

- Prep Time: 15 minutes (plus 2 hours of passive soaking)
 - Cook Time: 45 to 60 minutes
 - Total Time: Approximately 3 hours (including soaking and cooling)
 - Intensity Level: Low to Moderate (Requires attention during the boil, but the process is straightforward).
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Instructions

1. Prepare the Peels (Prep: 15 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Start by collecting your citrus peels. If you are using peels from fruit you have just eaten, remove as much of the bitter white pith as you can, but do not worry if some remains—the pith is actually rich in pectin. However, avoid using peels that have been heavily treated with wax or pesticides; if possible, scrub the fruit well before peeling or use organic citrus. Chop the peels into smaller pieces, about 1-inch chunks, to increase the surface area for extraction.

2. The Soak (Passive Time: 2 hours | Intensity: None)

Place the chopped peels in a large bowl or pot and cover them with about 4 cups of cold water. Let them soak for at least 2 hours. This step helps soften the peels and begins to draw out the pectin. Some recipes suggest soaking overnight for a stronger yield, but 2 hours is sufficient for a good result. You may notice the water becoming slightly cloudy; this is normal.

3. The First Boil (Cook Time: 30 minutes | Intensity: Moderate)

Transfer the peels and their soaking water to a heavy-bottomed saucepan. Add the lemon juice. Bring the mixture to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce the heat to maintain a steady simmer. Simmer uncovered for about 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. The peels should become very soft and translucent, and the liquid should reduce slightly.

4. Strain and Mash (Time: 10 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Remove the pot from the heat and let it cool slightly. Set a fine-mesh strainer or a double layer of cheesecloth over a large bowl. Pour the mixture through the strainer. Using the back of a spoon or a potato masher, press down firmly on the peels to extract as much liquid as possible. The liquid you collect is your pectin stock. The spent peels can be composted.

5. The Reduction (Cook Time: 15 to 30 minutes | Intensity: Moderate)

Return the strained liquid to the saucepan. Bring it to a boil and continue to boil it down until it has reduced by about half. This concentrates the pectin. You should notice the liquid becoming slightly thicker and more syrupy. To test the strength, place a small spoonful of the hot liquid on a chilled plate. If it sets into a soft gel when cooled, it is ready. If it remains watery, continue boiling for another 10 minutes and test again.

6. Cool and Store (Time: 30 minutes | Intensity: Low)

Carefully pour the hot pectin liquid into clean glass jars or bottles. Let them cool to room temperature before sealing. Store the pectin in the refrigerator, where it will keep for about 2 to 3 weeks. For longer storage, you can freeze the pectin in ice cube trays and transfer the frozen cubes to a freezer bag, where they will last for up to 6 months.

How to Use Your Homemade Pectin

Because homemade pectin is not standardized, you will need to experiment with quantities. As a starting point, use about 1/4 cup of homemade liquid pectin for every 2 cups of fruit puree or juice. If the jam does not set after cooling, you can re-boil it with a bit more pectin. Keep in mind that homemade pectin may have a slightly cloudier appearance and a softer set than commercial varieties.

Nutrition (Approximate)

The nutritional profile of homemade citrus pectin is minimal, as the vast majority of the sugars and calories remain in the discarded peels. The final liquid is primarily water with trace amounts of soluble fiber.

Serving Size: 1 tablespoon (15 ml)

- Calories: 2 to 5 kcal
- Total Fat: 0 g
- Sodium: 1 to 3 mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 0.5 to 1 g
- Dietary Fiber: 0.5 g
- Sugars: 0 g

- Protein: 0 g