



Garden Fresh Farm Recipes

Jalapeño Pepper Jelly

Here's another recipe for using fresh garden peppers. Pepper jelly is so versatile in its use. It can be served with crackers and cream cheese or used as a glaze over grilled or baked pork or chicken.

Yields: 6 (1/2-pint jars)

Ingredients:

13 Jalapeño chile peppers, 4 whole and 9 seeded chile peppers (see Comment #1 & #2 below)
2 medium or 1 large bell pepper (either red, yellow, or orange pepper) (see Comment #3 below)
OPTIONAL - Add 1 Habanero pepper to add heat to the jelly
1/3 cup freshly-squeezed lemon juice
1 1/2 cups of cider vinegar
6 cups granulated sugar
4 ounces liquid pectin (Certo Liquid Pectin ONLY) - Other brands do not work well. (see Comment #4 below)
Food coloring (green or red), optional



Directions:

Remove stems from all 13 jalapeños; discard stems. Leave 4 jalapeños whole and remove seeds from the other 9 jalapeños. Chop the 4 WHOLE jalapeños very fine or puree in blender, then add remainder of the seeded jalapeños; chop medium to fine. Remove stems and seeds from bell peppers; add to blender.

Add vinegar to blender to help chop and mix together. Puree until coarsely ground and small chunks remain.

In a large non-reactive pot over medium-high heat, add blended pepper mixture; bring to a hard boil. BOIL FOR A FULL 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and stir in lemon juice and granulated sugar. Place back on medium-high heat and bring back to a hard boil. Add liquid pectin (Certo Liquid Pectin ONLY) and food coloring; again bring back to a HARD BOIL for ONE FULL MINUTE. Skim off any foam (scum) that develops with a spoon. Remove from heat.

Have hot sterile 1/2-pint jars and lids ready.

Carefully put hot jelly into hot sterilized jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Wipe any spilled jelly from jar rims. Center lids on top of jars and tighten screw bands securely, but not as tightly as possible. Test seal, after cooling, with finger. If middle pops up when pressed, jar is not sealed. Boiling water bath for 10 minutes.



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Jalapeño Pepper Jelly - COMMENTS:

#1 - The jalapeños chiles I used for these batches were fairly large - none were small. Note: Jalapeño jelly can be pretty "hot" if you have included a lot of the seeds in your cooking. The fat molecules in the cream cheese absorb the hot capsaicin of the jalapeños, reducing the heat, but leaving the flavor of the chiles.

#2 - IMPORTANT: Wear rubber disposable gloves when you clean the jalapeño chiles! It's amazing how HOT the oil from the jalapeños are. The first batch I made, I felt that I did not need to wear gloves. After all, it's just jalapeños! After doing the first batch, my finger and hands burned for nearly 4 hours (plus you can't touch ANY parts of your body or you will burn there too), and I could not wash the stuff off (and even the next day, my fingers were sensitive to hot water). I now always use gloves!

#3 - Bell peppers were medium to large. If you use TWO bell peppers, make sure they are medium sized. If you use TWO large bells, they will make the jelly not set up because of the amount of liquid produced. Unless you cook it longer... (I have no idea how much longer). Green bell peppers seem to make the jelly taste too much like bell pepper and it drowns out the jalapeño taste almost completely. Yellow, red or orange bell peppers are ideal for this jelly because their flavor does not take away from the jalapeños. They add very nice color to the final product.

#4 - WE tried another brand of pectin - (BALL), and it did not work well at all. I had to open all the jars, as they did not set up, and REBOIL the liquid for an additional 12 minutes before it would set up. USE ONLY Certo Liquid Pectin. NOTE: You can't substitute the powdered pectin for the liquid pectin, as the jelly will not work right). THEY ARE NOT ALL THE SAME!

IMPORTANT:

Only use sterilize jars for jams and jellies. Wash the containers in hot, soapy water and rinse. Sterilize the jars by boiling them 10 minutes, then keep the jars in hot water until they are used. Keeping them hot will prevent the jars from breaking when filled with the hot product. Wash and rinse all canning lids and bands. Treat the lids as directed by the manufacturers. Lids can be used only once.

Yields approximately 6 each 1/2-pint jars.