

PRESERVE THE HARVEST

Dehydrating Fruit & Vegetables

According to the experts





Quick tips

1. SUCCESSFUL DRYING DEPENDS ON HEAT, AIR DRYNESS AND GOOD AIR CIRCULATION.
2. SELECT FRESH, FULLY-RIPENED FRUITS.
3. PRETREAT FRUIT PIECES BY DIPPING IN AN ASCORBIC ACID, CITRIC ACID, LEMON JUICE OR SODIUM METABISULFITE SOLUTION, MORE ON THIS BELOW.
4. WHEN DRY, ALLOW FRUIT TO CONDITION FOR FOUR TO 10 DAYS BEFORE PACKAGING FOR STORAGE.
5. PACKAGE DRIED FRUITS IN TIGHTLY SEALED CONTAINERS AND STORE IN A COOL, DRY PLACE.

FIRST, THOROUGHLY WASH AND CLEAN FRUITS TO REMOVE DIRT OR SPRAY. SORT AND DISCARD ANY FRUIT THAT SHOWS DECAY, BRUISES, OR MOLD. SUCH DEFECTS CAN AFFECT ALL FOODS BEING DRIED, THAT'S A RISK NOT WORTH TAKING.



PRE-TREAT FRUITS PRIOR TO DRYING: HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. IT CAN HELP DESTRUCT POTENTIALLY HARMFUL BACTERIA DURING DRYING, INCLUDING ESCHERICHIA COLI, SALMONELLA SPECIES & LISTERIA MONOCYTOGENES. IT ALSO HELPS KEEP LIGHT-COLOURED FRUITS FROM DARKENING DURING DRYING AND STORAGE AND IT SPEEDS THE DRYING OF FRUITS WITH TOUGH SKINS, LIKE CHERRIES.



Here's the Lemon Juice pretreatment:

MIX EQUAL PARTS OF LEMON JUICE AND COLD WATER. CUT THE PEELED FRUIT DIRECTLY INTO THE CITRIC ACID OR LEMON JUICE SOLUTION. ALLOW TO SOAK 10 MINUTES, THEN REMOVE WITH A SLOTTED SPOON, DRAIN WELL AND DEHYDRATE.

Crack Skins

FRUITS SUCH AS GRAPES, PRUNES, SMALL DARK PLUMS, HAVE TOUGH SKINS. TO ALLOW INSIDE MOISTURE TO EVAPORATE, "CHECK" SKINS BEFORE DRYING WHOLE FRUITS. TO CRACK SKINS, DIP FRUIT IN BRISKLY BOILING WATER FOR 30 TO 60 SECONDS, THEN DIP IN COLD WATER. DRAIN.

Testing For Dryness

TESTING FOR DRYNESS

FOODS SHOULD BE DRY ENOUGH TO PREVENT MICROBIAL GROWTH AND SUBSEQUENT SPOILAGE. DRIED FRUITS SHOULD BE LEATHERY AND PLIABLE.

TO TEST FOODS FOR DRYNESS, REMOVE A FEW PIECES AND LET COOL TO ROOM TEMPERATURE.

WHEN WARM OR HOT, FRUITS SEEM MORE SOFT, MOIST AND PLIABLE THAN THEY ACTUALLY ARE. SQUEEZE A HANDFUL OF THE FRUIT. IF NO MOISTURE IS LEFT ON THE HAND AND PIECES SPRING APART WHEN RELEASED, THEY ARE DRY

POST DRYING

Conditioning. When drying is complete, some pieces will be more moist than others due to their size and placement during drying. Conditioning is a process used to evenly distribute the minimal residual moisture throughout all pieces. This reduces the chance of spoilage, especially from mold. To condition, place cooled, dried fruit loosely in large plastic or glass containers, about two-thirds full. Cover and store in a warm, dry, well-ventilated place for four to 10 days. Stir or shake containers daily to separate pieces. If beads of moisture form inside, return food to drying trays for further drying, then repeat conditioning process.

Pasteurizing. Foods that might have been exposed to insects before or during the drying process should be pasteurized to destroy insect eggs.

- **Freezer method.** Seal dried food in heavy freezer containers (boxes or bags). Freeze for 48 hours to kill insects and insect eggs. Remove and package promptly for permanent storage.