

## WI GUIDELINES FOR JAMS, PRESERVES & MARMALADES

Preservation is a method of 'keeping' fruits and vegetables at their best, for use until the next season of production. Containers are sealed to preserve items for this length of time or longer.

Fruit curds, mincemeat and uncooked chutneys and relishes are **not accepted as true preserves** as they do not have this lengthy keeping ability (see further notes in this section), but are marked using the same recommended marking scheme.

### **Recommended marking scheme**

For exhibits including jams, jellies, marmalade, bottled fruit, fruit syrups and squash, vinegar preserves and herbs.

Each item is marked on its own merits, out of 20 marks.

#### **External standard**

Container, cover, label, appearance 2

#### **Internal standard**

Colour 5

#### **Quality**

Consistency, texture, quantity 6

Flavour and aroma 7

## General guidelines

Entry should be correct by the schedule (for example, size of jar, contents).

## Recycled Jars and Lids

Plain jars must be used for showing preserves. Jars bearing trade names can only be used for domestic consumption preserves.

If twist top lids are used for showing, they must be new and plain.

Commercial lids are not acceptable. Old lids do not always give a good seal. If jars or lids with commercial names on them are used for showing, technically this contravenes the Trades Description Act. This is not acceptable.

## JAMS

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- Jars filled to within 3 mm ( $\frac{1}{8}$  inch) of top. Fill to the top and allow for shrinkage.
- Schedule may state size of jar and type of fruit to be used.
- Colour bright, even and characteristic.
- No scum or foreign bodies, mould or sugar crystals.
- Fruit evenly distributed, not too many stones.
- Skins tender.
- Consistency 'jellified' not runny or sticky, no loose liquid or syrup.
- Flavour full, fresh and characteristic of the fruit.

## JELLIES

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- Schedule often asks for small jar approximately 225g ( $\frac{1}{2}$  lb)
- Should be brilliantly clear (with darker jelly, easier to see if sample removed by judge).
- No pulp, haze or scum.
- Colour even, bright and characteristic.
- Consistency should tremble, but hold its shape.
- No air bubbles.
- Flavour true of fruit, full and well balanced.

## MARMALADE

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Jelly marmalade is often in a class of its own because of its different nature to thick marmalade.

- Based on citrus fruits, but other ingredients (for example, ginger) may be added unless schedule states otherwise. Label accordingly.
- Colour will vary according to type, but bright and characteristic.
- Consistency 'jellified', not runny or too firm.
- No air bubbles, or scum.
- Peel tender, uniformly cut and distributed.
- Traditionally peel should be sliced. Minced peel would lose marks, unless specified in schedule.
- Flavour slightly bitter, characteristic and true of fruit used.

## Covers for jams, jellies, marmalades

The first thing the judge looks for is the seal. This shows that the item is actually worthy of the term *preserved*.

Lids should always be put on freshly potted sugar preserves, immediately each jar is filled, when hot.

The temperature of the preserve should not drop below 82°C (180°F) in order to produce a seal and ensure that any yeasts and moulds present in the headspace do not survive.

This can be achieved by;

- a new twist top
- a new pliable press-on cover , with a traditional jam jar
- a wax disc covered with cellophane top, when cooled
- **No wax disc is needed under a twist top or plastic top**

A twist top or plastic cover will pop when opened, if there is a true seal.

It is not acceptable to stick a paper cover onto solid tops

Avoid honey jars with screw tops, as the thread does not produce a good seal. The new twist tops, however, do give a seal.

A wax disc, placed smooth side down, when carefully trimmed to fit the rim of the jar and the surface of the preserve, will cause an airtight seal when cooled, and only needs a cellophane cover to protect from dust. This should never be put on a tepid preserve as the moist air trapped may cause spoilage. Always put cellophane cover on when completely cold.

## FRUIT CURD

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- This contains eggs and butter, is cooked at a low temperature, therefore it is not a true preserve.
- In co-operative exhibits fruit curds **must not** be included as a preserve item, but **may be** included as a filling in a cookery item.
- Be careful if schedule asks for a fruit preserve!
- Fruit curd must be covered with a 'breathing' top (that is, a wax circle and cellophane top). Curd does not achieve high enough temperatures for wax to seal, but disc forms double dust cover.
- Twist tops and pliable tops are **not acceptable (NA)**
- Colour bright, characteristic and even
- Consistency spreadable, but not runny or rough
- No egg spots, peel, scum, sugar crystals or air bubbles
- Flavour fresh and well balanced, with no greasy taste
- Must state date when made
- Should be refrigerated and consumed within 4 weeks