

# Blueberries

In Skagit County, the cooler summer temperatures allow blueberries to ripen slowly, which results in more sugar content in the harvested fruit. Up to 10 tons of blueberries can be grown on an acre of land, and with 4,800 Skagit acres planted in blueberries, it is not surprising that they are plentiful all summer long. There are many varieties of blueberries with a range of size, flavor, and color - including hot pink!

## Nutrition

Often marketed as a superfood, blueberries are an excellent source of Vitamin A and Vitamin C, as well as beneficial plant compounds and antioxidants. They are a great snack or dessert for calorie-conscious people, providing 42 calories per half-cup of berries with no fat or cholesterol.

## Selection

Choose plump, firm berries that are free of moisture. When purchasing in the store, avoid packages that appear damp or stained as that may indicate overripe berries. Berries should be firm, smooth, and dry. Deeply colored, they should also have a light dusting of silver gray and should not be wrinkled. Store blueberries unwashed until ready for processing. To wash, gently rinse under running water.

## Storage

Fresh blueberries keep longer than any of the other berries. Store them in the refrigerator for up to twelve days. For best storage, store unwashed until ready to use. Do not submerge them in water; instead, wash gently under cool, running water.

## Measurements



X 200



Weight



Volume

## Freezing

### Whole Fruit:

- Wash and air dry blueberries.
- Place on clean towels to dry to remove excess moisture if needed..
- Pack in moisture-vapor proof freezer containers or freezer weight plastic bags. Leave 1/2 inch of headspace for expansion during freezing.
- Blueberries can also be frozen first on a tray, then pack into moisture-vapor proof freezer containers or freezer weight plastic bags.
- Label, seal and freeze .

### Crushed or Puree:

- Wash blueberries.
- Crush, press through a sieve, or puree in a blender or food processor.
- Mix in sugar if desired.
- Pack into moisture-vapor proof freezer containers or freezer weight plastic bags leaving headspace for expansion.
- Label, seal and freeze.



**Tip:** Frozen berries or puree may be used at a later date to make fruit spreads, juice or in baking.

**Tip:** Frozen berries work well in muffins, cakes, and breads as they retain their shape and can be evenly distributed in batter.



## Drying

**Whole Fruit Preparation:** Sort and wash blueberries, leave whole. Remove stems and immature berries.



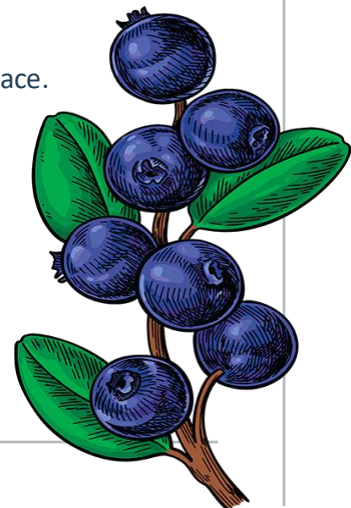
**Pretreatment:** For improved quality, a boiling water blanch is recommended to crack the skins and improve the drying process. Blanch berries by dipping in boiling water for 15-30 seconds, then plunge into ice water. Drain on absorbent material, and pat dry.

### Drying Procedure:

- Spread in a thin layer on drying trays.
- Dry at 140°F, until shriveled and leathery, generally 24-36 hours.
- Package dried berries in moisture/vapor proof containers.
- Label. Store in a cool, dark, dry place.

### To make blueberry fruit leathers

- Purée berries, sweeten to taste as desired and pour on a fruit leather drying sheet or drying tray covered with plastic wrap.
- Place in a dehydrator or warm oven (140° F.) and dry until leathery with no moisture pockets.
- Cool thoroughly. Roll or cut into bite-size pieces.
- Package fruit leathers in moisture/vapor proof containers.
- Label. Store in a cool, dark, dry place.



# Boiling Water Canning



## Canned Blueberries

Blueberries are processed in the boiling water canner. An average of 12 pounds is needed per canner load of 7 quarts; 8 pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints.

**Hot Pack:** Wash and sort. Heat blueberries in boiling water for 30 seconds and drain. Fill hot jars with blueberries and cover with hot sugar syrup, fruit juice or water, leaving ½ inch headspace.

Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed.  
**Raw Pack:** Wash and sort. Pack blueberries in hot jars (shake gently to get a full pack). Cover with boiling sugar syrup, fruit juice or water to 1/2-inch headspace.

Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims with a clean dampened paper towel. Adjust two-piece lids and process in boiling water canner according to the directions below.

Once processing is complete, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes before removing jars. Let cool at room temperature, undisturbed, for 12 to 24 hours and check seals. Wipe jars, remove rings, label, and store in a cool, dry place.

(Source: [https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can\\_02/berries\\_whole.html](https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_02/berries_whole.html))

### Processing Directions:

Style of pack	Jar Size	1–1,000 ft	1,001 to 6,000 ft
Hot	Pints or Quarts	15 minutes	20 minutes
Raw	Pints or Quarts	15 minutes pints, 20 minutes quarts	20 minutes pints, 25 minutes quarts

## Blueberry Syrup

Select 6½ cups of fresh or frozen blueberries. Wash and crush blueberries in a saucepan.

To prepare juice, heat fruit to boiling, then reduce heat, and simmer until soft (5 to 10 minutes). Strain mixture through a colander and drain until cool enough to handle. Strain collected juice through a double layer of cheesecloth or jelly bag. Discard the dry pulp.

The yield of pressed juice should be about 4½ to 5 cups. Combine juice with 6¾ cups of sugar in a large saucepan, bring to boil, and simmer for 1 minute. For thicker syrup, increase cooking time.

To make a syrup with whole fruit pieces, save 1 or 2 cups of the fresh or frozen fruit. Add fruit when adding sugar, and simmer as directed for syrup.

Remove from heat, skim off foam, and fill into hot half-pint or pint jars, leaving ½-inch headspace. Wipe rims with a clean dampened paper towel. Apply two-piece lids and process in boiling water canner according to directions below.

When processing is complete, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes before removing jars. Let cool at room temperature, undisturbed, for 12 to 24 hours and check seals. Wipe jars, remove rings, label, and store in a cool, dry place.

(Source: [https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can\\_02/berry\\_syrup.html](https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_02/berry_syrup.html))

### Processing Directions:

Style of pack	Jar Size	1–1,000 ft	1,001 to 6,000 ft
Hot	Half pints or pints	10 minutes	15 minutes

# Boiling Water Canning



## Jams/Jellies/Preserves:

Blueberries can be made into a variety of fruit spreads, either alone or in combination with other fruits. Recipes for jams, jellies and preserves can be found in commercial pectin packages. Options are available for full sugar, low sugar and freezer jam products. Recipes using pectin have been carefully formulated and should be followed exactly. Cooked fruit spreads must be processed in a boiling water canner for storage at room temperature.

## Spiced Blueberry-Peach Jam

(without added pectin)

Yield: About 6 or 7 half-pint jars

- 4 cups chopped or ground peaches (about 4 pounds peaches)
- 4 cups blueberries (about 1 quart fresh blueberries or 2 ten-ounce packages of unsweetened frozen blueberries)
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- ½ cup water
- 5 ½ cups sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 stick cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon whole cloves
- ¼ teaspoon whole allspice

To prepare fruit. Sort and wash fully ripe peaches; peel and remove pits. Chop or grind peaches. Sort, wash, and remove any stems from fresh blueberries or thaw frozen berries.

To make jam. Measure fruits into a saucepan; add lemon juice and water. Cover, bring to a boil, and simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add sugar and salt; stir well. Add spices tied in cheesecloth. Boil rapidly, stirring constantly, to 9 degrees F. above the boiling point of water, or until the mixture thickens. Remove from heat; take out spices. Skim.

Fill hot jam immediately into hot jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Wipe rims with a clean dampened paper towel. Adjust two-piece lids and process in boiling water canner according to the directions below.

Once processing is complete, turn off heat, remove canner lid and wait 5 minutes before removing jars. Let cool at room temperature, undisturbed, for 12 to 24 hours and check seals. Wipe jars, remove rings, label, and store in a cool, dry place.

(source: [https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can\\_07/spiced\\_blueberry\\_peach\\_jam.html](https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/can_07/spiced_blueberry_peach_jam.html))

## Processing Directions:

Style of pack	Jar Size	1–6,000 ft
Hot	Half pints or pints	10 minutes

Preserve Skagit Crop Sheets describe three food preservation techniques—freezing, drying, and boiling water canning—consistent with USDA Food Preservation and Food Safety recommendations. Pressure canning for low acid foods such as meats and vegetables is not included.

Additional resources and recipes, as well as information on Pressure Canning, can be found on the WSU Skagit Food Preservation Website <https://extension.wsu.edu/skagit/fam/food-preservation/> or the National Center for Home Food Preservation <https://nchfp.uga.edu/index.html>.

Copyright 2022 WSU Skagit Extension. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed on this fact sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of the USDA. WSU Extension programs are available to all without discrimination.

