



Chocolate Cranberry Jam

Homemade jam is one of the most flavorful ways to preserve fruit, and with the basics of fresh fruit, sugar and spices, making your own jam is a lot simpler than you may think. This recipe pairs tart cranberries with rich chocolate for a deliciously sinful autumn jam.

Makes slightly more than 1 pint

Ingredients

1 12-ounce bag of fresh cranberries
1 1/2 cups (12 ounces) sugar
1/3 cup water
1 star anise
2 teaspoons orange zest
2 1/2 ounces bittersweet chocolate (60-72% recommended), finely chopped

Equipment

Pastry brush
Pint jar or canning jar
Rubber spatula
Tall non-reactive metal saucepan
Zester

Preparation

Combine the sugar and water in a saucepan. Mix until the sugar is completely covered with water, resembling wet sand. Add the star anise and orange zest. Wet your hand or a pastry brush and run it around the edge of the pot to remove any stray sugar crystals. Place the pan over medium heat and bring the sugar to a simmer. Continue to simmer briskly, without stirring, until the sugar reaches hardball stage (248°F) and the bubbles on the surface begin to look evenly sized.

Immediately add the cranberries, stirring with a rubber spatula. Reduce the heat to medium-low and continue to cook, stirring often, until all of the cranberries have softened and the jam thickly coats the back of a spoon. Remove the pan from heat and immediately stir in the chocolate until it is completely combined. Transfer to a jar to cool, then store in the refrigerator.

[Chef's Note: When you add the cranberries, they may begin to clump together. Don't worry, as they will soon begin to pop as their skins burst, release all of their succulent juices and melt the sugar again.]

Service

A spoonful of the jam is a delightful accompaniment with poultry or lamb. Spread on toast, biscuits or scones for a luscious breakfast.

Variations

Jam-making can be one of the most creative ways to preserve fruit, and this jam is no exception. Omit the chocolate for a wonderfully fragrant cranberry jam, or try this recipe with other fruits to create your own recipe. Use different flavorings and spices instead of the star anise and orange: Lemon, lime, cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, cloves or peppercorns make flavorful additions. Brown sugar can also replace the white.

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