

Prep Time	20 minutes
Cook Time	15 minutes
Cooling Time	24 hours (minimum resting)
Yield	4 half-pint (8 oz) jars
Difficulty Intensity	Medium (Requires basic simmering and safe handling of hot peppers)
Spice Intensity	High 🌶️🌶️ (The sugar tempers the initial bite, but the capsaicin remains potent)

Table of Contents

- ◆
- [The Ingredients & Their Roles](#)
- [Step-by-Step Instructions](#)
- [The Last of the Recipe: Storage and Maturation](#)
- [Serving Suggestions](#)
- [Nutrition Information](#)

The Ingredients & Their Roles

Creating the perfect candied jalapeño requires a precise balance of structure, acid, and sugar.

- 1.5 lbs Fresh Jalapeños: Look for firm, bright green peppers with smooth skin. If you see white lines (corking) on the skin, those peppers will be significantly hotter. You need fresh, crisp peppers so they don't turn to mush during the boil.
- 2 Cups Fresh Pineapple: Cut into small 1/2-inch tidbits. Fresh pineapple provides a firm texture and bright, acidic sweetness that canned pineapple lacks.
- 2 Cups Apple Cider Vinegar (5% acidity): The acid is non-negotiable for food safety if

you plan to water-bath can these, and it balances the heavy sugar load to create a tangy syrup.

- 4 Cups Granulated Sugar: Granulated sugar creates a cleaner, less muddy syrup than brown sugar, allowing the bright green and yellow colors of the peppers and pineapple to shine in the jar.
- 1 tsp Turmeric: Primarily for color, giving the syrup a golden, appetizing hue.
- 1/2 tsp Celery Seed & 1/2 tsp Garlic Powder: These savory background notes prevent the syrup from tasting like straight candy, anchoring it as a savory condiment.
- 1/4 tsp Cayenne Pepper: Optional, but recommended if you want to ensure a sharp, lingering bite that competes with the pineapple's tropical sweetness.

Step-by-Step Instructions

1. Prep the Produce: Wear nitrile or latex gloves for this step.

Wash the jalapeños thoroughly. Slice off the stems and discard. Cut the peppers into uniform 1/4-inch rounds. Do not remove the seeds or membranes—this is where the heat lives. Peel and core the fresh pineapple, dicing it into 1/2-inch cubes. Set both aside in a large glass or stainless steel bowl.

2. Build the Syrup:

In a large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven, combine the apple cider vinegar, granulated sugar, turmeric, celery seed, garlic powder, and cayenne pepper. Bring the mixture to a rolling boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat to a simmer and let it cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sugar is completely dissolved and the liquid reduces

slightly into a thin syrup.

3.Simmer the Solids:

Carefully slide the sliced jalapeños and pineapple chunks into the boiling syrup. Bring the pot back to a rolling boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for exactly 4 minutes. The jalapeños will shrink slightly and turn from bright green to an olive, duller green. Do not overcook, or the peppers will lose their structural crunch.

4.Separate and Pack:

Using a slotted spoon, immediately transfer the jalapeños and pineapple from the hot syrup into clean, sterilized half-pint mason jars. Pack them relatively tightly, leaving about 1/2-inch of headspace at the top of each jar. Leave the remaining hot syrup in the pot.

5.Reduce the Syrup:

Turn the heat back up under the pot of syrup. Boil hard for 6 to 8 minutes. You want the liquid to reduce and thicken slightly. When you dip a cold metal spoon into the liquid and it coats the back like a thin glaze, it is ready.

6.Fill the Jars:

Carefully ladle the boiling syrup over the peppers and pineapple in the jars. Insert a plastic chopstick or butter knife down the inside of the jars to release any trapped air bubbles. Ensure the solids are completely submerged in the syrup, maintaining a 1/4-inch headspace at the top of the jar.

The Last of the Recipe: Storage and Maturation

The final step—and often the hardest—is the waiting period. Do not eat the Cowboy Candy immediately. The peppers need time to absorb the sugar, which mellows their raw, vegetal heat and creates the signature “candied” effect.

Refrigerator Method (Immediate Use):

Wipe the rims of the jars with a damp paper towel. Secure the lids and bands. Let the jars cool on the counter to room temperature, then transfer them to the refrigerator. Wait at least 1 week (preferably 2 to 3 weeks) before opening. They will keep safely in the fridge for up to 3 months.

Water Bath Canning (Long-Term Storage):

If you want to store these in the pantry, wipe the rims with a paper towel dipped in white vinegar to cut through any sticky syrup and ensure a perfect seal. Apply two-piece canning lids. Process the jars in a boiling water bath for 10 minutes (adjust for altitude if necessary). Carefully remove the jars and let them sit undisturbed on a towel for 24 hours. Check the seals. Properly canned, they will last in a dark, cool pantry for up to 1 year. Once opened, store them in the refrigerator.

Serving Suggestions

Cowboy Candy with Pineapple is aggressively flavored, meaning a little goes a long way to elevate a dish.

- **The Classic Appetizer:** Pour a generous spoonful over a block of full-fat cream cheese. Serve with sturdy, salty crackers. The fat of the cheese neutralizes the capsaicin, while the salt balances the sugar.
- **Burgers & Sandwiches:** Layer a few slices inside a smashburger or a pulled pork sandwich. The pineapple acts as a sweet, acidic relish that cuts through heavy meats.
- **Tacos:** Excellent on fish tacos or pork Al Pastor, where the tropical pineapple notes naturally belong.

- Cocktails: Drop a single candied jalapeño and a small splash of the syrup into a Margarita or a Bloody Mary for a sweet, fiery kick.
- The Glaze: Do not throw away leftover syrup once the jar is empty. Brush it over chicken thighs, ribs, or salmon during the last 5 minutes of grilling for a sticky, spicy finishing glaze.

Nutrition Information

(Estimated per 2-tablespoon serving, assuming the standard amount of syrup is consumed with the peppers)

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	45 kcal
Total Carbohydrates	12g
Sugars	11g
Dietary Fiber	0.5g
Protein	0g
Total Fat	0g
Sodium	5mg
Vitamin C	15% Daily Value