

Handy Reference for Drying Fruits

YIELD OF DRIED FRUIT

The water content of fruits varies, as does the amount of waste from peels, seeds, pits and cores. When properly dried, 25 pounds of fresh fruit will yield 4 to 8 pounds of dried fruit.

FRUIT LEATHERS (Roll-ups)

Preparation - Wash, peel, pit or core, chop, and cook fresh fruit in a double boiler until soft and/or 160°F. Puree in a blender or food processor. To 2 cups puree, add 1/2-teaspoon ascorbic acid crystals or 2 tablespoons lemon juice to prevent darkening. Add 1 or 2 tablespoons sugar, honey, or corn syrup, and/or 1/4-teaspoon spice, if desired. Combinations of fruits provide interesting flavors.

Canned pureed fruits (e.g., applesauce, baby peaches, or baby plums) are easiest to use. Canned fruits in juice are also suitable. Drain off the juice and puree the solids, adding just enough juice for spreading consistency.

Frozen fruits may be thawed, pureed, and dried; however, the final product will have a better color and flavor if the puree is also heated to 160°F before being dried.

Drying – Line drying tray with specially made leather drying sheets, plastic wrap, freezer paper (shiny side up) or the inner bag from a cereal box cut to size. Pour 1 to 2 cups of fruit puree onto lined tray and spread evenly to no more than 1/4 inch thick.

Fruit leather will take 6 to 24 hours to dry. Fruit leather is done when it peels off the liner easily. If over-dried, it can still be used in baking or over cereals. If too much sugar is added, the leather will remain tacky (sticky).

Leathers may also be made from pureed cooked vegetables; however, they should be dried until they are leathery to brittle.

PRE-TREATMENT METHODS FOR FRUIT

Pre-treatments prevent fruit from darkening when peeled or cut and during storage. The chart on the reverse side shows pre-treatment recommendations. Only use dip for two batches, as the potency of the solution diminishes.

After pre-treating, drain the fruit. Blot with paper towels. Before placing food on tray, spray tray lightly with vegetable oil spray to prevent food from sticking.

Steam Blanch - Bring several inches of water to a boil in a large pot with a tight fitting lid. Place prepared fruit, not more than 2 inches deep, in a steamer pan or wire basket *over*, not touching, the boiling water. Cover and begin timing immediately. Halfway through the blanching time, stir, turn, or separate fruit to insure an even heat treatment to all pieces.

Syrup Blanch - Mix 1 cup sugar, 1 cup light corn syrup, and 2 cups water in a pot. Bring to a boil. Add 1 pound (3 to 4 cups) of prepared fruit and simmer 10 minutes. Remove from heat and leave fruit in hot syrup for 30 minutes.

Water Blanch (*checking*) – Plunge fruit with tough skins into boiling water to burst the skin. This allows internal moisture to escape during drying.

Ascorbic Acid Dip - Mix 2 teaspoons of powdered or crystalline ascorbic acid, or 6000 mg vitamin C tablets, crushed, into 1 quart cool water. Add fruit to solution as soon as it is cut and soak fruit no more than 3 to 5 minutes.

Commercial Anti-browning Dip (such as Fruit Fresh®) use according to package directions. As soon as the fruit is cut, add it to the solution. Soak fruit no more than 3-5 minutes.

Fruit Juice Dip - Use juice naturally high in Vitamin C (orange, lemon, pineapple, grape, or cranberry). As soon as the fruit is cut, add it to the juice. Soak fruit no more than 3 to 5 minutes. Juice may be consumed after use.

Fruit	Preparation and Pre-treatment	Dehydration Time (hours)	Test for Dryness
Apples	Wash, peel, and core. Cut into slices or rings about 1/8 inch thick. Syrup blanch 10 minutes or steam blanch 3 to 5 minutes or use a dip.	6 to 12	Pliable with no visible moisture
Apricots	Wash, halve, and pit. Syrup blanch 10 minutes or steam blanch 3 to 4 minutes or use a dip. If desired, slice. Slices will take less time to dry.	24 to 36 (halves)	Pliable with no visible moisture
Bananas	Use solid yellow or slightly brown flecked bananas. Avoid bruised or over-ripe bananas. Peel and slice 1/4 to 3/8 inch thick. Syrup blanch 10 minutes or steam blanch 3 to 4 minutes or use a dip.	8 to 10	Pliable to brittle
Berries, firm (blueberries, cranberries, and currants)	Wash and drain. Water blanch 15 to 30 seconds to check skins. Place fruit in ice water. Drain.	24 to 36	Pliable with no visible moisture
Berries, soft (strawberries, raspberries, black berries)	Sort and wash carefully. Cut large berries into evenly sized pieces. No pre-treatment needed.	24 to 36	Pliable to brittle
Cherries	Stem, wash, drain, and pit fully ripe cherries. Cut in half, chop, or leave whole. Sour cherries: syrup blanch 10 minutes. Sweet cherries: No pre-treatment needed.	24 to 36	Pliable with no visible moisture
Citrus peel	Wash fruit thoroughly. Remove outer 1/16 to 1/8 inch of peel with a vegetable peeler. Avoid white bitter pith. No pre-treatment needed.	8 to 12	Pliable to brittle
Grapes, seedless	Leave whole. Water blanch 30 seconds or more to check skins. Place fruit in ice water. Drain. No pre-treatment needed if cut in half. Halves will take less time to dry.	12 to 20 (whole)	Pliable with no visible moisture
Peaches or nectarines	Wash. Remove skins if desired. Syrup blanch 10 minutes or steam blanch 8 minutes. Then halve, pit, slice, or quarter. If using a dip, peel, halve, slice, or quarter as desired before dipping.	36 to 48	Pliable with no visible moisture
Pears	Wash, halve, core, and peel if desired. Slice or quarter. Syrup blanch 10 minutes or steam blanch 6 minutes or use a dip and soak no more than 3 to 5 minutes.	24 to 36	Pliable with no visible moisture
Pineapple	Use fully ripe fresh pineapple. Wash, peel, and remove thorny eyes. Slice lengthwise and remove core. Cut in 1/2-inch slices crosswise. No pre-treatment needed.	24 to 36	Pliable but not sticky.
Plums	Wash. For whole fruit: Water blanch 30 to 45 seconds or more to check skins. Place fruit in ice water. Drain. For halves: Steam blanch 15 minutes. For slices: Steam blanch 5 minutes. Halves and slices will take less time to dry.	24 to 36 (whole)	Pliable with no visible moisture
Rhubarb	Wash. Slice diagonally into 1-inch slices. Steam blanch 1 to 2 minutes.	10 to 16	Brittle

References:

USDA's *Complete Guide to Home Canning*, 2006
So Easy To Preserve, 5th Edition, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Georgia, 2006
National Center for Home Food Preservation website: <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/>

For additional information, contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension Office.