

Pears

Pears have been enjoyed since ancient times. There are around 100 different varieties grown worldwide, with the Bartlett, Bosc, and D’Anjou among the most popular. Two lesser known varieties that thrive in Skagit County’s cool fall climate are the Conference, a thin, elongated variety with a matte brown speckling that tastes sweeter and is juicier than the Bosc variety; and the Taylor’s Gold Comice which is a russet-skinned pear that is tender, aromatic and has the flavor of juicy pear-flavored butter. Pears are best canned, dried, and made into butters. They also make good relishes and chutneys. Freezing fresh pears is generally not recommended.

Nutrition

Pears are a rich source of vitamin C, vitamin K, and fiber with small amounts of folate, pro-vitamin A and niacin promoting skin health and wound healing. Pears have no fat, cholesterol, or sodium.

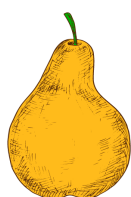
Selection

Pears are harvested before they are ready to eat. For longer term storage, choose firm pears without cuts or bruises. Pears nick and bruise very easily, so handle with care. When possible, select pears with stems intact. To select ripe fruit, test by pressing flesh just under the stem-the fruit should have some give at that location. This should indicate ripe fruit. Avoid soft fruit. To clean pears before processing, wash under running water and dry with a paper towel.

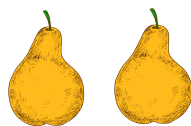
Storage

Unripe fruit will continue to ripen in the refrigerator. Depending on variety, unripe fruit may last several months when stored in this manner. To hasten ripening, store at room temperature for several days or until they begin to soften. Ripe fruit may also be stored in the refrigerator and should keep for an additional 3-5 days.

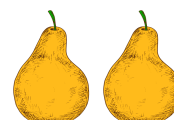
Measurements



Size



Weight



Volume

Freezing

- Select well-ripened, firm fruit.
- Wash and peel. Cut in halves or quarters and remove cores.
- Use an anti-darkening agent to prevent browning.
- Heat in boiling sugar syrup, your choice of light to heavy syrup, for 1 to 2 minutes (depending on size of pieces). Drain, cool, and pack in cooking syrup.
- Pack in moisture-vapor proof freezer containers or freezer weight plastic bags, leaving 1-inch headspace. Seal, label, and freeze.



Note: Freezing fresh pears is generally not recommended due to poor quality when defrosted. Cooked pears can be frozen with more success.

Drying

Preparation: Wash, peel, and remove stems. Cut in half lengthwise and core. Section or slice into ¼ to ½ inch pieces.



Pretreatment: Pretreat with anti-darkening solution to prevent discoloration. Drain well.

Drying Procedure:

- Dry in single layers on drying trays.
- Dry at 140° F, approximately 24-36 hours, until leathery and pliable.
- Cool thoroughly.
- Package dried foods in moisture/vapor-proof containers. Label.
- Store in a cool, dark, dry place.



Boiling Water Canning

Pear Preserves

•Yield: About 5 half pint jars

Ingredients

- 1½ cups sugar
- 2½ cups water
- 6 medium cored, pared, hard, ripe pears, cut in halves or quarters (about 2 lbs)
- 1½ cups sugar
- 1 thinly sliced lemon

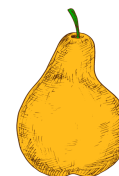
Procedure: : Combine 1½ cups sugar and water; cook rapidly for 2 minutes. Add pears and boil gently for 15 minutes. Add remaining sugar and lemon stirring until sugar dissolves. Cook rapidly until fruit is clear, about 25 minutes. Cover and let stand 12 to 24 hours in refrigerator.

Processing Directions:

Sterilize canning jars. Heat fruit and syrup to boiling. Pack fruit into hot jars, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Cook syrup 3 to 5 minutes, or longer if too thin.

Pour hot syrup over fruit, leaving ¼ inch headspace. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel; adjust two-piece metal canning lids. Process in a Boiling Water Canner.

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



Style of pack	Jar Size	1–1,000 ft	1,001–3,000 ft
Hot	Half pints or pints	5 minutes	10 minutes

Boiling Water Canning



Safety Note. Asian pears, apple pears, and Oriental pears (which are a different tree fruit crop) must be acidified before canning. Asian pears require the addition of bottled lemon juice to the canning jar. Add 1 Tbsp bottled lemon juice per pint or 2 Tbsp per quart. Process using pear processing times listed.



Canned Pears

An average of 17½ pounds is needed per canner load of 7 quarts; an average of 11 pounds is needed per canner load of 9 pints.

Wash and peel pears. Cut lengthwise in halves and remove core. To prevent discoloration, keep pears in an anti-darkening agent.. Prepare a solution of your choice - very light, light, or medium syrup or pack pears in apple juice, white grape juice, or water.

Very light syrup: 6 ½ cups water, ¾ cup sugar
Light syrup: 5 ¾ cups water, 1 ½ cups sugar
Medium Syrup: 5 ¼ cups water, 2 ¼ cups sugar

Hot pack - Boil drained pears 5 minutes in syrup, juice, or water. Fill hot jars with hot fruit and cooking liquid, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims with clean dampen paper towels. Adjust lids and process according to directions below.

Raw pack. Pack fruit into hot jars and cover with boiling syrup, water, or juice.

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

Processing Directions:

Style of pack	Jar Size	1–1,000 ft	1,001–3,000 ft
Hot	Pints	20 minutes	25 minutes
Hot	Quarts	25 minutes	30 minutes
Raw	Pints	25 minutes	30 minutes
Raw	Quarts	30 minutes	35 minutes

Preserve Skagit Crop Sheets describe three food preservation techniques—freezing, drying, and water bath 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>.

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