Prep Time: 20 minutes
Cook Time: 45-55 minutes
Total Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

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Ingredients

- 1 kg (2.2 lbs) fresh rhubarb stalks
- 800 g (4 cups) granulated sugar
- 1 large lemon (you will need both the juice and the zest)
- 1/2 tsp unsalted butter (optional, to reduce foaming)

Equipment

- Large, heavy-bottomed pot or preserving pan
- Wooden spoon or heatproof spatula
- 4-5 sterilized 250ml jam jars with lids
- Ladle and a wide-mouth funnel (optional, but helpful)
- Small plate placed in the freezer (for testing the set)

Instructions

Part 1: Preparation (Time: 15 minutes | Intensity: Low)

1. Prepare the Jars: Sterilize your jars and lids. You can do this by washing them in hot, soapy water and rinsing well, then placing them in a low oven (120°C/250°F) for 10-15 minutes until completely dry. Keep them warm until you're ready to fill them.

2. Prepare the Rhubarb: Wash the rhubarb stalks and trim off the leaves and the very bottom of the stalk. There's no need to peel them; the skin adds beautiful color and natural pectin. Slice the stalks into 1-2 cm (about 1/2 inch) pieces.

3. Combine Ingredients: Place the chopped rhubarb into your large, heavy-bottomed pot. Add the granulated sugar, the zest of the lemon, and the juice of the whole lemon. Stir everything together until the rhubarb is well-coated.

Part 2: Maceration (Time: 30 minutes – 2 hours | Intensity: None)

This is a crucial step for a better-textured jam. Cover the pot and let the rhubarb and sugar mixture sit at room temperature for at least 30 minutes, or up to 2 hours. The sugar will draw out the juices from the rhubarb, creating a syrupy liquid. This process, called maceration, helps the rhubarb soften and break down more evenly during cooking.

Part 3: The Cook (Time: 45-55 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

1. Start the Cook: Place the pot over medium heat. Stir the mixture gently until all the sugar has dissolved. Once the sugar is dissolved, turn the heat to medium-high and bring the mixture to a rolling boil.

2. Maintain the Boil: Let the jam bubble vigorously, stirring frequently to prevent it from sticking to the bottom of the pot. If a white foam forms on the surface, you can skim it off with a spoon. (Adding the 1/2 tsp of butter at this stage can help reduce this foaming).

3. Reduce and Thicken: Continue to boil for about 30-45 minutes. You'll notice the mixture will reduce and start to thicken. The rhubarb will break down into soft, jammy pieces, and the color will deepen to a beautiful ruby red.

4. Test the Set: After about 30 minutes of boiling, it's time to test for a set. Take your chilled plate from the freezer and place a small spoonful of jam on it. Let it cool for a few seconds, then push it with your finger. If it wrinkles and forms a skin, the jam is

ready. If it’s still runny, continue to boil for another 5-10 minutes and test again. The jam will also thicken further as it cools.

Part 4: Jarring and Processing (Time: 10-15 minutes | Intensity: Medium)

1. Ladle the Jam: Carefully ladle the hot jam into your warm, sterilized jars, leaving about 1 cm (1/2 inch) of headspace at the top. Use a funnel to make this easier and less messy.

2. Seal the Jars: Wipe the rims of the jars with a clean, damp cloth to remove any sticky residue. This is essential for a good seal. Screw on the lids firmly.

3. Process the Jars (Optional but Recommended for Long-Term Storage): Place the sealed jars on a rack in a large pot of boiling water, making sure they are completely covered. Boil for 10 minutes. Carefully remove the jars and place them on a heatproof surface to cool completely. As they cool, you should hear the satisfying “pop” of the lid sealing. Any jars that don’t seal should be stored in the refrigerator and used first.

Part 5: Cooling and Storage (Time: 12-24 hours | Intensity: None)

Let the jars sit undisturbed for 12-24 hours to set completely. Store in a cool, dark place (like a pantry) for up to a year. Once opened, store the jam in the refrigerator and consume within 3-4 weeks.

Recipe Notes & Tips

- Rhubarb Variations: For a more complex flavor, try adding a split vanilla bean, a cinnamon stick, or a star anise to the pot during the cooking process. Remove them before jarring.

- Sugar Content: Do not be tempted to reduce the sugar significantly. The sugar is not just for sweetness; it’s a critical preservative and is essential for achieving the proper set. This recipe uses a moderate amount; for a lower-sugar version, you would need to use a special pectin designed for low-sugar recipes.

- The Wrinkle Test: This is the most reliable way to test for a set without a thermometer. Don’t skip it! A jam that is too runny can be re-boiled, but a jam that is over-cooked and too thick is difficult to fix.

- Don’t Double the Recipe: It’s best to make jam in small batches. Doubling the recipe can increase the cooking time significantly and make it harder for the jam to set properly.

Nutritional Information (Approximate)

This is an estimation and will vary based on the exact amount of sugar used and the final yield.

Serving Size: 1 tablespoon (approx. 20g)
Servings Per Recipe: Approx. 60

- Calories: 50 kcal
- Total Fat: 0g
- Saturated Fat: 0g
- Sodium: 0mg
- Total Carbohydrates: 13g
- Dietary Fiber: 0g
- Total Sugars: 12g
- Protein: 0g