Prep Time: 20 minutes

Cook Time: 20–25 minutes (sauce) + 15 minutes (water-bath processing)

Total Time: Approximately 1 hour 15 minutes

Difficulty: Beginner to Intermediate

Method: Water-bath canning

Equipment Required: Large stockpot or Dutch oven, water-bath canner with rack, 4 half-pint canning jars with lids and bands, jar lifter, funnel, ladle, bubble remover or chopstick, clean kitchen towels, magnetic lid lifter (optional).

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Ingredients

- 4 cups fresh cranberries (about 1 pound/450 g), rinsed and sorted (discard soft or

shriveled berries)

- 1 cup granulated sugar (adjust to taste; up to 1½ cups for sweeter sauce)
- 1 cup water
- 1 cup orange juice (freshly squeezed preferred)
- 1 tablespoon orange zest (optional, for brightness)
- 1 cinnamon stick (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves or allspice (optional)
- Pinch of salt (enhances flavor)

Optional Variations: Add 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger, 1 star anise pod, or 2 tablespoons port wine (note: alcohol affects processing time slightly; stick to tested recipes if altering significantly).

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step 1: Prepare the Canning Equipment (10 minutes)

Wash jars, lids, and bands in hot soapy water and rinse thoroughly. Keep jars hot until filling—either submerge them in the canner of simmering water or run them through a dishwasher cycle and leave them in the hot appliance. Place lids in a small saucepan of hot

(not boiling) water to soften the sealing compound. Fill the water-bath canner halfway with water and bring to a simmer (180°F/82°C) while you make the sauce.

Step 2: Cook the Cranberry Sauce (15–20 minutes)

In a large, heavy-bottomed stockpot or Dutch oven, combine the water, orange juice, and sugar. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Add the cranberries, orange zest, cinnamon stick, cloves, and salt. Return to a boil, then reduce heat to medium and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 10–15 minutes, until most of the berries have burst and the sauce has thickened slightly. It will continue to thicken as it cools. Remove the cinnamon stick. Taste and adjust sweetness if needed. Intensity: Medium-high to medium heat; gentle, steady simmer—avoid a rolling boil that splatters.

Step 3: Fill the Jars (10 minutes)

Ladle hot sauce into hot jars using a funnel, leaving ¼ inch (6 mm) of headspace. Use a bubble remover or chopstick to release trapped air, then wipe jar rims with a clean, damp cloth. Center lids on jars and apply bands until fingertip-tight (not overly tight).

Step 4: Process in the Water-Bath Canner (15 minutes)

Using a jar lifter, lower filled jars onto the rack in the canner, ensuring they are covered by at least 1–2 inches of water. Bring to a full rolling boil, then start the timer: process half-pint and pint jars for 15 minutes (adjust for altitude: add 5 minutes for 1,001–3,000 ft; 10 minutes for 3,001–6,000 ft; 15 minutes for 6,001–8,000 ft). Maintain a steady boil throughout. Intensity: High heat to sustain a rolling boil; do not let the water drop below a boil.

Step 5: Cool and Check Seals (12–24 hours)

Turn off heat and let jars rest in the canner for 5 minutes. Remove jars with a jar lifter and place on a towel-lined counter, spaced 1 inch apart. Let cool undisturbed for 12–24 hours. Check seals by pressing the center of each lid—it should be concave and not flex. Label jars with date and contents. Store in a cool, dark place for up to 12 months. Refrigerate any

unsealed jars and use within 3 weeks.

Timing and Intensity Summary Table

Stage	Time	Heat Intensity
Equipment prep	10 min	Medium (simmering water)
Cook sauce	15–20 min	Medium-high to medium
Fill jars	10 min	N/A (hot pack)
Water-bath process	15 min (+ altitude adjustment)	High (rolling boil)
Cool and seal	12–24 hrs	None

Tips and Troubleshooting

- Sauce too thin? Simmer a few extra minutes before filling; cranberry sauce sets as it cools.
- Sauce too thick? Stir in a splash of water or orange juice before jarring.
- Lids didn’t seal? Refrigerate and use within three weeks, or reprocess within 24 hours with new lids.
- Don’t double the recipe in one pot—cranberries need room to burst and sauce needs to thicken evenly.
- Never alter sugar drastically when canning; sugar contributes to gel formation and safety in tested recipes.
- Altitude matters: Always adjust processing time for your elevation.

Nutrition Information (per 2-tablespoon serving, approximately 16 servings per recipe)

- Calories: 45
- Total Fat: 0 g
- Sodium: 5 mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 11 g
- Dietary Fiber: 1 g
- Total Sugars: 9 g (includes added sugar)
- Protein: 0 g
- Vitamin C: 4% DV