

## HERB JELLIES

With the growing popularity of herbs, it is not surprising that they are finding their way into jellies. Herbal jellies can add a special touch to family meals served as a condiment, hore d'oeuvre and make great gifts. Herb jellies are easy to make and can be made from both fresh and dry herbs.

### 1. Herb Selection and Preparation:

Although fresh herbs are preferable, dried herbs and/or seeds may be used. A general rule is: 1-cup fresh = ½-cup dried = ¼-cup seeds. More or less may be used according to taste. The herbs should be gathered in early morning after the dew has dried from the leaves, but before the hot sun has evaporated the essential oils from the foliage. Wash the herbs by swishing in a basin of cool water, being careful not to bruise the leaves. The herbs used for the infusion are chopped and put into the liquid and then strained before using. Bruise the leaves with a wooden spoon or potato masher when the herbs are infusing into the juice or water. This along with the heat will increase the release of the essential oils.

### 2. Basic Herb Jelly Recipes:

To make a herbal infusion: In a covered pan, combine fruit juice or water with the herbs. Heat to the boiling point, but do not boil. Remove from heat and let mixture steep, covered, for at least 20 minutes. Strain the liquid through a coffee filter paper or jelly bag, squeezing the herbs left in the paper or bag to include all the flavor. Discard herbs. This is the herb jelly liquid base.

#### *Recipe using powdered pectin*

3 cups fruit juice or water  
1 cup fresh herbs  
2 Tablespoons lemon juice or vinegar \*  
1 package powdered pectin  
4 cups sugar  
3-4 drops food coloring (optional) \*\*

} Herb Infusion

Mix the prepared herb infusion with the lemon juice or vinegar, food coloring if desired, and pectin. Mix well. Bring to a full rolling boil (stirring constantly) until the boil cannot be stirred down. Add sugar. Continue stirring until mixture comes to a full rolling boil. Boil hard for one minute. Remove from heat. Stir and skim foam. Immediately pour into hot jars. Seal and process in a boiling water bath canner for 10 minutes.

#### *Recipe for Liquid Pectin*

2 cups juice or water  
1 cup herbs  
3½ cups sugar  
2 Tablespoons lemon juice or vinegar\*  
1 pouch liquid pectin  
food coloring (optional)\*\*

To the prepared herb infusion add the lemon juice or vinegar, food coloring (if desired) and sugar. Mix well. Over high heat, stirring constantly, bring mixture to a full rolling boil that cannot be stirred down. Mix in pectin all at once, and return to full rolling boil. Continue stirring and boil

hard for one minute. Remove from heat. Stir and skim foam. Pour into hot jars. Seal and process in boiling water bath for 10 minutes.

\*Vinegar can be substituted for all or part of the lemon juice when it is desirable for the jelly to have a tangy, sweet flavor. Use this variation for meat accompaniment with herbs such as tarragon or fennel.

\*\* A few drops of food coloring can be added to the mixture before boiling, if desired, to enhance the color of the jelly. Choose from the colors red, yellow or green, but use sparingly – just a few drops are needed.

### **3. Suggestions for Herb and Fruit Juice Combinations:**

Basil (opal) - basil and water infusion – this will be a rose color without food coloring.

- Basil (sweet) - basil and water infusion (add 2 Tablespoons cloves for spicy flavor), strain.
- Cinnamon/cherry juice (make infusion with ¼ cup crushed cinnamon), strain.
- Clove/tangerine juice (make infusion with ¼ cup crushed cloves), strain.
- Fennel – fennel and water infusion, add vinegar for all or part of the lemon juice.
- Lemon balm with red grape juice.
- Lemon thyme with white grape juice.
- Lemon verbena and lemonade.
- Marjoram and grapefruit juice.
- Mint with water or apple juice.
- Parsley with water or dry white wine.
- Sage with cider or apple juice.
- Savory and cranberry juice.
- Scented geranium with water or apple juice.
- Sweet woodruff and white wine.
- Tarragon and white wine or with water (add vinegar).
- Thyme and purple grape juice.

*Use Your Imagination.*

Prepared by Ann Engelcke, OSU/Lane County Extension Master Food Preserver and  
Nellie Oehler, OSU/Lane County FCD Faculty, 2004

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