



Elspeth's Strawberry and Black Pepper Jam

1200g ripe strawberries - hulled and chopped (quite large chunks)

600g preserving sugar

Juice of 2 lemons

120 peppercorns ground with a pestle-and-mortar

(100 would be fine if you feel a bit wary about using too much pepper)

- Put the prepped strawberries in a bowl with the sugar and lemon juice, cover and marinate in the fridge for 2 hours
- Put the contents of the bowl into a shallow saucepan and bring to the boil
- Reduce to a simmer for half-an-hour skimming off all the fluff (at least as much as you can)
- Sieve the contents of the pan to separate the strawberries from the syrup
- Return the syrup to the washed pan and add the crushed peppercorns
- Simmer for about one-and-a-half hours (and it is possible to skim off rather condensed fluff at this stage)
- Return the strawberries to the syrup and bring to the boil
- Immediately transfer to sterilized jars (if the contents are too much for your jars a small bowl for the breakfast/lunch/supper table I find very acceptable)
- Accompaniments for the jam, which has a deliberately 'soft' set, could include scones and clotted cream – vanilla ice cream – and I also enjoy it with toast and butter.