

Red Huckleberries

Red huckleberries are translucent, red, acidic berries that grow on densely branched shrubs up to 5 feet tall. The small, bell-shaped flowers are solitary in the axils of the leaves. Huckleberries are found on brushy, rocky hillsides of Southeast Alaska.

Red huckleberries are available in the fall. They make a superior jelly and may also be eaten raw or dried and used for jams, preserves, pies, muffins

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Storage and Preservation

cloth towel over a slanted surface, such as a cutting board, with one end propped up a few inches above the other. Gently roll the berries down the towel; most of the debris and leaves will cling to the towel, while the berries roll off. Huckleberries should be stored covered in the refrigerator and will keep up to one week.

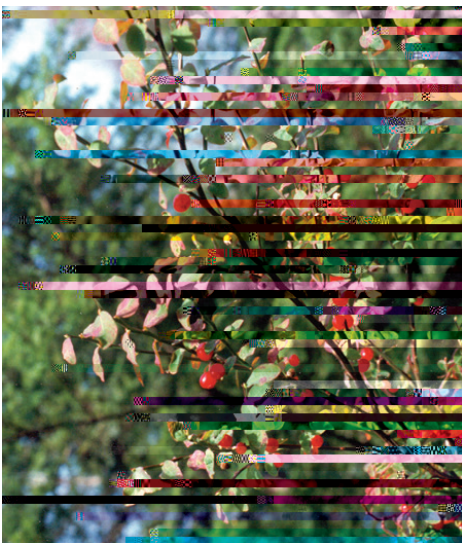
How to Freeze

Arrange dry, fresh huckleberries in one layer on a cookie sheet and place in the freezer. When frozen,

transfer berries to freezer bags or containers. Properly frozen, huckleberries will maintain good quality up to two years.

How to Dry

Select firm, dry huckleberries. To sun dry, cover a flat tray with cheesecloth or light muslin. Spread the berries on the cloth; place the tray in the sun. Dry in sun for two days, turning once or twice, then set tray in a warm, dry place and let huckleberries stand until leathery to the touch. To dry berries in a dehydrator, spread on an open screen and dry as for other berries, following directions for the dehydrator. Oven drying is possible, but very low heat (140° F) must be used and the oven door must be left slightly open, with a fan placed nearby, so moisture can escape. Store dried berries in a cool, dry place.



canned.

Yield: 5½ cups

Huckleberry

Sterilize canning jars. Heat juice, stirring oc

How to Prepare Puree

Cooked method: Add 1 cup of water to 4 cups of huckleberries. Cook until skins have popped. Press through sieve or food mill. Discard skins and seeds.

Yield: 2 cups

Uncooked method: Rinse 4 cups of huckleberries, drain, put in a blender and blend until the consistency of a thick puree.

Yield: 2 cups

To freeze, pack into rigid containers leaving a 1/2-inch headspace for expansion. Seal and freeze.

To can, fill hot jars with hot puree, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Process quarts or pints in a boiling

water bath for 15 minutes. Purees can be

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jars, leaving $\frac{1}{4}$ inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and adjust two-piece lids. Process 5 minutes in a boiling water bath.

To process in a boiling water canner, follow these steps:

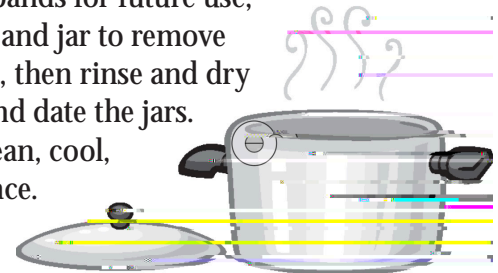
Fill the canner halfway with water. Preheat water to a low boil. Place hot, filled jars, fitted with lids, into the canner on the rack. Add more boiling water, if needed, so the water level is at least 1 inch above jar tops. Turn heat to its highest position until water boils vigorously, then, set a timer for the processing time indicated in the recipe. Cover with the canner lid and lower heat setting to maintain a gentle but continuous boil throughout the processing time.

When the jars have been boiled for the recommended time, turn off the heat and remove the canner lid. Using a jar lifter, remove the jars and place them on a towel, leaving at least 1 inch of space between the jars during cooling.

After cooling jars for 12 to 24 hours, remove the

screw bands and test seals. Press the middle of the lid with a finger. If the lid springs up when finger is released, the lid is unsealed. If a lid fails to seal on a jar, remove the lid and check the jar-sealing surface for tiny nicks. If necessary, change the jar, add a new, properly prepared lid and reprocess within 24 hours using the same processing time. Alternately, adjust headspace to 1½ inches and freeze, or store in the refrigerator and use within three days.

If lids are tightly sealed on cooled jars, remove and store screw bands for future use, wash the lid and jar to remove food residue, then rinse and dry jars. Label and date the jars. Store in a clean, cool, dark, dry place.



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