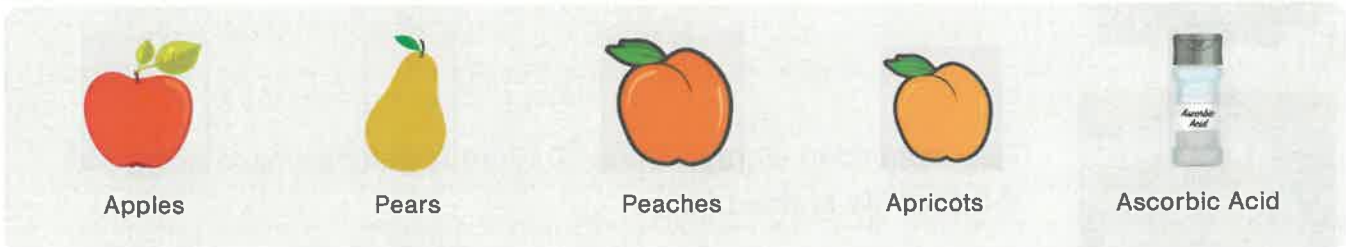




A Guide to Drying Foods

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Drying foods is one of the oldest methods of food preservation. It is simple, safe, and easy to do. Drying preserves food by lowering the moisture content. When there is little to no water or moisture in the food, the growth of microorganisms is slowed.



Steps for Dehydrating Foods

1. Select and wash ripe produce.
2. Remove stems, cores or pits. Cut away any bruising and slice produce evenly.
3. Complete any pretreatments. There are several pretreatment options to prevent fruit from darkening. Treating fruit before dehydrating also helps retain the fresh produce flavor and increases the shelf life.
 - To use a solution, find the solution of choice and dip fruit slices in mixture for the required time. Find solutions for pretreating fruit at: extension2.missouri.edu/gh1563.
 - To steam blanch, boil several inches of water in a pot and place produce in a wire basket above the boiling water. Water should not touch the produce. Cover with a lid and blanch for appropriate amount of time. To find appropriate blanching times, visit: extension.sdstate.edu/pick-it-try-it-it-preserve-it and view our Preserve It! resources.
4. Remove produce from pretreatment, rinse thoroughly with water, and pat dry with a clean dish towel or paper towel.
5. Place produce evenly on dehydrator trays. Drying times vary from 4 hours-12+ hours. To find appropriate drying times, visit: extension.sdstate.edu/pick-it-try-it-it-preserve-it.
6. Check for desired dryness. Fruits should be pliable and leathery in texture with little moisture. Vegetables should be chewy and brittle, but vary depending on the vegetable.



Storing Dried Foods



Store dried foods in a sealed moisture-proof container. Keep the products in a cool, dry, and dark place.



Recommended storage times for dried fruits are up to one year.



Recommended storage times for dried vegetables have about half the shelf life of dried fruits.

For more information on storage of dried foods, visit National Center for Home Food Preservation (nchfp.uga.edu/how/dry/pack_store.html).

Safety Considerations



Wash all produce in cold running water.
Remove any dirt or insect larvae.



Blanching facilitates the reduction or elimination of pathogens that can be found in raw produce.

Cleaning your Dehydrator

- Clean the base of the dehydrator with a damp cloth and wipe dry.
- Always wipe down and wash the trays and lid of your dehydrator after each use.
- If your trays are dishwasher safe, put the trays in the dishwasher to be cleaned.



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