

PIONEER DAY – STRAWBERRY JAM

Almanzo tucked his napkin deeper into the neckband of his red waist. And he ate plum preserves and strawberry jam, and grape jelly, and spiced watermelon-rind pickles.

TOOLS

Measuring cup

Measuring spoons

Dinner knife or huller

Potato masher or food processor

Small saucepan

Small bowl

Fork or small whisk

Wooden spoon

1-cup container with lid

INGREDIENTS

1 pint fresh strawberries

½ cup sugar

1 Tablespoon cornstarch

½ - 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

DIRECTIONS

1. Remove tops from strawberries and ask a grown-up to help you cut them in half and place them in the saucepan. If berries are very ripe, mash with a potato masher until they are in small pieces. For less-ripe berries, ask a grown-up to help you place them in a food processor with a chopping blade and pulse a few minutes until they are in small pieces. Some can be larger than others – just make sure the mixture is not too soupy.
2. Toss the berry pieces and the sugar together in the saucepan. Let stand for 20 minutes. Press a spoon into the berry liquid and remove 1 tablespoon of the liquid. Put in the small bowl (or use measuring cup). Using the fork or small whisk, mix the cornstarch into the tablespoon of berry liquid until there are no lumps. Add the mixture back to the berries.
3. Ask a grown-up to help you bring the berries to a boil. Stir occasionally and continue to boil mixture for about 15 minutes, or until the jam is thick (the mixture will continue to thicken a little bit, later, when you've put it in the refrigerator).
4. When the jam is cool enough to handle, spoon the mixture into the container, cover, and refrigerate. When the mixture is cold, add the lemon juice to taste and mix.