

BAKED APRICOT JAM, WITH VANILLA AND CARDAMOM

INGREDIENTS

3 pounds fresh apricots
1/2 cup water
1 vanilla pod, split open
4 whole cardamom pods
5 cups plain granulated sugar
a few tablespoons of vodka

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 325F.

Cut the apricots in half and extract the pits. Cut into quarters. Place apricots in a high-rimmed baking dish and pour the water over. Place vanilla bean and cardamom pods in the dish and then pour over the sugar.

Bake for 3 - 3 1/2 hours, checking occasionally to make sure the fruit is continuing to cook without burning. Stir the fruit to make sure that it isn't sticking too much to the pan. Don't worry if the mixture looks a little watery, it will become thicker upon cooling. Once the fruit is slightly caramelized (and even slightly browned), turn the oven off. Allow the jam to cool in the oven. Move to a large bowl, and take out the vanilla bean and cardamom. The fruit should be very soft (falling apart), but if you like, you can mash the apricots a little more with a fork. Fill the jam jars, packing down the fruit, leaving a 1/4 to 1/2 inch of headspace. Pour on a small amount (1/2 teaspoon per glass) of vodka and swirl to have the alcohol cover the jam (this will help sterilize a bit as well). Screw on canning lids. You can simply allow the jars to cool and then store them in the refrigerator for up to 3 months. For longer term storage at room temperature, process the jars in a boiling water bath for 5 minutes per your usual method.