

Pears and Cranberries are in season...the following recipes make wonderful holiday or hostess gifts!

Chunky Pear Preserves

Ingredients:

3 lbs. green, hard pears, peeled, cord and sliced in small pieces
1 Tbsp. lemon juice, for each layer
1/2 cup sugar, for each layer
1 tsp. cinnamon
1–20 oz. can unsweetened, crushed pineapple with juice
1 Tbsp. lemon juice

Method:

Spray a pot with Pam™ and measure in 2 cups pears. Sprinkle 1 Tbsp. lemon juice and 1/2 cup sugar over each layer of pears. Repeat layers until all pears have been used. Refrigerate 6–24 hours.

Add 1 tsp. cinnamon and simmer 20–30 minutes (do not add any liquid). Add crushed pineapple and 1 Tbsp. lemon juice and simmer until preserves are thick and sticky (about 15–20 minutes). Pour into sterilized jars, pour 1/2 Tbsp. apricot liqueur (instead of vodka) on top, light with match and seal immediately.

Cranberries Pickled in Cognac

Ingredients:

3 cups fresh cranberries
3/4 cup white sugar
3/4 cup dark brown sugar
1/3 cup cognac or brandy

Method:

Bring cranberries and sugar (both light and dark) to boil (add no liquid). Cover and cook over medium heat for 30 minutes. Stir in 1/3 cup cognac (make sure alcohol is 40% or 80 proof) and pour into sterilized jars. Pour 1/2 Tbsp. vodka on top, light with match and seal immediately.

Serve with ham, turkey, bagels and cream cheese or over Brie cheese with gingersnaps.

How to Seal Preserves

To help the environment...I use recently emptied jelly, preserve or similar jars that have a rubber seal on the inside of the cap. These jars can only be used once to seal a new batch of preserves. Set hot, sterilized jars (use boiling water or your dishwasher) on a wet paper towel on a cake rack on your workspace and put a metal spoon in the jar to keep the jar from cracking. Pour hot preserves into the jar. Put 1/2 Tbsp. vodka or other 40% or 80 proof liqueur on top while the preserves are still hot and light with a match. While burning, screw lid very tightly on top to seal. (Serves the same purpose as putting hot wax on top.) Let cool and give as holiday or hostess gifts!