

Preserving Apples, Pears, and Quince



Pome Fruits Fast Facts

- Pome fruits include apples, crabapples, pears, quinces, Asian pears, and loquats.
- Store pome fruits near freezing (32°F), in very humid conditions (80%-90% RH), such as plastic bags with holes. Examine the bags often for visible moisture; immediately air out bags with any condensation.
- Pome fruits give off ethylene gas; you may store them together, but away from other produce, especially bananas, grapes, potatoes, and onions.
- Preserve pome fruits by canning, pickling, freezing, or drying.
- One pound of pome fruits is equivalent to 3 medium fruits, 3 cups cored and sliced or chopped, or 1½ to 2 cups purée.
- **To prepare pome fruits:** Wash fruit. Peel if desired, cut in half, and remove core. Slice or chop as desired. **To pre-treat for browning:** Prepare a solution using 3,000 mgs crushed Vitamin C tablets, or 4 teaspoons (5 grams) citric acid in a gallon of water. Or use plain apple juice. Soak prepared and cut fruit for 5 minutes; drain.

Applesauce (also, pears or quince): Prepare 2½ pounds apples for one quart applesauce. Cut fruits into quarters, place in a saucepan with ¼ cup water, cover, and cook over medium heat 10-15 minutes, or until very soft (quince can take an hour to cook). Purée until chunky or smooth. If desired, add 2 tablespoons sugar or honey, or to taste. For Cinnamon Applesauce, add 1-2 teaspoons ground cinnamon per quart after fruit has cooked, but before puréeing. Cool, cover, and refrigerate up to 3 days.

Frozen applesauce: pack chilled applesauce into freezer-safe containers. Freeze up to 12 months.

Canned applesauce: Reheat applesauce to a boil; if sugar was added, continue to cook until sugar is completely dissolved. Keep sauce 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).

Pickled apples, pears, or quince: Prepare 2½ pounds fruit per quart. Cut into thick wedges; pre-treat for browning. In a saucepan, stir together 1 cup sugar, ½ cup cider vinegar, ½ cup apple juice or water, ½ stick cinnamon, and 2-3 whole cloves. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer 10-15 minutes. Add prepared fruit. Cook 5 minutes. Cool, cover, and refrigerate up to 1 month. For longer storage, fill hot canning jars with hot fruit and pickling liquid; adjust headspace to ½-inch. Process apple pickle pints or quarts for 20 minutes (at 0 to 1,000 feet). Process pear or quince pickle pints for 20 minutes or quarts for 25 minutes (at 0 to 1,000 feet).

Dried apple or pear slices: Prepare fruit and slice ¼ thick or less. Preheat an oven or food dehydrator to 130°F to 140°F. Dry slices until pliable for snacking, or until crisp for longer storage. Cool until no longer warm; store in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for about 2 months. Freeze for longer storage.

Dried applesauce leather: Leathers are made from purées that are spread thin and dried until supple and chewy. Prepare applesauce (pears or quince may be substituted). Add 2 tablespoons sugar or honey, or to taste. If desired, add 2 tablespoons lemon juice to brighten flavor. 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.

Apple Cider 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 1-quart glass jar, add 2 cups room-temperature apple juice. Cap it and shake to mix thoroughly. Add more juice, filling the jar no more than ¾ full. Cover the jar with a clean piece of clean cheesecloth (or a towel). Store at warm room temperature (70°F to 75°F), away from light (for example, in a cupboard). It should be ready in 2-4 weeks, or when it tastes pleasantly tart. Use within 12 months.