

Auma's Featured Recipe

Hot Pepper and Basil Jelly

If you've never tried to make jelly before why don't you give it a go this year. This one is relatively easy and always a hit. Having a few jars around for a quickie appie is the best. You can pour this over a chunk of brie or goat cheese and serve with crackers or bread. Yum!

INGREDIENTS:

5 c. chopped sweet bell peppers (all one color or an assortment of colors works)
About 1 c. chopped and seeded hot chiles (Jalapenos, Serranos, or whichever chile you deem to be the heat that you like)
Leaves from 2 large sprigs of basil (or omit, if you don't like or don't have fresh basil)
2 ½ c. cider vinegar
6 ½ c. sugar
2 packages (3 ounces each) of liquid pectin (just make the boxed dry kind and liquidize)

Combine the bell peppers, chiles and basil in a food processor and process until they are finely minced. Transfer all to a tall, non reactive saucepan (like stainless steel, ceramic, etc). Add the vinegar and bring it to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Stir the sugar into the pepper mixture and bring it to a full rolling boil over high heat. The mixture should be boiling so furiously that you cannot stir it down. It should take about 10-15 minutes to reach this point.

Add the pectin and boil for 1 full minute.

Ladle the hot jelly into sterilized half-pint canning jars with two-piece canning lids (all available at the grocery stores), leaving a ¼ inch head space in each jar. Wipe the rims of the jars with a moist, clean paper towel or cloth before adding the lids and then put the screwbands on the lids and tighten. Process the jars in a boiling water bath for 5 minutes (usually with some sort of rack on the bottom of a pot large enough to cover the jars with water). Take the jars out of the water and place on the counter to cool off. After they cool, check the lids to make sure that they sealed. You will hear them, as they "pop" and seal while cooling. If you press on the cooled lid it should have indented in a just a titch. If some didn't, no worries, just refrigerate those and use them first. Store the sealed ones in a cool, dry place for up to one year.

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