

Apricot Butter

4 pounds apricots, halved, pits removed	1 cup sugar, plus more as needed
1/2 vanilla bean, halved and seeds scraped	1/8 teaspoon salt 1 tablespoon lemon juice.

1. In a 6- or 7-quart pot set over very low heat, cook the apricots, covered, until completely soft, 60 to 90 minutes, stirring often. Pass the apricots through a food mill fitted with a medium or fine screen. Return the purée to the pot.
2. Line the bottom of a large, wide pot with a few paper towels. Set 4 clean 8-ounce jamming jars in the pot so that they do not touch. Fill the pot with enough water to cover the jars by 1 inch. Place over high heat, cover and bring to a boil. Uncover, slip the jar lids into the water and simmer until you've finished preparing the apricot butter.
3. Meanwhile, add the vanilla bean and seeds and the sugar to the apricots and bring to a rolling boil over medium heat, stirring often, until the purée glazes the back of a wooden spoon, 10 to 15 minutes from when it starts to boil. (Wear long kitchen mitts to prevent burns; the fruit will spatter.) To check the consistency, remove the pot from the heat and place a spoonful of purée on a plate. Refrigerate for several minutes. If the apricot butter is too thin, return the pot to the heat and continue boiling until it has reached the desired consistency.
4. Add the salt and lemon juice, and sweeten to taste with more sugar if necessary. Remove the vanilla bean. Using clean tongs, remove the sterilized jars from the simmering water and shake out the water. Fill each jar with the hot apricot butter. Clean the rims of the jars to promote a good seal, then fasten the caps tightly and invert onto a wire rack to cool. Store in a cool, dry place or in the refrigerator and eat within a few months. *Makes 4 8-ounce jars. Adapted from June Taylor.*