

Apricot Vanilla Anisette Jam

A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to go cherry and apricot picking. I came home with a ridiculous number of cherries (have you checked out the [What's Ripe Right Now Group](#) lately? It's swelling), but also with a bag heavy with Blenheim apricots. The apricots sat in the fridge for about a week, mellowing, waiting for me to stop fawning over the cherries, which I finally, finally did.

The apricot jam in Kim Boyce's [Good to the Grain](#) served as my inspiration here.

Makes 3 cups

3 pounds ripe apricots (even slightly past-prime is fine), preferably Blenheim, halved and pitted

2/3 cup sugar

1/2 vanilla bean

2 teaspoons Anisette, Pernod, Ouzo, Galliano, or your favorite anise-y liqueur, or more, to taste

Place a small plate in the freezer. Set a large bowl of ice, with a bit of cool water in it, on the counter.

Combine the apricots and sugar in a large, heavy pot. Halve the vanilla bean and scrape in the seeds; toss the pod in, too. Stir over medium heat until the fruit begins to weep its juices and the sugar melts.

Raise the heat slightly and continue cooking for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring constantly, until the apricots have largely fallen apart but some soft mounds of fruit still remain. Kim's book says the jam is done when it reaches 200 degrees on a candy thermometer, but mine never really climbed above 190. To test doneness, spoon a bit on the frozen plate, flip the plate upside down, and see if it clings. If it does, you're good. Pull the pot from the heat and stir in the liqueur.

Carefully scrape the jam into a bowl that will fit comfortably inside the ice bath; set the bowl in the ice. Stir occasionally for a few minutes, then spoon the jam into clean jars. Let cool, uncovered, then seal and set in the fridge. (I keep all my jam refrigerated because I'm not a proper canner.)

Finally, I like to keep the vanilla bean in the jam. It makes me happy.