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Putting the Jell Into Jellies and Jams

By MILLIE LERDALL

"I don't see how you make such lovely jellies.

Isn't that one of the commonest expressions long about the time canning season comes around? It just seems like fate has it in for some women when it comes to making jelly; the same fate that hovers over the woman who always has a blister in the center of her custard pie. The woman who makes perfect pies takes all the ribbons at the fair knows the secret of jelly making and now I'm going to tell it to you.

First of all there is a very essential chemical substance in fruit juice called pectin that makes jelly set. It is very abundant in grapes, currants, apples, and in the white rind of oranges and lemons and also occurs in cherries, raspberries, blackberries and pears in small quantities.

If the jellymaker can find out how much pectin any fruit juice contains, she knows whether or not that juice will make jelly of good consistency. There are several pectin tests which may be used. The alcohol test is a good one but not very practical in these prohibition days, so the epson salts test is a good substitute. Take one-fourth teaspoon epson salts, one teaspoon fruit juice and one-half teaspoon sugar. Stir together and let stand. If enough pectin is present to make a good jelly, a firm jelly lump will form. If this lump does not form the juice must have pectin added to it before it will jell. Apple juice or a juice made by boiling the rind of lemons or oranges will give enough pectin to make any fruit juice jell.

Having ascertained whether the juice will jell or not the next step is to extract the juice:

(1) Select fruit not over ripe, pick over, wash and cut up if it is very large.

(2) Cook in a covered kettle slowly adding just enough water to prevent burning if the fruit is juicy. If it is not juicy add water to nearly cover.

(3) Sterilize jelly bag thoroughly and suspend a piece of gauze over the hot fruit and let drain from twelve to twenty hours. Never squeeze the bag if you want a clear transparent jelly.

(4) The pulp may either be reheated with water for a second extraction or better still, it may be put thru a colander and used for butter.

For juices rich in pectin and acid such as currants and grapes, use a cup of sugar to one cup of juice. For other fruits with less acid such as cranberries, raspberries, sour apples and crabapples use three-fourths cups of sugar to one cup of juice. Measure the sugar carefully and heat in an oven, being careful not to let it burn. Bring the fruit juice to boiling point and boil for ten minutes, removing all seed that arises to the top. Add the hot starch. Stir slowly and boil till it makes a good test. This test is known as the "cold plate test." To test, put a small amount of hot syrup from a silver spoon. If the drop breaks from the spoon the jelly is done.

Preserves, Jams, Marmalades

Preserves, jams and marmalades are made from fruit pulp and juice cooked thick with from three-fourths to its whole weight in sugar.

Orange Marmalade

9 oranges
6 lemons
4 quarts water
Same weight sugar as fruit
Slice the oranges and lemons crosswise as thin as possible; remove the seeds and put into a preserving kettle. Cover and let stand thirty-six hours, then boil for two hours. Measure the cooked fruit and add an equal amount of sugar. Cook until the mixture jells. This recipe makes sixteen glasses.

Big Plum Conserve
1 basket big plums
Sugar—two-thirds weight of plums
3/4 lb. shredded almonds
3 oranges and rind of one
Cut the plums in halves and remove the stones. Cook plums, oranges and sugar forty-five minutes. Blanch the almonds, shred and add to the fruit mixture. Cook ten minutes longer. This makes thirteen glasses.

Grape Fudge
7 lbs. grapes
1 lb. walnuts
1 lb. raisins
Wash grapes and remove the pulp. Cook pulp and remove the seeds by putting through a sieve. Chop skins and nuts. Mix pulp and sugar. Add chopped skins, nuts and whole raisins. Cook until thick. This makes twenty-two glasses.

Peach Conserve
4 lbs. ripe peaches
1 lb. pineapple (grated)
1 lemon
3/4 lb. almonds
1 orange
3/4 lb. raisins
Add one pint sugar per pint of cooked pulp.

Grape Juice
10 lbs. grapes
1 cup water
Dilute half to serve

worth of poetry. Bob is as keen about poetry as I am and we just have to have the Sunday Times to say nothing of his professional books. Larry watch that speedometer. Every time I stop for breath it slows down. I can hear Esther and Bob on the back seat exchanging their opinions on the high finance of new-lyweds too. Bob is arguing like a lawyer for a "partnership plan." That's what I call it when you men treat us like equals and each knows all the main things about the cost of housekeeping. Esther I have talked Larry deat, dumb and blind on this budget business. He has been a lamb to listen so attentively. He even says he got some new ideas on the subject. You have to blame him if he springs any queer ideas. Do come in and have a drink. I'll give you three guesses to tell me what it is. It's my own idea and I'm going to get famous. It's guaranteed to make you forget not only your business worries but household affairs as well. It makes the dumb to speak and the talkative wife to be silent. Don't you think that will be a taking advertisement?

Thanks awfully for the ride. We certainly do enjoy rolling around in your Royce. Bye.