

## SMALL-BATCH APRICOT PRESERVES WITHOUT COMMERCIAL PECTIN

36 oz fresh organic apricots, slightly under-ripe; halved, pit and stem removed

1 1/2-to-1 2/3 cups sugar

1 1/2-to-2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

2 drops pure almond extract

optional flavors: bourbon, vanilla-bean, lavender, rosemary, lemon verbena

1 teaspoon unsalted butter (omit for vegan version)

Have ready a non-reactive stainless steel pan; preferably heavy-bottomed. Arrange apricot halves in a single layer, sprinkle with some sugar, arrange remaining apricots and sugar and continue until all is gone. Add lemon juice. Cover and set aside 8-to-12 hours; mix every so often.

Place pan over medium-low heat, untouched, for 10-to-12 minutes; until all sugar crystals dissolve. Turn up the heat to high and bring mixture to a boil. At this point, white foamy scum will start to appear on the surface.

Reduce heat to medium or medium-high. Cook preserves for another 12-to-20 minutes; remove surface scum as needed. Make sure you swirl pan once in a while to avoid fruit sticking to the bottom.

Meanwhile, place canning jar in a 200F oven.

Remove pan from heat. Gently mix in almond extract and butter (this will melt away any remaining scum foam). Add additional flavors if using at this point. Let sit for 15-to-20 minutes then ladle into warmed jar. Run a knife around edges to remove any air bubbles. Seal jar while still warm then refrigerate once completely cool.