

drying

It couldn't be simpler to save some produce for future enjoyment by drying it.



Air drying:

Use for small foods like hot chilli peppers. String them on a thread using a darning needle and hang them in a cool dry place where there is good ventilation. Kitchens can be too moist with all the steam that comes from cooking.

Air-dry herbs like thyme, rosemary, sage, oregano. Gathered in small bunches, tied the stems to make a bouquet and hang upside down. Once they are completely dry, crush the leaves off the stem and store in a glass jar.

Oven drying:

If you are new to drying, instead of buying a food dehydrator, use your oven. With a few jelly roll pans, parchment paper, cooling racks you can make your own raisins, fruit leathers, dried tomatoes, dried apples slices and prunes. Oven drying recipes suggest an oven temperature of 170° F. Rather than having multiple levels at one time, just do 2 racks to ensure good ventilation.

Food Dehydrators:

Basic food dehydrators are not expensive, can easily be found at kitchen and hardware stores and produce professional results. They come with an adjustable thermostat and a fan.

For drying recipes go to www.eatlocal.org/makeitlast

drying fruit

Preserve the best of the season by drying fruit for snacks and treats all year long. Start with fruit that is ripe, but not soft or squishy. They should not have any soft spots or bad spots. Here is how to prepare whole fruits for drying.

Apples	slice into rings or pieces 1/8 inch thick
Blueberries	cut in half and place skin side down
Cherries	remove stem, cut into quarters and remove pit, place skin side down
Peaches	blanch if you'd like to remove skin. Cut into 1/8 inch slices
Strawberries	remove crown and cut into 1/4 inch slices
Tomatoes	slice into pieces 1/8 inch thick

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