



Apricots

**NUTRITION:**

Apricots are full of vitamin A and also contain significant amounts of several minerals including iron, calcium, phosphorus, and copper. Three medium apricots equal one-third the daily requirement of vitamin A. Each apricot has about 20 calories.

HOW TO SELECT:

Look for apricots that are plump with a uniform golden orange color. Immature fruits are greenish yellow in color and firm to hard. Shriveled fruit is an indicator the fruit was picked prematurely. Moorpark, Tilton and Blenheim are the leading varieties marketed in Washington. All are excellent for eating fresh or preserving (canning, freezing and dehydrating).

STORAGE:

Since they are such a delicate fruit, do not handle more than necessary. Buy only the amount you can eat in a few days. Store ripened fruit covered in the refrigerator. Under-ripened fruit will ripen quickly out of the refrigerator. Wash fruit just before eating. There is no need to peel because apricot skin is soft and tender.

DRYING:

Use any variety, fully ripened but not so soft they are easily mashed or lose shape during drying.

Preparation:

- Wash, cut in half, and pit. Do not peel.

Pretreatment:

- Mix 1/2 tsp. ascorbic acid crystals or 3 crushed 500 mg. tablets of vitamin C with 1 qt. water. Leave apples in this solution for 5 minutes. Drain fruit.
- Soak 5 minutes in pineapple, orange, or lemon juice. Drain fruit.
- Soak 2-5 minutes in solution of 2-4 tbsp. salt to a gallon of water. Drain fruit.
- Boil syrup solution (1 part sugar to 2 parts water). Add fruit and simmer 5 minutes. Drain fruit.

Drying Procedure:

- Arrange in single layer on drying trays, pit side up.
- Average drying time for halves is 24-36 hours at 130-150 degrees F.
- Dry until leathery and pliable. There should be no moisture when cut slices are squeezed.

FREEZING:

Select firm, ripe, uniformly yellow fruit. Wash, halve, and pit. Peel and slice if desired. (To loosen skins, dip in boiling water for 15 to 20 seconds.) Pack in syrup OR pack in sugar. Use ascorbic acid to retard browning. Freeze in moisture-vapor proof containers.

CANNING:

WATER BATH CAN

Apricots, Nectarines, Peaches, Pears: Wash, peel if desired. Peaches peel best when first dipped in boiling water, then cold water. Halve fruits, remove pits or cores. Slice if desired. To prevent darkening, dip cut fruit into water containing 3 grams (3000 milligrams) ascorbic acid to 1 gallon of cold water. Six crushed 500 mg vitamin C Tablets may be used or follow instructions on commercially prepared mixes of ascorbic or citric acid. Drain.

Hot Pack: Heat fruit though in hot syrup. If fruit is very juicy, add sugar without additional liquid, 1/2 cup sugar per quart. Pack fruit and cover with boiling syrup leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Add ascorbic acid, if desired. In a boiling water bath process pints for 20 minutes and quarts for 25 minutes.

Raw Pack: Pack fruit, cover with boiling syrup leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Add ascorbic acid, if desired. Process pints for 25 minutes and quarts 30 minutes in a boiling water bath. A light syrup for a 7-quart load contains 9 cups water and 2 1/4 cups sugar.

Fruit Juice: Wash, remove pits or seeds, crush fruit. Heat to simmering; stir to prevent sticking. Strain through cheese cloth or jelly bag. Add 1 cup sugar to 1 gallon juice if desired. Reheat to simmering (185-210 degrees F.). Pour hot juice into jars leaving 1/2 inch headspace. Process in a boiling water bath for 5 minutes for pints and quarts.

**JAMS/JELLIES/
PRESERVES:**

SUGARLESS APRICOT-PINEAPPLE JAM

2 cups (11 ounces) dried apricot halves 4 cups (40 ounces) canned pineapple
2 cups unsweetened pineapple juice chunks, juice packed

Combine apricots, pineapple and juice in saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently. When apricots are soft, puree small amounts in blender or mash with potato masher until smooth. Return mixture to saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Boil until the temperature is 9 degrees F. above boiling, about 10 to 15 minutes, or until the desired thickness is reached. Remove from heat.

To Can Jam: Pour boiling hot jam into hot, sterile pint or half-pint jars to 1/4 inch from top of jar. Seal and process for 5 minutes in a boiling water bath. Cool and store in cool, dry, dark place. After opening, store in refrigerator.

For more information call WSU Skagit County Extension:

360-428-4270

Or visit:

<http://skagit.wsu.edu/FAM/MFP.htm>

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