



# How to Dry Fruit

In 4 or 5 Easy Steps

# Step 1 - Prepare



- Choose fruit
- ## Best Fruits to Dry
- Apples
  - Apricots
  - Berries
  - Cherries
  - Figs
  - Grapes
  - Peaches
  - Plums
  - Pears

# Step 1 - Prepare

- Wash fresh, ripe fruit
- Remove stems
- Peel if desired
- Pit
- Cut out bruised areas
- Slice if desired
- Crack skins
  - Whole cherries, figs, and grapes
  - Dip fruit in boiling water for 30-60 seconds
  - Dip fruit in ice water for 30-60 seconds



# Step 1 - Prepare

- Pre-treat fruit
  - Pre-treating helps get rid of possible harmful bacteria
  - Pre-treating helps prevent apricots, apples, peaches, pears and other light fruits from getting dark while drying
- Pre-treat fruit with
  - Lemon or lime juice
    - Let fruit sit in  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup lemon or lime juice +  $\frac{1}{2}$  gallon water for at least 15 minutes, up to an hour.
  - Sodium metabisulfite
    - Dip fruit in sodium metabisulfite.
    - Can be found at local canning or health food store.

# Step 2 - Macerate



- Optional Step
- Soaking prepared fruit in sugar
  - Stir ½ cup sugar into 3 pounds of prepared fruit

# Step 2 - Macerate

- Macerating
  - Reduces the amount of time necessary to dry the fruit
  - Results in a chewier product
  - Works well for fruit that will be eaten as snacks
  - Unnecessary for fruit you will use for cooking
- Let fruit sit in sugar at least 1 hour
- Fruit may sit as long as overnight
- Drain fruit and save resulting syrup
- Syrup can be used to sweeten iced tea or to flavor water



# Step 3 - Dry Fruit



- Use a food dehydrator that has a temperature control
- Can also dry fruit in an oven
- Or outside in the sun
- Drying preserves fruit by removing moisture
- Bacteria, yeasts, etc. cannot grow unless they have a source of moisture

# Step 3 – Dry Fruit

- **Helpful Tip!**
  - Spray drying racks with cooking oil before using.
  - This helps when it is time to remove sticky fruit
  - And saves lots of clean-up time
- Spread fruit single depth on racks
- Set food dehydrator temperature to 135 degrees
- Place fruit that still has it's skin, skin-side down
  - I mostly use this when drying apricot halves or cherry halves



# Step 3 - Dry

- Dry fruit until pliable and leathery
- Fruit should not be brittle **EXCEPT**
  - thin fruit slices like apples and pears
- Dried fruit should not be sticky or tacky
- How long will it take?
  - Depends on the fruit, i.e. apricot halves will take longer than blueberries
  - Non-macerated fruit will take longer than macerated fruit
  - Drying in a humid environment will take longer than drying in an arid environment

# Step 3 - Dry

- Drying in an oven
  - Use a slow oven, 140 degrees
  - Single layer of fruit
  - Fruit will take longer to dry
  - Quality will not be as good as drying in a food dehydrator
- Drying in the sun
  - Single layer of fruit
  - Cover with cheesecloth to protect from bugs
  - Drying will take longer in a humid environment
  - Often the quality is not as good as using a food dehydrator

# Step 4 - Condition

- **Important Step!**
- Some pieces will have more moisture than others
- This step will help even-out the moisture and prepare for storage





# Step 4 - Condition

- Put dried fruit into a plastic zip-lock bag
- Or a sealed plastic or glass container
- Shake
- Do this several time each day for 2-7 days
  - Length of time depends on where you live
  - Humid environment? Condition for 7 days
  - Arid environment? 2 days may be fine

# Step 5 - Store

- Store all dried fruit in the refrigerator or freezer for 48 hours
- Or heat your dried fruit to 150 degrees for 30 minutes
- This ensures that no insect eggs survived the drying process



# Step 5 - Store

- Dried fruit can then be stored in a moisture proof container:
  - On the shelf
  - In the refrigerator
  - In the freezer
- Dried fruit can also be stored in a vacuum packed container:
  - On the shelf
  - In the refrigerator
  - In the freezer



# Words of Experience

- Many sources will tell you that apricots do not dry well using a food dehydrator
- They are wrong!
- I macerate fruit that will go into someone's lunch box
- Fruit that will be used for making fruitcake or other cooking doesn't get the maceration treatment

# Words of Experience

- I personally have had good luck drying apricots, all berries, cherries, peaches, apples and pears
- Because of their size and thin skin, sour cherries do not need to go through the cracking process before drying whole – as long as they have been pitted first

# Words of Experience

- Many people cannot tolerate foods pre-treated with sodium metabisulfite.
- Although a lemon juice bath does not prevent fruit from darkening somewhat, I have always had good results using this method.
- A lime juice bath will add its own distinctive flavor to your fruit.



# Words of Experience

- An expensive food dehydrator is not necessary
- A food dehydrator with a temperature control is necessary
- Most models can be purchased for under \$50
- Even though I live in an arid area, I get better results with a food dehydrator than with solar or sun drying

# Words of Experience

- After one experience losing a year's worth of dried cherry tomatoes....
- I always store my dried fruits in the freezer
  - It only takes a few minutes for them to come to room temperature, ready to eat
  - When frozen they are easier to crumble, a technique I use when cooking with dried tomatoes
  - Freezing the fruit helps keep it good quality

# In Conclusion

- Drying fruit is easy
- Dried fruit is delicious
- Drying fruit is a good way to preserve, especially if you have limited storage space
- Dried fruit makes excellent holiday gifts
- **Enjoy!**
- Questions? Contact us at [www.SeedtoPantry.com](http://www.SeedtoPantry.com)