Why process bael fruits?
- The fruit is rich in protein, carbohydrates and minerals and is a source of carotene, thiamine, riboflavin, niacin and vitamin C
- Processing reduces post-harvest losses
- Processing increases the shelf-life of the fruit
- Processing adds value and increases income

How to process bael fruits?

1. Pre-processing into pulp

   - Graded + washed mature green bael fruits
   - Break fruits
   - Scoop out pulp along with seeds and fibres
   - Add water (1:1)
   - Add citric acid (5 g/kg)
   - Dissolve sodium metabisulphite (1.5 g/kg) in water and acid (optional)
   - Mix
   - Heat for 1 min at 80°C
   - Pass through pulper
   - Place in containers and seal
   - Store

2. Processing methods

   - Powder
     - Pulp
     - Spread pulp on trays
     - Dry
     - Cut into pieces
     - Dry
     - Grind into powder
     - Sieve
     - Pack + seal
   - Preserve
     - Graded + washed mature green bael fruits
     - Break fruits
     - Scoop out pulp along with seeds and fibres
     - Cut pulp in 2.5 cm thick slices
     - Wash in water
     - Prick with a fork
     - Soak overnight in cold water
     - Blanch
     - Impregnate with sugar by gradually raising the syrup to 78 Brix
     - Pour into jars and seal

   - Jam
     - Pulp
     - Mix 1 kg sugar and 10 g pectin per kg pulp and add
     - Heat mixture while stirring until weight of pulp is reduced to half
     - Dissolve citric acid (25 g/kg) in water and add
     - Dissolve potassium metabisulphite (2.5 g/kg) in water and add (optional)
     - Filter and add
     - Prepare syrup by mixing 1.4 l water and 1.6 kg sugar per kg of pulp
     - Mix
     - Pour into bottles and seal
     - Heat pasteurise in bottles at 80-95°C
     - Cool in cold water

   - Squash
     - Pulp
     - Add sodium carbonate (2 g/kg) and mix
     - Dry
     - Cut into pieces
     - Dry
     - Grind into powder
     - Sieve
     - Add water (1:1)
     - Dissolve citric acid (5 g/kg) in water and add
     - Continue cooking until total sugar content is 68.5%
     - Cool at room temperature
     - Packaging and Storage
       - Pack in clean, well sealed glass or plastic jars. Store in a cool, dark place for several months.

   - Pickles/chutney
   - Jam/jelly
   - Candy/toffee/preserve
   - Beverage/squash
   - Powder
   - Dried fruits
   - Pulp

How to store bael fruits?
- Fresh fruits: - for 15 days at 30°C, when harvested at full maturity (light green)
  - for only 1 week at 30°C, when harvested ripe
  - for 3 months at 9°C
- Pulp: - for up to 6 months, when packed in heat-sealed containers

References:
- Department of Agriculture, Peradeniya, Ministry of Agriculture & Lands, Sri Lanka.