

Preserving Pineapple

Pineapple Fast Facts

- Preserve pineapple by canning, drying, pickling, or making canned or frozen jam or sauce. You can also use the rind to make homemade fermented vinegar. Freezing fresh pineapple tends to develop off flavors so is not recommended.
- One pound of pineapple is equivalent to ½ medium pineapple, 2 cups cubed, 1½ cups purée, or 1 cup juice.
- **To prepare pineapple:** Scrub rind with a brush and rinse well under running water. Grasp the crown (leaves) and twist to remove; or, lay pineapple on its side and cut off the crown with a large, sharp knife. Cut off about ½ inch from each end (crown and base). Stand pineapple on one end. Using a serrated fruit or bread knife, cut the rind off the fruit, working in strips about 2-inches wide around the outside. Remove as little of the fruit as possible. Finally, cut out the brown eyes using the tip of a knife or vegetable peeler. Save the rind for making vinegar, if desired. Cut fruit in quarters then cut out the central woody core. Alternatively, you may use a pineapple corer tool, which removes the rind and core in one step, but may waste more fruit on larger pineapples. Cut peeled and cored fruit into slices, spears, or cubes.

Pineapple Peel Vinegar: Dissolve ¼ packet wine or beer yeast in a small amount of tepid water. Let stand 10-15 minutes, or until foamy. In a clean and sanitized ½ gallon glass or stoneware container, stir together 4 cups distilled water and ½ cup granulated sugar until dissolved. Stir in foamy yeast mixture and 1 cup clean, thinly sliced pineapple rind. Cover container with a clean towel. Store in a dark, warm place (70°F to 75°F). It should be ready in 2-4 weeks, or when it tastes pleasantly tart. Use within 12 months.

Macerated Pineapple: *Macerate* means to soften or soak. Use this technique to dress up fresh fruit with a sprinkle of sugar or splash of vinegar, as well as to preserve fresh fruit in alcohol. In a small saucepan, stir together 2 tablespoons granulated sugar and 1½ cups gold rum. Heat over medium and stir until sugar dissolves; cool. In a sterilized 1-quart glass jar, place 3 slices fresh peeled gingerroot, 3 whole cloves, and 1 cinnamon stick. Fill jar with 4 cups fresh pineapple chunks. Pour cooled syrup over pineapple. Cover jar and refrigerate up to 6 months.

Dried pineapple fruit leather: Fruit leathers are made from purées that are spread thin and dried until supple and chewy. In a food processor or blender, purée 2 cups pineapple cubes until smooth. Preheat an oven or food dehydrator to 130°F to 140°F. Line the drying tray with plastic wrap or parchment paper. Spread purée ¼ to ½ inch thick on the liner. Dry until leather is evenly pliable and firm with no soft spots. Peel from liner while still warm. Cut or roll into serving pieces. Cool before wrapping pieces individually. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dry place up to 2 months. Freeze for longer storage.

Spicy Pickled Pineapple: Place 4 cups pineapple spears or cubes in a sterilized quart jar. In a saucepan, stir together ¾ cup sugar, 6 tablespoons each cider or palm vinegar and unsweetened pineapple juice, 4 slices fresh ginger, and 1 dried chile pepper. Bring to a boil,

reduce heat, and simmer 10-15 minutes. Strain to remove solids. Pour hot syrup over pineapple. Cover jar and refrigerate up to 1 month. For longer storage cook fruit in pickling syrup, fill jars and process like canned pineapple (recipe follows).

Canned pineapple: For each quart (2 pints), prepare 4 cups pineapple slices, spears, or cubes. In a saucepan, stir together 1½ cups water and ½ cup sugar. Bring to a boil, when sugar has dissolved, add prepared pineapple and cook 1-2 minutes. Keep mixture hot while filling jars; adjust headspace to ½-inch. Process pints for 15 minutes or quarts for 20 minutes (at 0 to 1,000 feet).

Pineapple-Chile Salsa: In a heavy stainless-steel or enamel saucepan, stir together 1 cup chopped pineapple, 1/8 cup chopped white or red onion, 1 tablespoon chopped bell pepper, 1 teaspoon each chopped fresh cilantro and mint, 1/8 cup fresh lime juice, 1 tablespoon each fresh lemon juice and unsweetened pineapple juice, 1 teaspoon brown sugar, and a dash of cayenne. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes. Cool and refrigerate or keep hot while filling jar; adjust headspace to ½-inch. Process half-pint for 15 minutes (at 0 to 1,000 feet). Makes 1 half-pint; recipe may be multiplied up to 7 half-pint pints.

Low-Sugar Pineapple Jam: In a heavy stainless-steel or enamel saucepan, stir together 1½ cups pineapple purée, 3½ tablespoons sugar, 1½ teaspoons fresh lime juice, 1 teaspoon bottled lemon juice, and ¼ teaspoon lime peel. Boil over medium heat, stirring constantly, until thickened to desired consistency. Refrigerate and use within 1 month. For longer storage, keep jam hot while filling jars. Process half-pints or pints for 10 minutes (at 0 to 1,000 feet).

