

*Rumtopf / Fermented Fruit Documentation*  
*Lynnette de Sandoval del Valle de los Unicornios*

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**BASIC RECIPES**

**Rumtopf:** Add equal amounts of fresh fruit and sugar in a loose lidded jar and add enough rum, wine, or brandy to cover the fruit. Stir often until sugar dissolves.

**Fermented Fruit (canned fruit):** Add equal amounts of drained, canned fruit and sugar in a loose lidded jar. Add one package of baking yeast and stir until sugar dissolves.

**Fermented Fruit (fresh fruit):** Start the syrup first: Mix 1 cup sugar, 2 cups water, and 1 package baking yeast in a loose lidded jar; stir often until sugar dissolves. When foam appears on top of the liquid, fermentation has started; let the mixture ferment for three or four days and then add equal amounts of fresh fruit and sugar.

**FERMENTATION**

Yeast changes sugar into alcohol and, in the process, produces carbon dioxide gas. The gas bubbles to the top of the liquid and escapes into the air.

The Fermented Fruit recipes will have the most active fermentation. Bubbles on top of your fermenting fruit mean the yeast is alive and active.

Rumtopfs are started with alcohol and will show little or no fermentation. Small bubbles trapped under the fruit and a few on top mean that fermentation is taking place. Introduction of yeast into a Rumtopf will cause more active fermentation.

Yeast does not like extreme heat or cold. Heat will kill the yeast and cold will cause it to go dormant. This means ... store in a cool place — if the room temperature is OK for you, it's OK for the fruit.

**CARE AND FEEDING**

The lid of the jar should be loose enough to allow the gas to escape but firmly seated to keep insects out.

When starting, do not fill the jar over 3/4 full; the fermentation will cause the volume to expand -- all over your counter if the jar is too full!

Let the basic recipe mellow for a week and then adjust the amounts as your taste dictates. Add flavorings if desired.

Keep at room temperature, away from heat. If you think the yeast has died, add a cup or two of sugar and stir often until dissolved. If bubbles do not appear in two-to-three days add another package of yeast.

Store in refrigerator, if you wish, during heat spells or when you will not be using it for a while. BUT fermentation will not take place while in the fridge, so do not keep it there permanently. When you remove it from the fridge, watch it for a few days to see if the yeast becomes active again; if not, treat as above for dead yeast.

Add more fruit as needed. When you run low on syrup or the alcohol tastes too harsh, add more sugar. If the Rumtopf (third recipe) tastes flat or stale, add 1/2 teaspoon yeast per gallon of mixture. Add new spices and flavorings as desired.

Always leave at least 1 1/2 cups of mixture in the jar.

**If you have any questions or problems, contact me: Lynnette (Debbie Coyle) at [Debbie.Coyle@gmail.com](mailto:Debbie.Coyle@gmail.com)**

## FRUITS

**Berries:** Any can be used, although blackberries have an overabundance of seeds and fresh strawberries and raspberries tend to bleach out. I've heard from someone who uses thawed, frozen strawberries, she says they hold their color and their shape well!

**Cherries:** Should be pitted for easier eating.

**Peaches, apricots, plums:** Should be peeled and sliced. They are easier to peel if you dip them in boiling water for one or two minutes and then dip them in cold water.

**Grapes:** Should be pierced with a needle or cut in half to allow the syrup to soak in. Seedless or not is your choice.

**Apples:** Will turn brown. Perhaps dipping the peeled, cut fruit in boiling water for one or two minutes will prevent this.

**Bananas:** Seem impractical, but I have not tried them -- they might work!

**Citrus:** I have not used these, but it seems you would want to keep the sections whole in their membranes, or, at most, cut in half, to prevent their disintegrating. Make sure you remove the white pith.

**Pears:** Peel and slice them.

**Pineapple:** Peel, remove eyes, chop.

**Dried fruit:** One recipe I have suggests using dried fruit in moderation and says to use 1/2 cup sugar for each cup of raisins used.

**Experiment** with different fruits. If you are unsure how well a fruit will work, put some of your mixture in another jar and add the new fruit to that. If you don't like the result, you can throw that away and still have your "mother" batch.

**With all fruit:** Use firm, ripe fruit, free from bruises and bad spots. Remove any blemishes.

## SUGGESTED FLAVORINGS

Cinnamon sticks, fresh mint, vanilla beans, whole allspice, whole cloves, orange peel, almond extract ... what do you like?

Don't use powdered spices, they stick to the sides of your jar and look bad.

Test any liquid flavorings in a small jar of fruit before you use them in your full jar. I had some orange flavoring that just tasted nasty when added to the fruit.

## READY TO SERVE?

Your fruit is ready to serve after two to three weeks, although the longer you let it sit, the better it will be.

As the fruit ages, it will shrivel, darken, and become infused with the syrup. This is the best type of fruit — if you can wait! The fruit will keep for a year or more if you don't add more to it. If you are constantly removing and replacing fruit, it will last indefinitely. (My mother kept hers going for several years.)

## SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Serve over ice cream, angel food or pound cake, meringue shells, pudding, custard, etc.



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