

Food Preservation – Peaches

Peach Leather

8 lbs fresh peaches
2 tsp Vitamin C powder
up to 1 cup fructose or other sweetener

Remove skin and pits from peaches. To make it easier, place fresh peaches in boiling water for about 1 minute. Place in cold water. Skins should come off easily. Place peaches in blender and puree. Pour into large bowl. Add 2 tsp vitamin C powder to prevent browning. Mix in sweetener if desired (1 cup fructose works well, use less if desired or try another sweetener). Pour 2 cups peach puree onto dehydrator trays (14 x 14). Spread evenly onto tray.

Dehydrate at 130 F for about hours. Leather should be pliable, not brittle when done.

Frozen Peaches

Peaches will discolor easily during handling and freezing. They should be dipped in a solution that prevents darkening. When working with large quantities of fruit, use a solution of 1/3 cup lemon juice to 4 cups water. Peaches can be frozen with a dry sugar pack or a syrup pack.

Select firm, ripe, top quality fruit. Keep all working surfaces clean and sterile. Wash fruit quickly in cool water but do not soak. Pack fruit in small quantities and handle the fruit as little as possible. Use freezer bags, rigid plastic containers, or mason jars. Label and date each package.

Dry Sugar with Ascorbic Acid Pack: In large bowl, place 4 cups sliced fresh peaches. Mix ¼ tsp ascorbic acid powder with 2/3 cup sugar. Sprinkle over fruit and mix. Add ¼ cup sugar and mix gently until the juice is drawn out and the sugar is dissolved. (about 10 minutes) Pack into containers. Freeze immediately.

Syrup Pack: Prepare a 50% syrup (2 cups sugar to 1 quart water; boil until sugar is dissolved) and add ½ tsp ascorbic acid powder for each quart of syrup. Add ½ cup syrup into freezer jar or container. Put sliced fresh peaches into container, shaking jar to fill all space. Add more syrup if needed. Seal, label and freeze immediately.

Peach Puree: Pit and slice 1 pound fruit. Add 2 TB sugar and ¼ tsp ascorbic acid powder. Place the mixture in a food blender and convert into a liquid. Pour the mixture into pint jars, freezer containers or ice cube trays (for baby food). Cover with plastic wrap to prevent discoloration. Seal, label and freeze.

Frozen Peach Pie Filling (use 1 gallon size freezer bags)

For each bag: 3 pounds peaches
1 cup sugar
¼ cup flour
1/2 tsp cinnamon
1/4 tsp nutmeg
2 TB lemon juice

Peel, pit, and slice peaches. Place sliced peaches in soaking solution to prevent darkening. Rinse and drain peaches and place heaping quart of peaches into freezer bag. Combine sugar, flour and spices. Add to freezer bag. Shake bag to coat peaches with sugar mixture. Add lemon juice. Let stand at room temperature until juices begin to flow, about 30 minutes. Flatten bags to freeze to for efficient use of space. Defrost slightly before putting into pie shell. Bake at 400 F for 40-50 minutes in prepared pie crust.

Dehydrated Peaches

Peaches must be firm and ripe with no green color. Wash peaches; dip in boiling water for one minute, then in cold water, to loosen skins. Remove pits; cut in ½ inch slices or circles. Pre-treat by dipping in an ascorbic acid solution. Dry at 130 – 135 F until pliable with no moisture pockets. Use as a snack or in baked goods, salads, desserts.

Canned Peaches (Water-bath canning method)

*Yield: 1 bushel of peaches will provide 18-24 quarts. Plan on close to 2-3 lbs fruit for each quart
Each quart jar will use 1 - 1 ½ cups syrup*

Select firm, ripe peaches. Sort, wash and drain just enough fruit for 7 quarts. Fill boiling water bath canner half full of hot water. Put canner on to heat. Prepare sugar syrup as desired:

- Extra Light - 1 cups sugar per quart water
- Light – 2 cups sugar per quart
- Medium – 3 cups sugar per quart
- Heavy – 4 ¾ cup sugar per quart

Put ½ cup prepared syrup into each quart. Put peaches into boiling water for ½ - 1 minute to loosen skins. Dip in cold water. Drain. Cut peaches into halves, pit and peel. Drop peaches into jar with syrup. Pack peaches, cavity side down, layers overlapping. Leave ½ inch head space. Add more syrup if necessary to cover peaches. Run nonmetallic spatula gently between jar and fruit to release air bubbles. Add more syrup if needed. Wipe top and threads of jar with clean damp cloth. Put lid on with sealing compound next to jar. Screw band down evenly and gently.

As each jar is filled, stand it on rack in boiling water bath canner. Water in canner should be hot, but not boiling. If needed, add more hot water to cover jars 1-2 inches. Put cover on canner. Bring water to a boil. Process jars at a gentle and steady boil.

Processing times for Utah: 35 minutes for quarts and 30 minutes for pints.