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**Rowan Jelly (Mountain Ash – Pyrus aucuparia)**

**By Simon Mitchell**

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Sharp and sour but sweet and succulent all at the same time, this traditional accompaniment to cold meat is bursting with flavour, and folklore !

Rowan tree and red thread – have the witches all in dread

On May eve Rowan crosses used to be worn in UK and were sometimes fastened to cattle (or their barns) for protection against witches and other evil doers. Legend has it that the crosses had to be made without a metal knife to work properly. Rowan branches were also bought indoors on a Good Friday as this tree had a reputation for strong protection against psychic forces.

This mish-mash of folklore and Christianity indicates older uses of the tree having been assimilated into a religion that converted people by adapting their beliefs and practices to its own ends. Rowan is the most interesting of tree names with connections to both ancient Norse and Hindu/Sanskrit culture. Spelled several ways it is connected to the old Norse word Runa – meaning a charm – and being able to ward off the effects of the evil eye. In even earlier times Runa was the Sanskrit word for magician. Run-stafas were staves cut from the Rowan tree and inscribed with runes for magical (and most likely protective) reasons. The smooth bark is ideal for this purpose.

The Rowan was such a sacred tree to the Celts that many churchyards in Wales still include the tree, not unlike the Yew tree in English churchyards. The berries were much used by the Celts for brewing wine, spirit, flavouring mead, ale, perry and cider. Try squeezing some of the fresh berry juice and putting it into a gin and tonic – it makes a convincing alternative to Angostura bitters. The fresh juice is mildly laxative and good for soothing inflamed mucous membranes. In herbal medicine the juice forms the basis of an astringent gargle for sore throats and in the 19th century it was used to treat scurvy – the disease of vitamin C deficiency.

## Rowan Jelly (Mountain Ash – *Pyrus aucuparia*)

Rowan berries are around from July/August through to November in the UK and may even stay on a tree until January if the thrushes don't eat them. They are at their best for Rowan Jelly when they have attained full colour but are not yet mushy. They contain varying amounts of tartaric, citric and malic acid dependent on their ripeness. Cut them from the stalks in clusters and remove as much stem as possible before cooking. When made into a jelly the fruit becomes quite astringent and the tart taste makes a good digestive accompaniment to meats such as venison, cold game or fowl.

Take about 3 pounds of Rowan berries and two pounds of juicy apples. Peel and core the apples, slice them and place them to simmer in 2 pints of water for 10 minutes, while you are washing and sorting the berries. Add the berries and simmer to a pulp. Use a potato masher to help this process if you like. Let the mixture cool a bit and then strain it through a jelly bag, leaving it to drip overnight.

Warm about 2 pounds of sugar and stir in the liquid mixture and heat to a simmer. I must admit to adding some pectin at this point as I have a problem with runny jams. You can do this and leave the apples out for a clear jelly. Add a knob of butter and stir to a rolling boil for a few minutes and put it into

sterilised jars and seal. It is a most unusual taste but the thing that delights me most about this jelly is the fantastic colour.

With thanks to: J. Lust, C.L. Zaleski, R. Phillips, Edward Step

Simon Mitchell

From an ebook called Wild Food underway at [simonthescribe](http://simonthescribe.com). If you wish to republish this article (with resource box intact) you will find excellent quality pictures to accompany it at

[JELLY.html](#)

## **Best Recipes: Peanut Butter and Jelly Milkshake**

**By Donna Monday**

Our old favorite sandwich standby: peanut butter and jelly, has got a new twist! That's right. Now you can have your peanut butter and jelly in a glass. Got milk?

A little ice cream? Good. Then you're ready to have a yummy taste treat that will really satisfy all your PBJ desires.

Peanut Butter and Jelly Milkshake makes a great afternoon snack for kids and adults. Now all you've got to do is decide what kind of jelly you want with that milkshake.

I know. Decisions like this can be so hard sometimes.

Peanut Butter and Jelly Milkshake 1 tablespoon peanut butter 2 tablespoons jelly or jam (grape, raspberry or strawberry) 1/2 cup milk 1 cup vanilla ice cream

## Rowan Jelly (Mountain Ash – *Pyrus aucuparia*)

### Directions

Combine peanut butter and jelly. Place in blender. Add milk and ice cream.

Blend until smooth.

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Donna Monday

Easy to make - fun to drink

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