



# Barb's Bits

by Barbara Kipps of Ward's Grapes & Fruit Farm

*Love to play in the kitchen, but hate to be bound by recipes? Guess what – me too!!!*

## How To

Many of you have asked how I make juice and jelly. There are many methods, including steamer and stove top, but I prefer to microwave grapes that have been pulled off the stems. No water is added, so the juice is very concentrated.

Power varies between different ovens, so I won't say how long to cook. Instead, monitor the looks of the grapes. The raw Concord is a bluish globe. When thoroughly cooked, the color becomes a very intense purple, the skins have come off the pulp, and it's all one juicy mess in the pot.

The prettiest, clearest juice is obtained by pouring all of the purple glob into a sieve and just letting it drain – don't push any pulp through! Let the juice stand for several hours (or refrigerate overnight). Some of the natural tartaric acid will form crystals and settle out. Now your juice will have less "bite".

## Getting the Most from your Concord Grape

I used to get perturbed at the volume of waste I threw out after making juice. Not any longer, though!

Very late one night, I squished it through a food mill just to see what the volume would be minus the seeds. (told you I liked to play in the kitchen!) The end product was a dark lavender grape puree.

Now here's the surprise: it tastes grape.....uhm, I mean great! Who would have thought taking away the grape juice concentrate would still leave so much flavor behind? I added a little sugar and ate it as I would applesauce.

Now for surprise #2: for my taste buds, the flavor was a little too intense, so I tried mixing equal volumes of grape puree and applesauce. Perfect! Now I enjoy sharing Grapelsauce with friends.

You might like a different ratio of grape to apple. Just play around with it. And yes, we have apples available for you to use.

## Other Uses – Multitasking the Grape!

Let's see, there's the usual eating, wine-making, juicing, jellifying, and jamming. As you might have guessed by now, I do mess around with stuff in my kitchen (usually creating a mess, too!). If you've been adventuresome enough to make some grape puree, try one of these ideas.



whew! I'm so tired!

Substitute grape puree for the oil in a chocolate cake recipe. Not only will the cake be very moist and lower fat, but believe it or not, the grape brings out the chocolate flavor, without adding much noticeable grape taste. Don't try this with a white or yellow cake, though. Those cakes do taste somewhat "grapey", but you'd probably enjoy a slice of jelly bread more. Then there's the weird grayish color to deal with.

Mix a little grape puree in with store bought spaghetti sauce for some enhanced flavor. If making your own sauce from scratch, adding grape puree or applesauce cuts the bitterness of the tomatoes as well as adding in some new experiences for your taste buds. Still keep the tomato as your main ingredient, or you and your family might not enjoy the color of the final product.

If you usually put applesauce in your burgers or meatloaf, substitute grape puree. You know how sometimes wine is used when fixing fancier beef dishes? Well, the grape puree elevates the humbler forms of meat dishes in a similar manner.

## Ward's Grapes & Fruit Farm

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by the Kipps family

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