

Preparing Apples for Freezing

Enzymes in light colored fruits such as apples, pears and peaches can cause oxidative browning as soon as the fruit is peeled or cut. Browning can cause loss of vitamin C. Because fruits are usually served raw they are not usually blanched to prevent this discoloration. Instead, chemical compounds are used to control enzymes in these fruits.

The most common treatment is ascorbic acid (vitamin C). Ascorbic acid may be used in its pure form or in commercial mixtures of ascorbic acid and other compounds. Browning can also be halted temporarily by placing fruit in citric acid or lemon juice solutions or in sugar syrup. However, these measures are not as effective as treatment with ascorbic acid in its pure form.

Apples, as well as other fruits, retain better texture and flavor if packed in sugar or sugar syrup. However, sugar is not necessary to safely preserve fruit. Fruits packed in syrup are generally best used for uncooked desserts, those packed in syrup or unsweetened are best for most cooking purposes, because there is less liquid in the product.

Freezing Apples in Syrup

This syrup recipe will make 5 1/3 cups syrup which will cover approximately 6 pints or 3 quarts of apple slices. Use rigid freezer containers or zip-closure freezer bags.

2-1/2 cups sugar
4 cups water
3 pounds apples
1/2 teaspoon ascorbic acid powder (1500 mg)*

To make syrup, dissolve sugar in lukewarm water, mixing until the solution is clear. To prevent browning add 1/2 teaspoon ascorbic acid powder (1500 mg) or equivalent in finely crushed vitamin C tablets. Stir to dissolve. Chill syrup before using. Select fresh full-flavored apples that are crisp and firm, not mealy in texture. Wash, peel and core. Slice medium apples into twelfths and large apples into sixteenths. Place 1/2 cup syrup in each pint-size container and slice each apple directly into chilled syrup. Press apples down in containers and add enough syrup to cover apple slices. Leave 1/2 inch headspace in each pint (or 1 inch in each quart-size container). Place a small piece of crumpled water-resistant paper, such as waxed paper, on top of each container to hold apples slices down under syrup. Seal, label, date and freeze at 0°F or below. Use within one year.

*To use lemon juice: drop apple slices into a solution of two tablespoons lemon juice and two quarts water. Drain well before covering with syrup.

Freezing Apples without Sugar

Apples frozen without sugar are generally used for cooking. Can be used for pie making too.

Wash, peel and core apples. To prevent darkening, dissolve 1/2 teaspoon (1500 mg) ascorbic acid powder or equivalent of finely crushed vitamin C tablets in 3 tablespoons water. Sprinkle over apples. Place apple slices in zip-closure freezer bags, label, date and freeze. Treated apples can also be frozen first on a tray leaving space between each piece. Pack into containers as soon as slices are frozen (approximately 2-4 hours). Freeze for up to one year at 0°F or below.

Dry Sugar Packed Apple Slices

Follow directions for "Freezing Apples without Sugar"; mix 1/2 cup sugar to each quart apples slices. Place apples in containers, press fruit down, leaving 1/2 inch headspace for pints and quarts. Seal and freeze for up to one year at 0°F or below.

Preparing Apples for Canning

Preventing Discoloration in Canning

After they are cut or peeled, apples, and other light colored fruit (pears and peaches) will begin to turn dark due to oxidation. To prevent this, as you prepare the fruit for canning, or cooking place in a holding solution made from ascorbic acid or vitamin C tablets. Tablets contain filler, which may turn the water cloudy, but it is not harmful.

Ascorbic acid powder can be purchased at health food stores or drugstores. It prevents darkening while enhancing nutritional value of apple recipes without changing flavor. Commercial ascorbic acid mixtures can also be used. Read the label on the container for the amount to use. Although lemon juice adds slight lemon flavor and may not be as effective, bottled or fresh lemon juice can also be used at a ratio of 1/2 cup per 1/2 gallon water.

Apple Chutney

Chutney is a piquant relish from the quinine of India. It is usually eaten in small amounts to add flavor and to accent a meal. To can: process chutney in a boiling water bath for 15 minutes for pints and 25 minutes for quarts. The following recipe is flexible as to which fruit is used.

1 cup pitted prunes, chopped
1 1/2 cups apple cider vinegar
2 cups brown sugar
1 teaspoon coriander seeds, ground
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/8 to 1 teaspoon ground cayenne pepper (optional)
3 medium-sized (crisp) apples, peeled, cored and chopped
1 cup currents, chopped

1 cup onions, chopped
2 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped

Cover the prunes with water and boil for 10 minutes. Drain and chop. Combine vinegar, sugar, coriander, cinnamon, salt and pepper in an enameled or stainless steel pan. Heat to boiling; add prunes, apples, currents, onions, and tomatoes. Cover and boil stirring frequently with a wooden spoon for about 30 to 40 minutes. Chill or serve warm. Refrigerate for up to two weeks or can.

To can: pour hot chutney into pint jars, remove air bubbles, use two-piece lids prepared according to manufacturers instructions, adjust lids and process for 15 minutes in a boiling water bath. Makes two pints.

Note: This recipe can be doubled or tripled with very good results.

Red Cinnamon Apple Rings

Great side dish with Braised Greens, Roast Vegetables, Roast Turkey or other poultry. These apple rings can be canned for long-term preservation or stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

5 pounds firm cooking apples
(Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Jonathan, Gala, Jonagold, etc.)
2 cups sugar
2 cups water
Red food coloring (optional)
4 cinnamon sticks
Ascorbic acid powder, vitamin C tablets, or lemon juice*

Wash and core apples; do not peel. Slice apples into 1/2 inch thick rings. To prevent browning, drop apple rings into a bowl of cold water (about 2 quarts) containing 1/2 teaspoon ascorbic acid powder (1500 mg), or use equivalent in finely crushed vitamin C tablets or 1/2 cup lemon juice. Keep apples covered with ascorbic acid water until ready to use. Combine sugar, 2 cups water and cinnamon sticks in a large saucepan. Add a few drops of red food coloring, if desired. Bring syrup to a boil and boil for five minutes. Remove from heat. Drain apples, add to syrup. Return syrup and apples to a boil; reduce heat and simmer 30 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand until cool. Remove apple rings from syrup. Loosely pack apple rings into canning jars leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Return syrup to heat and bring to a boil. Remove cinnamon sticks. Ladle hot syrup over apple rings leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Adjust two-piece lids. Process pint size jars 15 minutes, or quarts 20 minutes in a boiling water bath canner. Yield about six pints or three quarts.

*May substitute 1/2 cup fresh or bottled lemon juice.

Source: So Easy to Preserve, Fourth Edition, University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service.

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