

Bloomfield Pear Butter

Makes enough for 12 to 14 half-pint jars

½ cup fresh apple cider

½ cup + ¼ cup fresh lemon juice

14 pounds ripe Bartlett pears

6 cups (packed) golden brown sugar

2 teaspoons freshly grated ground nutmeg

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

2 teaspoons ground ginger

1.5 teaspoons coarse salt (such as Kosher salt)

Combine apple juice and ½ cup lemon juice in a large, heavy pot. One at a time, core, peel and cut pears into 1/2" - 3/4" pieces, stirring into the juice mixture in the pot as soon as they are cut, to prevent browning.

Cook pears over medium heat for about 10 minutes, or until pears release enough juice for the mixture to boil. Stir frequently.

Reduce heat to medium-low, cover pot and simmer for about 20 more minutes, or until pears are tender. Continue stirring frequently to keep them from scorching at the bottom of the pot.

Remove pot from heat and let mixture cool (at this point, you can either let it cool for a few minutes, or for several hours at room temperature, or overnight in the refrigerator).

Put the pear mixture through a food mill, using the disk with the smallest holes. I like to grind it into a second large pot, but you could also use a very large bowl).

If using a bowl, return the mixture to the pot. Add ¼ cup lemon juice, brown sugar, nutmeg, cinnamon, ginger and salt. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves and the spices are all mixed in.

Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until pear butter thickens, darkens and is reduced by about half, about 2 hours. Stir every 5 minutes, to prevent scorching.

While the mixture simmers, prepare 14 half-pint glass canning jars and lids, and set up a canning pot for processing.

When the pear butter is ready, ladle it into the clean, hot jars, leaving ¼" headroom at the top of each jar. Remove air bubbles. Wipe jar threads and rims with a clean, damp cloth. Screw on hot lids. Process in the canner for 10 minutes. Cool completely. Store in a cool, dry place for up to 1 year.

Enjoy!
Alisa Goldberg