Jalapeno Jelly

I'm a big fan of canning. In fact, The Bell Époque offer a whole line of preserves, jams, and jellies, from apricots to zananas, and unexpected pickles, like pickled lemons with coriander, radish and carrot, and the traditional cucumber, done up as everything from butter to dill.

However, for a dash of the unexpected, try adding some spice with jalapeno jelly. It's delicious and although it confounds some cooks, the jelly actually makes a delicious glaze for chicken or pork, or a base for chutney or other dipping sauce, or even as a spicy addition to ice cream or cookies.

You can use the conventional water bath for canning. No pressurized canner required! Also, jalapeno jelly keeps for 12 months (unsealed), which makes it a great, long-lasting gift. Just make sure to include instructions for use!

Jalapeno Jelly

Makes 2 8-ounce jars

* 1 large green bell pepper
* 12 jalapeno peppers
* 1 1/2 cups apple cider vinegar
* 1 pinch salt
* 4 1/4 cups granulated sugar
* 4 ounces liquid pectin
* 4 more jalapeno peppers, seeded and finely chopped
* Green food coloring optional (but not recommended)

1. Remove the stems and deseed the green bell pepper and jalapenos. Process in a food processor or blender until finely chopped.
2. Transfer the peppers to a large saucepan and stir in the vinegar. Bring to a boil, and let simmer for 15 to 20 minutes. Strain the mixture through at least 2 layers of cheesecloth, and discard pulp. You should have about 1 cup of liquid.
3. Return the liquid to the saucepan, and stir in the salt and sugar until dissolved. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. When the mixture comes to a rolling boil (one that cannot be stirred down), boil for one minute, then stir in the liquid pectin.
4. Stir in the four remaining jalapeno peppers, and ladle into sterile jars leaving a ¼-inch of room at the top. Seal jars in a hot water bath. Refrigerate jelly after seal is broken.