**Apricots**

I am always astounded by the number of people who don’t like apricots.

This could be because the supermarket fruit is picked under ripe and is often sour or floury.

The taste of a sun warmed apricot, fresh off the tree is a strong food memory of mine. Biking home from school, Whanganui High, grabbing the long bamboo pole and knocking off some ripe warm apricots. Sitting on the cool grass eating the sweet, warm, juicy jewels.

The closest I have come to getting my fix is a ripe Moorpark apricot.

Sanjay our market magician always lets me know when he spots them at the market.

Mum used to free flow freeze apricot halves, spread on a tray our large chest freezer then bag them to be used in the winter months. Some years they didn’t last that long as a frozen apricot half or two straight from the bag was like an instant apricot sorbet.

Here is my recipe for apricot jam. It can be made with any fresh apricots but Moorpark are the best. Apricot stones contain a nut which when cooked in the jam gives a delicious dimension to the finished product. The nut contains amygdalin that is toxic until cooked. Roast the stones at 160 fan for 30 minutes, allow to cool, then crack to release the nut from inside the stone.

Using a sugar thermometer is the best way to know if the jam will set.

Let me know if you need any further help with jamming.

Enjoy

Julie

**Apricot Jam**

Yield 6 x 314ml Jars

1 kg apricots (Moorpark if available)

800g sugar

6 apricot nuts – see note

50mls water

* Cut the apricots into quarters and remove the stone.
* Put into a stainless or glass bowl, add the sugar and leave overnight.
* Save 6 stones from the batch to roast and remove the nut.
* Roast the stones then with a hammer or other device crack to get the nut out (do not eat these until they are cooked to remove the toxins)
* Put the apricots, sugar, apricot nuts and water in a stainless pot and stir to dissolve the sugar without boiling.
* Once the sugar is completely dissolved increase the heat.
* Bring to a rolling boil for 10 minutes, can take up to 20 mins
* Bring to 104c on a sugar thermometer.
* Pour into sterile jars – clean jars put into the a 100c oven for 15 mins.
* You can leave the nuts in or take them out as you wish.
* Put lids in a pan of water and bring to the boil. Drain and leave on a clean tee towel.
* Pour the hot jam into the hot jars and seal with lids immediately
* Once cool label. Will keep for a year if you don’t eat it before.