



Chokecherry Jam

Krista Kafer

Chokecherries are a native to Colorado and can be picked in late summer along the Colorado Front Range and in the mountains. Wait until they are a deep purple. At peak ripeness they taste like slightly sweet merlot wine. Be sure to spit out or remove the seed, as it's toxic.

Ingredients:

- 1 qt Chokecherries
- 1 qt Sugar
- 2 tbsp Lemon juice
- ½ c Apple juice
- 1 packet of pectin

Equipment:

- Foley food mill
- Large pot
- Mason jars for canning

I jamify without an exact recipe using the ratio of 1:1 fruit pulp to sugar. If you have a quart of fruit, you will need a quart of sugar. Sugar sweetens the fruit and binds it to the pectin to firm up the jam.

1. Wash berries and remove stems.
2. Run fruit through a Foley food mill, which will separate the seeds from the pulp. Set the pulp aside, and discard the seeds.
3. Put fruit pulp in a pot. Add sugar and some apple juice, and two tablespoons of juice. The apple juice isn't necessary but it's nice. I put a cup or so to 2 quarts of fruit.

4. Bring to a boil and add one package of pectin. Reduce heat to a low boil. Stir often. At this stage you are cooking it down and reducing the moisture. Put a small plate in the freezer. Every so often, dip a metal spoon into the jam sideways and let the jam drip off. As it cooks the jam drips will get thicker and thicker until it comes off the spoon as a chunky sheet of yumminess. Take out the frozen dish and put a little jam on it. Wait a minute and see if it sets up and has the texture of jam. When it does, you are ready.
5. While you are jamifying, boil your jars and lids to sterilize them, and set them aside.
6. Once the jam is ready (spoon test in step 4), pour it into jars. Leave 1/4 inch of space at the top. Put on lids and re-boil the jarred jam for 5 minutes. After you take the jars out the raised bubble in the jar lid will pop down over the next few minutes signifying the jar has sealed. If the lid hasn't popped in an hour, replace the lid and re-boil for 5 minutes. Always use new inner lids for each sealing process. The jar and outer lid can be reused.

In my experience chokecherry jam doesn't set up as solid as other jams. Sometimes it feels a little more like a sauce, but that's okay! Chokecherry jam sauce tastes great on ice cream or on baked ham. You can mix a little into a vinaigrette. I also eat it out of the jar like a barbarian.

Happy jamifying!

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