

Easy seasonal apple and wild blackberry jam



Ed up with the thought of endless crumbles and pies? It's easy to make chutneys and jams from this year's bumper crop of apples, says Christine Hart, owner of Sussex Jams And Chutneys.

Christine says the best all-rounder is the Peasegood's Nonsuch, a large apple from Lincolnshire. It is a cooking apple but requires much less sugar than other cookers.

She says: "Never be put off by cooking apples, they are excellent to work with. It's quicker to peel and prepare a large apple, and these varieties have a wonderfully sharp flavour. You can add sugar as you like. Cooking apples still produce deliciously sweet jams."

"While chutneys and apple sauce are popular choices, I like to make apple jams and serve with scones, as an autumnal alternative to a classic cream tea."

INGREDIENTS

(MAKES FOUR JARS AND LASTS UP TO A YEAR)

500g apples, ideally Peasegood's Nonsuch or Bramley, peeled, cored and diced

500g wild blackberries, or substitute for more apples
1kg sugar (adjusted according to the sweetness of your apples)

1-2 lemons, or 50ml of lemon juice
150ml water

Optional: Crème de Cassis (blackcurrant liqueur), brandy or ground cinnamon for an indulgent twist

METHOD

You'll need jars with lids plus a thermometer

1 Before chopping, wash the fruit carefully. Add



the chopped apples, wild blackberries and water into pan and gently simmer on a low heat for 15 minutes, to soften the fruit, stirring occasionally.

2 Add the sugar and stir until dissolved.

3 Add the 50ml of lemon juice.

4 Turn the heat to medium/high for 10-15 minutes and bring the mixture to a boil. Using a jam thermometer, wait until the temperature reaches 104.5 degrees and then test to see if setting point has been reached. At this point, you may add additional flavours, such as

Crème de Cassis, brandy or cinnamon.

5 To test, place a small amount of preserve onto a heatproof dish that has been chilled in a fridge. Leave to stand for five minutes and run your finger through the mixture once it is cooled. It should wrinkle if set. Taste the mix to see if it is at your desired sweetness.

6 Sterilise your jars and lids by washing in hot water, then place the jars in an oven at 120 degrees for 15 minutes. Place the lids in boiling water for five minutes, then remove and dry in a warm oven.

7 Pour the preserve into the hot, dry jars. Leave a small gap at the top and immediately seal the lid tightly. Finally, label and store.