturer's recommend) for 5 minutes, and use the magnetic "lid lifter wand" to pull them out.

Step 11 - Fill the jars

Fill them to within $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch of the top, wipe any spilled spiced peaches off the top, seat the lid and tighten the ring around them. Put them in the canner and keep them covered with at least 1 inch of water and boiling. If you are at sea level (up to 1,000 ft) boil pint jars for 5 minutes and quart jars for 10 min. If you are at an altitude of 1,000 feet or more, see this chart:



Recommended process time for Spiced Peaches in a boiling-water canner.

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

Step 12 - 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, 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.

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 jar

