

ELDERBERRY SYRUP

<http://honest-food.net>

Hank Shaw

Most elderberry syrup recipes require you to add water to your boiling berries. *Shame!* Watering down that elderberry goodness! I suppose it works fine, but you don't have to water down your berries to make a sufficient amount of syrup — unless you are in a serious drought. Use my method and you will get 3+ pints from 3 pounds of elderberries, as opposed to 2 pints from 2 pounds of elderberries with another 2-4 cups of water thrown in. Believe me, this is a huge flavor difference.



Photo by Hank Shaw

What does 3 pounds of elderberries look like? Well, like this:



Photo by Hank Shaw

You will need at least a pound of elderberries for this recipe, and preferably three pounds, so you have enough to last a while. I use a **food mill** to extract as much juice as I can from the berries, but if you don't have one you can use a jelly bag. I am pretty cavalier about my canning practices with syrups, as they are so sugar-dense they are incredibly resistant to bacteria. I don't bother to sterilize my equipment, although I do make sure everything is freshly cleaned, and I do use a brand- new canning lid. If you feel the need to process your syrup in a boiling-water bath, 10 minutes will be more than enough.



Photo by Holly A. Heyser

Makes 3 pints.

Prep Time: 1 hour

Cook Time: 20 minutes

- 3 pounds elderberries, destemmed
 - 4 cups sugar
1. You will need to remove the berries from the stems; elderberry stems are toxic. (I go through some **tricks on destemming elderberries here.**) It should take you about 45 minutes to an hour to destem 3 pounds of elderberries, which equates to about a half a normal paper grocery bag.
 2. At this point you can empty your berries into a large bowl of ice water. Weird debris will float, like dead flower husks, bugs, etc. Pour this off.
 3. Pour the elderberries into a large pot and either mash them thoroughly with a potato masher, or, better yet, with an immersion blender. Only break up the berries for a few seconds using the immersion blender, and use it on low setting. You don't want to grind up the seeds, which are bitter.
 4. Bring the elderberries to a boil, stirring often. Now, if you are using a food mill, set it up with its finest plate and pour the elderberries into it. Run the food mill until the mash is pretty dry, then squeeze out any remaining elderberry juice. You should have a little more than 1 quart. If you are using the jelly bag method. Mash the berries again after they've boiled, then pour them into a jelly bag suspended over a large bowl. Let this drain for 1 hour. You should have a little less than 1 quart.
 5. If you are using the food mill, pour the juice through your finest mesh sieve to catch any stray seeds or pulp. You don't need to do this with the jelly bag method.
 6. Return the juice to the (cleaned) pot and add an equal volume of sugar, normally about 4 cups.
- Bring to a boil until it froths, then turn off the heat and pour into clean jars. Always use a new canning lid when you are making this syrup, unless you plan on eating it in the next few weeks. Seal the jars and let stand until the lids pop. They will keep for a year on the shelf or in the fridge.