

How to Dry Foods

Two Methods:[Prepare for Drying Food](#)[Choose Your Drying Method](#)

Food drying offers an alternative method of food preservation than canning or freezing food. The process involves extracting moisture from specific foods to prevent the formation of bacterial growth and other organisms that cause rot or decay. Drying works best when it occurs outdoors in an oven or in a food dehydrator. Vegetables, fruits, herbs, meats and fish can withstand the food-drying process. Certain preparation methods apply before drying foods.

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Method 1 of 2: Prepare for Drying Food

1.

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Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water and clean any utensils you plan to use.

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2. **2**

Clean fresh vegetables, such as green beans, corn and peppers.

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Trim away any bruises with a knife. Cut vegetables into smaller pieces, at least 1/2-inch (3.8 cm) thick, for easier drying.

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Place 1 quart (0.94 liters) of vegetables into a 36-inch (91 cm) cheesecloth.

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Blanch the cheesecloth bag of vegetables on the stove in a half-filled pot of boiling water. You may also add 1/4 teaspoon (1.2 ml) of citric acid to the water. Allow up to 6 minutes for blanching, then immediately place the bag in cold water for the same amount of time.

2. **3**

Rinse and slice fruits, like apples, cherries and peaches.

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Cut the fruit into 1/2-inch (1.27 cm) pieces or in halves to ensure even drying. Fill a large pot with at least 1 quart (0.94 liters) of water.

o Add up to 1.5 teaspoons (7.3 ml) of food-grade quality sodium sulfate or sodium bisulfate to the water. Soak for approximately 5 to 15 minutes, depending on how you sliced the fruit. Rinse the fruit pieces with cold water before placing them on a rack to dry.

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Gather herbs during the morning once the dew evaporates.

o Collect the herbs right after the morning dew to minimize the risk of wilting.

o Rinse the herbs in cool water and shake off any excess.

4. **5**

Clean and cut lean meats and fish.

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Slice lean cuts of beef or salmon into 1/4- to 1/2-inch thick (1.27 cm) slices. Cut off all fat because it spoils the meat during the drying process.

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Freeze any meat or fish you plan to dry for around 30 days. The freezing temperature should be at 0 degrees Fahrenheit (approximately 17 degrees Celsius) or lower.

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Thaw the meat and fish in the refrigerator. Add salt, seasonings and any marinades of your choice before the drying process. Remember to wash your hands again after handling vegetables, fruit, herbs and meat.

Method 2 of 2: Choose Your Drying Method

1.

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Arrange slices of vegetables, fruits or meats in single layers on drying trays. Place the trays inside of an oven or a food dehydrator.

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Line the bottom of the drying appliance with aluminum foil if you marinated the meat. This will catch the drippings.

3.

3

Place the drying trays in the appropriate appliance.

4. **4**

Start the drying process.

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If you use an oven, then leave the door slightly open and keep a fan nearby for ventilation.

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Close the door of the food dehydrator since it already comes with a ventilation fan.

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Air-dry herbs or put them in a food dehydrator. Tie herbs such as basil, sage, rosemary and thyme in small bundles and hang them outdoors. Place the herbs in a food dehydrator for faster drying.