

mama eats

fresh strawberry jam with lemon

notes: if you've never made jam yourself before, it can seem daunting, scary, anxiety inducing- will it set or be a runny mess? Courage, you can do it. Also, runny jam is just the thing to go on yogurt, and I actually don't like mine too thick. Prepare the jars ahead of time. I pour boiling water in, let it stand 5 minutes, then pour it out and turn them upside down on a cooling rack until ready to use. Some may be worried about sugar. Sugar works as both a thickening agent and a preservative. Traditional jam recipes call for a ratio of 1:1 fruit:sugar, so this is already reduced. I wouldn't go lower if you plan to keep it long term (these will keep in the fridge up to 1 year). But if you plan to eat it fast, you could reduce the sugar more, or make [a chia seed jam like this one](#) for a less, alternative sweetener, or no sugar option. I don't eat gobs of jam at once, so I don't worry about the sugar personally.

2 pounds strawberries

1 pound sugar

1 unwaxed lemon, cut in half

2-3 sterilized jam jars

a ladle + a canning funnel

Hull the strawberries, taking care to nip off any soft or questionable spots with a sharp paring knife, wiping with a damp cloth to clean (you don't want excess water in your jam). Quarter them into a heavy bottomed pot. Add sugar to the pot, then squeeze the lemon over the top and throw in the squeezed halves, too. Mix thoroughly and let it sit on the counter for 4-6 hours, this process lets the fruit macerate in the sugar, becoming more intensely flavored and fragrant.

Set a couple of small saucers in the freezer to use later on, and set the pot of fruit on the stove. Bring to a soft boil over medium high heat and cook, stirring occasionally, about 25 minutes, or until jam begins to look more viscous, like warm honey (if you have a thermometer, the temperature we are looking for is about 220°F / 105°C). Test the jam by spooning a little onto one of the saucers from the freezer. Place the saucer in the fridge for a few minutes and then push the jam with your finger. If it wrinkles and does not run back together very quickly, it is set and ready. If not, boil 5 more minutes and re-test, continuing until jam is set.

When jam is set, carefully remove the lemon halves and discard. Ladle hot jam into the prepared jars. Screw on the lids and either let cool before storing in the refrigerator or freezer for up to one year, or [proceed with canning](#) if you desire to keep it shelf stable.