

## Pear Butter

6 ripe, but firm, pears—preferably comice pears  
⅓ cup brown sugar  
1 tablespoon honey  
1½ tablespoons lemon juice  
⅓ cup water  
2 teaspoons cinnamon  
¼ teaspoon nutmeg  
¼ teaspoon allspice  
⅛ teaspoon cloves  
¼ teaspoon cardamom

Gently peel the pears with a vegetable peeler. Rub each peeled pear with a cut lemon to prevent too much discoloring. Halve the pears, remove the stems, core them, and cut them into small chunks as quickly as possible.

In a large saucepan, combine the pears with the lemon juice and water. Bring to a slow boil, then add all the other ingredients. Simmer the pears over medium-low heat for about an hour, stirring frequently. Half way through the cooking, taste the mixture for sweetness and for any needed spice adjustment.

If not sweet enough, add a little more brown or white sugar. If the pear butter seems to hold too much liquid, raise the heat and boil to cook off the excess water, stirring constantly to avoid scorching. If it's too sweet, add a bit more lemon juice. Purée the mixture in a blender or food processor until very smooth.

In the meantime, bring a large kettle of water to boil, with a wire rack at the bottom. Place 4-6 one-cup glass jars, plus their lids, in the kettle of boiling water with a pair of tongs. Time this sterilization so that the jars have boiled for at least 15 minutes just at the time the pear butter has been puréed.

Remove the jars and lids with the tongs, draining out all water and being careful not to touch, and thus contaminate them.

Pour the pear butter into the jars, using a large-hole funnel, if possible. Immediately place the lids on the jars. Allow to cool thoroughly.

If you plan to use the pear butter within a couple weeks, just keep it refrigerated. Otherwise, freeze the remaining jars.