



LIFE CYCLES

Community

Cookbook

Fruit Harvest
Recipes

Thank You



Thank you to all who contributed recipes to this community cookbook! The recipes in this collection were sourced from our beloved volunteers, staff, and greater community.

To celebrate 25 years of the Fruit Tree Project, LifeCycles has compiled some of our favourite recipes, utilizing locally harvested fruit from backyards, farms, and the urban orchard of the Greater Victoria region.

We are grateful for the hundreds of volunteers, community members, and partners who have generously contributed to this program over the years.

Thank you to the New Horizons for Seniors Program; without their generous support, we would not have been able to deliver this program to its fullest, bringing together people from all walks of life to become part of the local food system.

We hope this booklet inspires you to grow, eat, and share local fruit for years to come.



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Betsy's Best Fruit Tips

Blueberries

Dehydrated blueberries were a bit too leathery for my husband, so we freeze the extra fruit. What a treat to have defrosted berries on muesli throughout the winter. Defrosted they taste delicious and keep their shape fairly well. Frozen berries are great in muffin recipes. (Drain well if using defrosted blueberries in muffins). We store blueberry muffins in the fridge or freezer because they mould quickly if left at room temp.

Raspberries

Bright, red raspberries add so much colour and flavour to a dish. We have more berries than we can eat fresh, so we try different ways of preserving them. The best berries are spaced on cookie sheets and frozen individually, making them easy to pour out of the container. Berries picked on damp days or at the end of the season are frozen in plastic containers. Once defrosted, they will be heated and strained for juice. Raspberries are very juicy when defrosted so I don't use these for pies.

Betsy's Best Fruit Tips

Green Grapes

Our grapes are seedless and slightly tart when fresh but frozen they are so sweet! Freeze them individually on cookie sheets then bag. In hot weather we eat them frozen. Defrosted we heat then strain them and get lots of sweet juice.

Tomatoes and Tomatillos

The great debate – fruits or vegetables? Well, they taste so good and add a burst of flavour to winter cooking. Instead of freezing them whole, we do the prep work before freezing them. Slice the fruits and lay them on greased cookie sheets. Season: we use salt, pepper, herbs and balsamic vinegar in any combination, then drizzle some olive oil. Place the seasoned fruit on wax or parchment paper and roll it up. Place rolls in a freezer bag or container. This way the fruit is easy to add to many dishes and it gets eaten up.

Lacto Fermented Plums

Ingredients

- Plums
- 2% Salt by weight (e.g. 20g of salt for 1 kg of plums)

Note:

If you don't have a vacuum sealer you can also do this in a salted brine / in a jar (2% salt:water ratio, 100 ml of water = 2g salt).

Make sure the brine fully covers the plums and weigh them down with a pickle weight. Burp the jar as necessary or use a pickle pipe to avoid buildup of gas.

Directions

- Wash plums, slice in half, remove pits
- Place plums in a vacuum bag. Add salt. Shake the bag to distribute salt evenly
- Arrange plums in an even layer and vacuum/seal shut
- Allow to ferment for 5-7 days until the bag has inflated. If the bag is at risk of bursting before fermentation is complete, carefully cut one corner to release the air (don't breathe the air in, it is very pungent!) then re-seal
- Once fermentation is complete, open the bag and pour the plums into a jar for storage in the fridge
- The fridge will slow fermentation but not stop it completely so it's best to eat these within a month of completion. I love them with yogurt or ice cream!

by: Lynn Hancock

Stuffed Prune Plums

Ingredients

- Prune Plums
- Cheese of choice, our preference is feta, blue or cheddar cheese

Directions

- Wash, then remove the pit from the prune plums by cutting it open only halfway lengthwise, enough to be able to scoop the pit out but keep the prune plum intact like a hotdog bun.
- Dehydrate them until they are still soft enough to stuff
- Stuff the empty space with a small rectangle of feta, blue or cheddar cheese.



Photo by Truffles



Photo by Truffles

by: Betsy Rose

Crustless Apple Pie

Ingredients

- 5 C peeled and thinly sliced apples
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- Zest of 1 lemon
- ½ C maple syrup
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 3 tbsp rolled oats
- 2 tbsp butter, cut in small pieces
- 2 tbsp flour

Topping

- ¾ C flour
- ⅓ C rolled oats
- ⅓ C any type of sugar
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp salt
- 5 tbsp cold unsalted butter cut in small pieces
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ½ C slivered almonds or chopped walnuts

Directions

- Preheat oven to 375°F
- Toss apple slices with lemon juice, zest, maple syrup and cinnamon. Mix in oats, butter pieces and 2 tbsp flour. Spoon mixture into a lightly greased deep 8-inch pie dish and press the apples down slightly
- For the topping, combine ¾ C flour, oats, sugar, cinnamon and salt. Cut in the butter with vanilla, until the mixture becomes crumbly texture
- Sprinkle the apples with the topping and spread nuts over the top
- Place pie dish on a baking sheet and bake for 20 mins
- Reduce oven temperature to 350°F and bake 45 minutes longer
- If the topping starts to brown too quickly, cover it loosely with foil paper. Cool pie before serving



Apple Banana Bread

Ingredients

Dry

- 2 C flour
- $\frac{1}{3}$ C brown sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt

Wet

- $\frac{1}{2}$ C peanut butter
- 3 mashed bananas
- $\frac{1}{2}$ C applesauce
- $\frac{1}{4}$ C buttermilk
- 3 tbsp sour cream or yogurt
- 2 eggs
- 6 tbsp melted butter
- 2 tsp vanilla

Optional

- $\frac{1}{4}$ C apples
- $\frac{1}{4}$ C nuts
- $\frac{1}{4}$ C chocolate chips

Directions

- Preheat oven to 325°F
- Grease a loaf pan or muffin tins
- In a large bowl add dry ingredients, mix until uniform
- In a medium bowl add wet ingredients, mix until uniform
- Form a well in the dry ingredients, and fold wet ingredients into the dry
- Adding the optional mix-ins, like nuts, chocolate chips, or apple chunks
- Be careful not to over-mix
- Add the mix to the loaf pan or muffin tins and top with optional toppings (e.g. granola, dried or fresh apples, or a sprinkle of brown sugar)
- Muffins: bake for 20-25 minutes
- Loaf: bake for 50-55 minutes

by: LC Community Member

Cornbread Apple Loaf

Ingredients

- 3 medium to large tart baking apples peeled, cored and sliced (e.g. granny smith apples)
- 2 tsp lemon juice

Dry

- $1\frac{1}{2}$ C yellow cornmeal
- $\frac{1}{2}$ C flour
- $\frac{1}{3}$ C sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt
- 1 tbsp sugar

Wet

- 2 eggs (beaten)
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ C buttermilk
- $\frac{1}{3}$ C melted butter

Directions

- Preheat oven to 375°F
- Simmer apples, sugar and lemon in a pot over medium heat for a few minutes to slightly soften, remove from heat
- Place dry ingredients in a bowl
- In another bowl, stir in beaten eggs, melted butter, buttermilk.
- Fold wet ingredients into the dry
- Pour a third of the batter into a greased loaf tin, layer half the apples on top, put another third of the batter, layer the remaining apples onto it, and then pour the rest of the batter
- Place the loaf tin in the centre rack of the oven and bake for 40-45 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.
- Sprinkle with sugar, and let cool in tin for 30 minutes before unmolding and setting on a cooling rack

by: LC Community Member

Pear Custard Pie

Ingredients

- 4 firm pears, peeled and thinly sliced
- ¼ C unsalted butter melted
- 3 eggs
- ¾ C milk
- ¼ tsp salt
- ⅓ C granulated sugar
- ⅓ C flour
- 2 tsp vanilla
- icing sugar as garnish
- cooking spray

Directions

- Preheat the oven to 350°F
- Coat a 9 inch round cake pan with cooking spray
- Arrange the pear slices in the pan
- Put the butter, eggs, milk, salt, sugar, flour and vanilla into a blender
- Process until smooth.
- Pour the batter over the pears
- Bake for 40-45 minutes until the custard is golden and firm to the touch
- Dust the top with powdered sugar before serving

by: LC Community Member

Honey Pear Custard Pie

Ingredients

- 4 pears, cut into wedges
- ½ C melted butter
- ⅓ C sugar
- ⅓ C cornmeal
- ¼ tsp salt
- ¾ C honey
- 3 large eggs
- ½ C cream
- 1 vanilla bean, seeds scraped out

Directions

- Preheat the oven to 350°F and butter a shallow 9-inch pie pan
- Line a baking sheet with foil
- In a medium mixing bowl, add melted butter and gradually whisk in sugar, cornmeal and salt. Drizzle in the honey and mix well. Fold in each egg one at a time and then the cream
- Scrape in a fresh vanilla bean
- Fan out the pears in the base of the pie pan
- Carefully pour in the custard.
- Place the pie pan on the foil lined sheet tray
- Bake in the center of oven for 35-40 mins. Rotating the pie halfway through
- Start checking after 30 minutes, you don't want the edges to burn
- The pie will puff up in the oven but still have a slight wiggle when finished
- Cool fully before serving, it will deflate slightly as it cools

by: LC Community Member

Plum Cake

Ingredients

- 1 lb plums, pitted and quartered
- 1½ C flour
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ tsp nutmeg
- ⅛ tsp cardamom
- ½ tsp salt
- ¾ C + 2 tbsp brown sugar (divided)
- ¼ C white sugar
- ½ C margarine or softened butter
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ C oat milk

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350°F
- Grease a 9-inch springform pan, cake pan or pie pan
- In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, and salt
- In another bowl cream the butter and 1 cup of the sugars until fluffy
- Add the egg and vanilla and beat until well combined. Gradually add the flour mixture, alternating with the milk, and beat until smooth
- Transfer the batter to the prepared pan and smooth the top with an offset spatula. Arrange the plums on top, skin side up, in a circular pattern so that they mostly cover the batter. Sprinkle the remaining 2 tablespoons of sugar over the plums

Plum Cake

Directions - Continued

- Bake on the middle rack of the oven for 60 to 70 minutes, until golden on top and set in the center
- When the cake is hot out of the oven, run a knife around the edges of the pan and then remove the springform edge, leaving the base in place (if using a springform pan)
- Let the cake cool on a rack completely. Slice and serve with ice cream or whipped cream, if desired

Notes

I've made this cake with golden plums and prune plums and both were very successful! Though I preferred the tartness that the golden plums provided. This cake also freezes well! I've kept it in the freezer for at least two months and once thawed it was delicious.





Quince Infused Gin

Ingredients

- 2-3 quince fruit
- 3/4 C sugar
- 750mL gin
- 2 L sterilized jar

Notes:

You can drink this on its own with some ice, but it's also good with a little orange rind twist and a cinnamon stick! It also pairs well with some peppercorn, anise, or clove.

The quince fruit will look quite dark by the time you strain the gin, it's all good!

Directions

- Sterilize a jar by taking a clean, dry jar and setting it on the middle rack of the oven at 275°F for 10 minutes and let cool to room temperature
- Wash and dry your quince fruit, making sure all the fuzz is removed from the skin
- Quarter and core the quince
- Put in the sugar and half of the quince in the jar
- Pour all the gin on top
- Fill the rest of the jar with quince
- Put on the lid and give it a good shake
- Store the jar in a dark cupboard for 3-4 weeks, shaking it once daily for the first week
- Once it has steeped long enough, strain through a cheesecloth, nut-milk bag or fine mesh strainer. Double strain for a clearer result

Pear Peel Juice

Ingredients

- 16 C of pear peels
- 24 C of water
- 2 - 4 C sugar depending on taste (3 C is usually good)
- ¼ C of lemon juice

Optional

- 1 inch stick of cinnamon

Notes:

This makes a nice, light flavoured cool drink when chilled, or it can be used as the syrup for canning other fruits. It's also killer with rum as a mixed drink.

Directions

- Put all the ingredients in a large pot over medium-high heat on stovetop
- Stir until the sugar dissolves
- Bring the mixture to a boil
- Once boiling, reduce heat to medium and boil for about 15 minutes
- Remove from heat and let it cool naturally to room temperature
- Strain through a cheesecloth for a clear juice, or through a tea strainer for a juice with a bit of pulp
- This juice can then be water bath canned if you add another teaspoon of lemon juice per 2 cups of juice

by: LC Community Member





Photo by Truffles

Fig Jam

Eating this jam throughout the winter feels like a taste of summer year-round. My friend and I have started a tradition of picking and making this jam together each summer from the abundance of figs that grow at my mother-in-law's place.

Ingredients

- 2 lbs green or purple figs, stemmed and cut into half-inch pieces
- 1 ½ C sugar
- ¼ C plus 2 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- ½ C water

Variation:

Substitute the water with ½ C of white port, and add one 4-inch sprig of rosemary with the lemon juice. Discard the rosemary before jarring.

Directions

- In a large, nonreactive saucepan, toss the fig pieces with the sugar and let stand, stirring occasionally, for about 15 minutes, until the sugar is mostly dissolved and the figs are juicy
- Add lemon juice and water, and bring to a boil, stirring until the sugar is completely dissolved.
- Simmer the fig jam over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until the fruit is soft and the liquid runs off the side of a spoon in thick, heavy drops
- Spoon the jam into three 250ml jars leaving ¼ inch of space at the top. Close the jars and let cool to room temperature. Store the jam in the refrigerator for up to 3 months

by: Anna Maria Stone

Golden Plum Spiced Jam

Ingredients

- 4 lbs golden plums, pitted and diced
- 4 C sugar
- 3 tbsp powdered pectin
- 1 ½ tsp cinnamon
- 1 ½ tsp cardamom
- 1 ½ tsp nutmeg
- 1 lemon juiced & zested

Directions

- Prepare a boiling water bath canner and 7-8 half pint jars
- Heap the prepared plums in a large, non-reactive pan
- Whisk the sugar, pectin, cinnamon, and nutmeg together and stir it into the plums
- When the plums are quite juicy and most of the sugar has dissolved, add the lemon juice and zest, and place the pan on the stove over high heat
- Bring the fruit to a boil then reduce the heat to medium high
- Cook at a low boil, stirring regularly, for 25 to 30 minutes, until the plums soften and the syrup thickens. You'll know when the jam is done when it is resistant to stirring and the droplets are thick and slow moving off the spoon

Golden Plum Spiced Jam

Directions - Continued

- When the jam is done, remove the pan from the heat. Funnel jam into the prepared jars
- Wipe the rims, apply the lids and rings, and process the jars in a boiling water bath canner for 10 minutes (do not start your timer until the pot returns to a full, rolling boil)
- Once the time is up, remove the jars from the canner and set them on a folded kitchen towel to cool. The lids should seal promptly and will often make a pinging or popping sound as the vacuum forms.
- When the jars are sealed, the center of the lids will be concave and when pressed, the lid will not move or wiggle



by: Megan Sociedade

Apple Leather in the Oven

Ingredients

- 1 ¼ pounds of chopped, peeled apples
- ¼ to ¾ C sugar (depending on desired sweetness)
- 2 tbsp lemon juice

Materials

- Baking tray
- Silicone mat, parchment paper or non-stick foil
- Food processor
- Saucepan
- Cooling rack
- Wax paper

Directions

- Preheat oven to 200°F
- Combine fruit, sugar and lemon juice in a food processor or blender. Puree to a smooth consistency
- Transfer the mixture into a saucepan. Bring to a simmer, and then reduce the heat to low. Stir frequently. Cook until the mixture is thick ~ 30 mins
- Line a baking tray with a silicone mat, foil or parchment paper.
- Spread the apple mixture using a spatula. Try to get a thin, even layer
- Bake for 3-4 hours
- Transfer the baking tray to a cooling rack and let it cool for 30 mins
- If the underside of the leather is still moist, return it to the oven moist side up, for 20 mins
- Peel off and transfer the leather onto a cutting board lined with wax paper. Use scissors or a pizza cutter to cut long strips of leather with the wax paper
- Roll them up and store in zip bags or jars for up to a week

Glossary

Water bath canning:

Water bath canning is a processing method in which your jars of food are boiled in a water bath canner for the amount of time determined by the recipe you are following.

Non-Reactive Pan:

It's a pan that doesn't react to the food being cooked in it, some examples of non-reactive materials are: stainless steel, glass and ceramic.

Gleaning:

Gleaning is the process of gathering leftover produce after a harvest. At LifeCycles, much of the produce we harvest is from farm gleaning and backyard fruit tree harvests.

Quince:

A quince fruit is bright yellow, fuzzy, and smells strongly floral when it's ripe. It has a tough flesh that is quite tart and astringent, and is not a fruit eaten raw, despite resembling pears and apples. Once prepared, quince sweetens and softens, and is a very popular fruit to preserve, poach and use in alcoholic beverages.