

Preserving Rhubarb



Rhubarb, which looks like a pink or red celery stalk, is botanically a vegetable, but is used like a fruit. It is most often found in pies and sauces, but can also be added to muffins, fruit crisp and made into jams and jellies.

The stalks have an extremely tart flavor so require some sort of sweetener to make them palatable. Rhubarb also can be combined with sweet fruit such as strawberries to cut down on the sugar needed.

There are basically two types of rhubarb;

- 1) hot house-grown, which has pink or light red stalks with yellow leaves, and
- 2) field-grown, which has dark red or green stalks with green leaves.

The hot house varieties have a somewhat milder flavor and are less stringy.

Rhubarb can be canned as a sauce, frozen or dried. When combined with strawberries, peaches or other fruit, it can make a great fruit leather. Rhubarb can also be made into fruit spreads, relish or chutney.

To Can: (Hot pack only): Select young, tender, well-colored stalks from the spring or late fall crops. Trim off leaves. Wash stalks and cut into ½-1-inch pieces. In a large saucepan, add ½ cup sugar for each quart of rhubarb. Let stand until juice appears. Heat gently to boiling. Immediately pack mixture into hot jars, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids. Process in a boiling water canner, 15 minutes for pints and quarts. After processing, take canner off heat. Remove lid and wait 5 minutes before removing jars.

Process Time (minutes) at various altitudes

Fruit	Pack	Jar size	0-1,000 ft.	1,001-3,000 ft	3,001 -6,000 ft	Over 6,000 ft
Rhubarb	Hot	Pints and Quarts	15	20	20	25

To Freeze: Choose firm, tender young stalks with few fibers. Wash, trim and cut into 1-inch pieces. Pack dry into freezer containers or bags. Rhubarb can also be cooked into sauce, cooled and frozen.

To Dry: Wash, trim and slice into 1-inch slices. Steam for 1-2 minutes or until slightly tender, but not soft. Dry on dehydrator trays until tough to crisp. Store dried rhubarb in a cool, dry, dark place in airtight containers.

Microwave Rhubarb Chutney

Yield: 5 pints.

- 3 cups Rhubarb, sliced
 - 1 cup cider vinegar (5%)
 - 1 cup sugar, dark brown
 - ½ tsp. each of ground ginger, allspice, dry mustard
 - 1 tsp. cinnamon
 - ¼ tsp. garlic powder
 - ½ cup chopped dates
 - ½ cup raisins
 - 2 medium apple
- In a 2-quart glass bowl, combine rhubarb, vinegar, brown sugar, ginger, allspice, mustard, cinnamon and garlic powder.
 - Microwave on high for 6 minutes or until boiling. Add dates, raisins and apples. Cover with a paper towel. Microwave on high 5 minutes
 - Stir and microwave 5 more minutes, stirring occasionally or until mixture thickens. Let stand to cool.
 - Spoon into jars or refrigerator containers and refrigerate

Rhubarb Relish

Yield: 2-3 pints

- 2 cups rhubarb, finely chopped fresh or frozen
 - 2 cups onion, finely chopped
 - 2½ cups brown sugar, packed
 - 1 cup vinegar
 - 1 tsp. salt
 - ½ tsp. cinnamon
 - ½ tsp. allspice
 - ¼ tsp. ground cloves
 - ¼ tsp. pepper
- Combine all ingredients in a saucepan.
 - Cook over medium heat for 30 minutes or until thickened, stirring occasionally.
 - Cool and store in the refrigerator.
 - Makes a nice condiment for poultry, pork or beef.

Strawberry Rhubarb Leather

- 1 cup rhubarb
 - ¼ cup water
 - 2 cups strawberries, sliced
 - ½ cup sugar
- Combine finely chopped rhubarb and water.
 - Simmer over medium heat for about 5 minutes.
 - Add strawberries and sugar.
 - Puree mixture in a blender or food processor until smooth.

To dry in dehydrator: Pour puree on fruit leather trays that have been lightly oiled. Dry until leathery and pliable. Remove from trays while still warm and roll.

To dry in oven: Pour puree on a cookie sheet that has been lined with wax paper, foil or parchment paper that has been lightly oiled. Set the oven temperature to the warm setting. Prop the door of electric ovens open with a potholder so the moisture can escape. Dry until fruit feels leathery and pliable. Rotate the trays every couple of hours until dry. When dry, remove from paper and roll. To store, wrap leather rolls in plastic wrap and store in a cool dry location.

Rhubarb Raspberry Freezer Jam

- 6 cups rhubarb, fresh or frozen chopped
 - ¼ cup water
 - 3½ cups sugar
 - 1 3 oz. package raspberry gelatin
- Chop rhubarb very finely.
 - Combine all ingredients except gelatin.
 - Bring to a boil and reduce heat to medium. Cover and cook until rhubarb is tender. Uncover and simmer for 12-15 minutes.
 - Stir in gelatin and mix until gelatin is dissolved. Cool.
 - When cool, package in freezer containers and freeze.

Strawberry Rhubarb Jam

Yield: Makes approximately 6 half pints

(from Ball Blue Book)

- 2 cups crushed strawberries
 - 2 cups chopped rhubarb (about 4 stalks)
 - 1 package powdered pectin
 - ¼ cup lemon juice
 - 5 ½ cups sugar
- Combine strawberry, rhubarb, powdered pectin and lemon juice in a large saucepan.
 - Bring to boil over high heat.
 - Add sugar, stirring until dissolved, return to rolling boil.
 - Boil hard 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat.
 - Skim foam if necessary. Ladle hot jam into hot jars leaving ¼ inch headspace.
 - Adjust two-piece caps. Process 10 minutes in a boiling-water canner.
 - After processing, take canner off heat. Remove lid. Wait 5 minutes before removing jars
 - Store jam in a cool dry dark location for best quality.

Source: OSU Master Food Preserver Program