



LET'S PRESERVE

CHERRIES

WP 112-99

These processing recommendations are for West Virginia conditions (maximum altitude, 4,000 feet). For canning directions in other locations, consult your county Extension office.

Recommended varieties

All sweet or sour cherries can be used.

Quantity

A lug weighs 25 pounds and yields 8 to 12 quarts. An average of 17¹/₂ pounds makes a 7-quart canner load; 11 pounds makes 9 pints. An average of 1³/₈ pounds makes 1 pint of frozen cherries.

Quality

Select freshly harvested cherries with deep uniform color and ideal maturity for eating fresh. Don't delay preserving them, with or without seeds.

Preparation

Stem and wash. Pit if desired. If pitted, immediately place cherries into cold water containing 1 teaspoon of powdered ascorbic acid or six 500-mg vitamin C tablets per gallon to prevent stem end discoloration. If preserved unpitted, prick skins on opposite sides with a clean needle to prevent splitting.

Freezing procedure

Don't freeze more than 2 pounds of food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day. Cherries may be packed with syrup or dry sugar.

To make a syrup pack, mix and dissolve 2¹/₂ cups sugar in 4 cups of water for sour cherries; or mix 1¹/₄ cups sugar in 4 cups water for sweet cherries. Add 1 cup syrup to each quart of prepared cherries.

To make a dry pack, mix ²/₃ cup dry sugar per quart of sour cherries or ¹/₃ cup sugar per quart of sweet cherries.

To package, fill pint or quart freezer bags to a level 3 to 4 inches from their tops. Squeeze out air, leave 1-inch headspace, seal, label, and freeze. Before freezing, bags may be inserted into reusable rigid plastic freezer containers for added protection against punctures and leakage.

Canning procedure

Wash jars. Prepare lids according to manufacturer's instructions. Cherries in jars may be covered with your choice of water, apple, or white grape juice, or more commonly with a very light, light, or medium syrup. A medium syrup is suggested for sour cherries, and a very light syrup for sweet

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cherries. To make a very light syrup for a canner load of quarts, mix $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups sugar in $10\frac{1}{2}$ cups water and heat to dissolve; or mix and dissolve $2\frac{1}{4}$ cups sugar in 9 cups water to make a light syrup; or $3\frac{3}{4}$ cups sugar in $8\frac{1}{4}$ cups water to make a medium syrup.

To make a hot pack, place drained cherries in boiling syrup, juice, or water ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup for each quart of drained fruit) and bring to a boil. Fill clean jars with hot cherries and cooking liquid, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch headspace. To make a raw pack, fill jars with drained cherries and cover with your choice of boiling liquid, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch headspace. Wipe the jar sealing edge with a clean, damp paper towel. Add lids and tighten screw bands. You may process jars in a boiling-water or pressure canner.

To process in a boiling-water canner, preheat canner filled halfway with water to 180 degrees F for hot packs or 140 degrees F for raw packs. Load sealed jars into the canner rack and lower with handles; or load one jar at a time with a jar lifter onto rack in canner.

Add water if needed to a level of 1 inch above jars and add cover. When water boils vigorously, lower heat to maintain a gentle boil and process for recommended time.

Process times

When using hot style of pack, process pint-size jars for 20 minutes and quart-size jars for 30 minutes. When using the raw pack method, process quart or pint jars for 35 minutes.

To process in a pressure canner, place the jar rack, 2 inches of water, and sealed jars in canner. Fasten lids, and heat canner on high setting. After exhausting steam 10 minutes, add weighted gauge or close petcock to pressurize the canner. Start timing the recommended process time when the desired pressure is reached.

When using a dial gauge canner and the hot pack method, process pints for 8 minutes using 7 pounds of pressure. For quarts, process for 10 minutes using 7 pounds of pressure. When processing raw, use 7 pounds of pressure for 10 minutes for pints and quarts.

When using a weighted gauge canner and the hot pack method, process pints for 8 minutes at 10 pounds of pressure. Process quarts for 10 minutes using 10 pounds of pressure. If packing raw, use 10 pounds of pressure for 10 minutes for pints and quarts.

Regulate heat to maintain a uniform pressure. When processing is complete, remove canner from heat. Air-cool canner until it is fully depressurized. Then slowly remove weighted gauge or open petcock, wait 2 more minutes, and unfasten and carefully remove canner lid.

After processing is completed, remove jars from canner with a jar lifter and place on a towel or rack. Do not retighten screw bands. Air-cool jars 12 to 24 hours. Remove screw bands and check lid seals. If the center of the lid is indented, wash, dry, label, and store jar in a clean, cool, dark place. If lid is unsealed, examine and replace jar if defective, use new lid, and reprocess as

Nutrition information

before. Wash bands and store separately. Cherries are best if consumed within one year and are safe as long as lids remain vacuum-sealed.

Average nutrient content per 1/2 cup serving (4 to 4.4 ounces) of cherries

	Raw		Frozen	Canned
	Sour, red	Sweet	Sour, red, unsweetened	Sour, red light syrup
Calories	26	52	36	94
Carbohydrates, g	6	12	8	24
Fats, g	0.1	7.0	0.3	0.1
Protein, g	0.5	0.8	0.7	0.9
Sodium, mg	1.5	0.5	0.5	1.5
Vitamin A*	10	2	10	4
Vitamin C*	8	8	2	Less than 2%

*Expressed as percentage of the U.S. Recommended Daily Allowances (US RDA). Cherries are an insignificant source of other vitamins.

Adapted from *Let's Preserve Cherries*, Pennsylvania State University College of Agriculture Sciences, Cooperative Extension, and reviewed by Amy O'Dell, Graduate Assistant, and Guendoline Brown, Ph.D., Nutrition and Health Specialist, June 1999.

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