



## Preserving Herbs for Winter Enjoyment

Now is the time to preserve your herbs to have for use throughout winter. We'll concentrate on items you can make that will add taste and variety to your winter cooking.

### *Herbal Pastes*

*One of the best known herbal pastes is pesto made with basil and olive oil. However, other herbs can be preserved using this same method and then frozen for use during the winter months.*

Begin by coarsely chopping 2 cups of fresh herb leaves in a food processor. Then slowly drizzle in 1/3 cup high-quality olive oil while the processor is still running. You may also want to try other oils such as canola, soybean, etc.

Pour into small jars. To remove air bubbles, run a knife through the mixture. Cover the top of the mixture with more oil to seal out any air, and refrigerate for up to two weeks. For long term use pack pastes in jars, cover with oil, and freeze for up to six months.

When you want to use your herb paste just spoon out the needed amount. Some herbs to make into pastes in addition to basil: chervil, cilantro, dill, fennel, marjoram, mint, parsley, rosemary, sage, savory, and tarragon.

### *Herbal Jellies*

*They may not be popular to make these days, but they're a wonderful way to capture the summer harvest of herbs. Jellies can be used to glaze meats or enjoyed on toast, scones, or crackers.*

### **Basic Herb Jelly**

2 cups fruit juice (apple juice is a good choice) or water  
1 cup fresh herbs  
1/4 cup cider vinegar or lemon juice  
4 cups sugar  
few drops food coloring (optional)  
3 ounces liquid pectin  
6 fresh herb sprigs (optional)

Preheat water in the boiling water bath canner and tea kettle. Sterilize six half-pint jars and prepare lids.

In a covered saucepan, combine the fruit juice or water with the herbs. Heat to the boiling point, but do not boil. Remove from heat, cover and let steep for 20 minutes.

Strain the liquid through a coffee filter or jelly bag, squeezing the herbs left in the bag to extract all flavor. Discard the herbs.

In a large non-aluminum saucepan, combine the herb infusion, lemon juice or vinegar, sugar, and food coloring. Bring to a full rolling boil over high heat, stirring constantly. (*Note: a candy thermometer is very handy*).

When the boil cannot be stirred down, pour in the pectin, stirring constantly. Boil for 1 minute. If you are using a thermometer, make sure the temperature gauge registers to the jelly point. Remove from the heat. Stir and skim off any foam that collects on top.

Add one herb sprig to each sterilized jar. Immediately pour in the hot jelly leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Seal.

Process in a boiling water bath for 5 minutes.

**Some combinations to try:** apple juice with rosemary, sage, thyme, mint, or oregano; orange juice with thyme, rosemary, basil, or lavender; red or purple grape juice with rosemary, thyme, or savory; white grape juice with roses, lemon herbs, tarragon or scented geraniums.

*Experiment and have fun!*

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