

# *Peach + Pear Jam with Chardonnay + Lemon Verbena*

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This recipe celebrates the hot summer months of July and August in the Northeast. Using fresh summer peaches makes this jam taste extra amazing. Pears give a nice texture and depth. Chardonnay and lemon verbena (a delicious herb) add flavor and pizzazz. Itching to improvise? For the Chardonnay, substitute Riesling, Vin Santo, or another liqueur of your choice. Increase the alcohol ratio in this recipe by a tablespoon if you fancy a boozy jam. If you cannot find lemon verbena, you could use thyme or rosemary, but add about half the number of sprigs.

This recipe is a two-day process. If you want to do it in one day, let the apples and rhubarb macerate for a few hours at room temperature and they should render enough juice for the recipe; the longer this macerates, the better it will taste, and the quicker it will cook.

*Special equipment:* mason jars (Ball, Kerr, etc.), canning pot, tongs

## **Ingredients**

4 pounds peaches	4 tablespoons lemon juice
1 pound pears, peeled & chopped	10 sprigs of lemon verbena (at least 20 leaves), 10 leaves finely minced
3 cups sugar (1.5 pounds)	
½ cup Chardonnay	

## **Directions**

**PREP FRUIT:** Boil a pot of water and turn off the heat. Add all the peaches, let them sit for 1 minute. Pull them out and remove skins. Chop the fruit. Peel and chop the pears. Measure fruit into a glass bowl or plastic food-safe Tupperware and add lemon juice, Chardonnay, and 2 cups of the sugar. Stir well.

**MACERATE:** Macerate at room temperature for an hour or more (but no more than 24 hours). Stir a few times to help dissolve the sugar. If not using within 24 hours, refrigerate or leave in a cool place overnight or up to 72 hours, so that the sugar and lemon juice can help release the juice of the fruit.

**SANITIZE JARS & LIDS:** Place your mason jars in a pot, covered with water; bring to a boil and turn off; leave jars in the hot water, covered, until ready to fill. Place lids in a heat-safe bowl and pour boiling water over them; let them sit in hot water while you prepare the jam.

Place a few metal spoons in the freezer for testing the consistency and gel of your jam later on. You can also place them in a cup of ice water if you prefer or on the windowsill in winter.

**COOK:** Bring the fruit mixture, along with the whole lemon verbena sprigs and minced leaves, to a boil and continue cooking on high heat for 5 minutes. Skim if there is foam and continue cooking on high heat for 5 minutes, stirring **frequently** to avoid scorching. Gradually lower heat as jam reduces volume and starts to stick on the bottom. Stir every 60 seconds as it reduces. **BE CAREFUL OF SCORCHING!**

The syrup will reach the gel stage at 221 ° F (105 ° C) on a candy thermometer, about 20 more minutes. If you don't have a thermometer, test the consistency by placing a teaspoon of the hot jam onto one of the frozen spoons you prepped. Let it rest for a few minutes, then test the gel by tilting the spoon vertically. What is the consistency? If the jam runs loosely like syrup or has pools of liquid surrounding the fruit chunks, then it's not done yet. If it glides slowly along in a gloopy glob, then the jam is ready. If syrupy, bring it to a boil again for 5 to 10 minutes. Once it is done, turn off the heat. Remove the whole sprigs of lemon verbena.

FILL jam to ¼ inch from the top (size of your pinky nail). Place lids on top and tighten hand-tight (not body-builder tight).

PROCESS: Place lids and rings on each jar, tighten, place jar in hot water canning pot using tongs, make sure jars are covered by at least 1-inch of water. Bring to a boil, covered and let boil in hot water for 6 minutes (they should be clinking together at a full boil). Turn off heat, remove and let rest till cool. Jam lasts at least 12 months unopened. Store in a cool, dark place to retain color. Once opened, refrigerate.