



FOOD PRESERVATION SERIES

Cherries

Michigan-grown Cherries are available between July and August.

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.

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.

TRIM LOSS

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

FOOD SAFETY TIPS

Purchase fruits that are not bruised or damaged. Bag fresh fruits separate from meat, poultry and seafood products.

Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.

Wash fruits thoroughly under running water. Do not use soap or detergent.

Use a separate cutting board for fruits, and keep away from raw meat, poultry and seafood

Follow standardized procedures recommended by the United States Department of Agriculture for home canning.

HOW TO STORE

Do not wash berries prior to dry freezing to avoid a tougher skinned product.

Store in the refrigerator at 40 F, in the crisper drawer to help retain moisture.

QUICK AND EASY SERVING TIPS

Serve fresh cherries as a snack.

Use in fruit salads and pies.

Topping for ice cream, yogurt and pastries

RECIPE

CHERRY SMOOTHIE

- 2 cups frozen tart cherries
- 1 ripe banana, peeled
- 1 cup cherry juice blend (or other juice)

Put frozen cherries, banana and cherry juice blend in a blender or processor. Puree until the mixture is smooth. Serve immediately in immediately glasses and top with a fresh cherry or 2 on top. Makes 4 cups ; 4 (8-ounce) servings

HOW TO PRESERVE

FREEZING CHERRIES

Freeze pitted or unpitted cherries. If cherries are pitted, add ½ teaspoon of ascorbic acid to each quart of syrup used. Freeze no more than 2 pounds of food per cubic foot of freezer capacity per day. A cubic foot will hold 7.4 gallons.

TART CHERRIES Select bright red, tree-ripened cherries. Stem, sort and wash thoroughly. Drain and pit. Pack using one of the following methods: **Syrup pack** : This is best for cherries to be served uncooked. 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 . This is preferable for cherries to be used for pies or other cooked products.

To 1 quart (1 1/3 pounds) of cherries, add ¾ cup sugar. Mix until sugar is dissolved. Pack into containers, leaving 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 ¾ 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.

SWEET CHERRIES Pack cherries into containers and cover with cold heavy syrup (see directions for cherry syrup). Leave ½ inch headspace. Seal, label and freeze.

Cherry Freezer Jam (8 half-pints)

3 cups pitted, ground cherries

5 cups sugar

1 box (1 ¾ ounces) powdered pectin and 1 cup water

or 1 pouch (3.175 ounces) liquid pectin

Mix cherries and pectin and let stand about 20 – 30 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes (If powdered pectin is used, combine it with water and boil 1 minute, stirring constantly). Add sugar mixture, stirring until sugar is well blended and completely dissolved. Pour jam into freezer containers, leaving ½ inch headspace. Let stand at room temperature for 24 hours to set. Freeze or store in the refrigerator up to four weeks.

CANNING CHERRIES

Sweet or sour cherries. Mature, bright, uniformly colored cherries are ideal for eating fresh or cooking. Stem and wash cherries. Remove pits, if desired. Place pitted cherries in water containing ascorbic acid 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 for preparing syrup).

How to Prevent Discoloration. 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.

Commercially prepared mixes of ascorbic and citric acid : They are seasonally available among canning supplies in supermarkets.

Citric acid powder : Sometimes sold in supermarkets, but it is less effective in controlling discoloration.

Be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions. Drain cherries before packing.

How to Prepare the 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.

		For 9-Pt Load*		For 7-Qt Load	
Syrup Type	Approx. Sugar (%)	Cups Water	Cups Sugar	Cups Water	Cups Sugar
Medium	30	5 ¼	2 ¼	8 ¼	3 ¾
Heavy	40	5	3 ¼	7 ¾	5 ¼

*This amount is also adequate for a 4 quart load

Hot pack . In a large saucepan, add ½ 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 ½ inch headspace.

Raw pack . Add ½ 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 ½ inch headspace. Adjust lids and process.

Cherry Syrup (about 9 half-pints)

Select 6 ½ 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 ½ to 5 cups. Combine the juice with 6 ¾ 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.

Table 2. Recommended Process Time for **Whole Cherries**, in boiling-water canner.

		Process at Altitudes of:			
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 3,000 ft	3,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Pints	15 min	20	20	25
	Quarts	20	25	30	35
Raw	Pints or Quarts	25	30	35	40

Table 3. Process Times for **Sweet or Sour Whole Cherries**, in a Dial-Gauge Pressure Canner.

			Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of			
Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time (Min)	0 - 2,000 ft	2,001 - 4,000 ft	4,001 - 6,000 ft	6,001 - 8,000 ft
Hot	Pints	8	6	7	8	9
	Quarts	10	6	7	8	9
Raw	Pints or Quarts	10	6	7	8	9

Table 4. Process Times for **Sweet or Sour Whole Cherries**, in a Weighted-Gauge Pressure Canner.

			Canner Pressure (PSI) at Altitudes of	
Style of Pack	Jar Size	Process Time (Min)	0 - 1,000 ft	Above 1,000 ft
Hot	Pints	8	5	10
	Quarts	10	5	10
Raw	Pints or Quarts	10	5	10

Table 5. Recommended Process Time for **Cherry Syrup** in boiling-water canner.

		Process at Altitudes of:		
Style of Pack	Jar Size	0 - 1,000 ft	1,001 - 6,000 ft	Above 6,000 ft
Hot	Half-Pints	10 min	15	20
	Pints	10	15	20

Source: National Center for Home Preservation

FURTHER INFORMATION

Cherry Marketing Institute
<http://www.cherrymkt.org/>

Food Domain Website
www.Fooddomain.msu.edu

National Center for Home Preservation
<http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/index.html>

“So Easy to Preserve” 5th ed. 2006. Cooperative Extension Service, The University of Georgia, Athens.
<http://www.uga.edu/setp/>

Safe Handling of Raw Produce and Fresh-Squeezed Fruit and Vegetable Juices
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/prodsafe.html>

Handbook of Fruits and Fruit Processing. 2006. Hui, Y., Barta, J., Cano, M., Gusek, T., Sidhu, J. and Sinha, N. (ed). Blackwell Publishing.

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