

TROUBLESHOOTING

JAMS & JELLIES

Sometimes, our jams and jellies don't turn out as we expect. Here's a little troubleshooting help.

Soft or Runny Jam/Jelly – safe to eat

Possible Problem

- Overcooking fruit causing pectin to fail
- Too much water with fruit
- Incorrect proportion of sugar to juice/fruit
- Undercooking which doesn't reduce enough liquid
- Not enough acid so pectin cannot produce a gel
- Making too large a batch
- Using a different type of pectin than what the recipe called for
- Using outdated pectin (yes, it really does matter)

Ideas to Try

- Wait at least 48 hours, sometimes pectin can take a while to set
- If you don't want to reprocess the jam/jelly consider yourself the proud owner of delicious syrup. Use it on pancakes, waffles or French toast. Mix it with club soda, 7-Up or alcohol for a delicious beverage. Or mix it with hot mustard and glaze a ham, meatballs or hamburgers with it.
- Reprocess the jam/jelly. Follow the guidelines from [National Centre for Home Food Preservation](#) on Reprocessing Soft Jam or Jelly.

Floating Fruit – safe to eat

Possible Problem

- Cooking time too short, so fruit doesn't break down enough
- Fruit pieces are too large leaving lots of air in fruit

Ideas to Try

- Chop fruit smaller
- Macerate fruit with sugar overnight (combine fruit and sugar in bowl and leave in fridge)
- Crush or mash fruit as it is cooking
- If using larger pieces, extend cooking time until fruit is a little softer
- After removing from hot water bath, allow to cool for 1 hour then gently turn jars upside down
- When ready to eat, open jar and stir fruit into the jam/jelly

Moldy/Slimy Preserve – NOT safe to eat

Possible Problem

- Poor seal leading to yeast and mold growth.

Ideas to Try

- Toss the jam
- To ensure a strong seal use new lids, check jars for cracks, wipe rims and process in a hot water bath.