



Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences

Drying Prepared Fruit¹

Susan Reynolds, M.S.²

Whichever drying method you choose, sun drying, solar drying, oven drying or dehydrator drying, be sure to place the fruit in a single layer on the drying trays. The pieces should not touch or overlap. Follow the directions for the drying method you choose and dry until the food tests dry. Approximate drying times are given in Table 1 "Drying Fruits At Home." Food dries much faster at the end of the drying period, so watch it closely.

DETERMINING DRYNESS OF FRUIT

Since dried fruits are generally eaten without being rehydrated, they should not be dehydrated to the point of brittleness. Most fruits should have about 20 percent moisture content when dried.

To test for dryness, cut several cooled pieces in half. There should be no visible moisture and you should not be able to squeeze any moisture from the fruit. Some fruits may remain pliable, but they should not be sticky or tacky. If a piece is folded in half, it should not stick to itself. Berries should be dried until they rattle when shaken.

After drying, cool fruit 30 to 60 minutes before packaging. Avoid packaging warm food that could lead to sweating and moisture buildup. However, excessive delays in packaging could allow moisture to re-enter food. Don't forget, if you've dried fruit out-of-doors, it must be pasteurized before it is packaged.

1. This document is FCS 8497, one of a series of the Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: July 1998. First published: February 1994. Reviewed: July 1998. Please visit the EDIS Web site at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>
2. Written by Susan Reynolds, M.S., former Extension Foods Specialist, University of Georgia, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Athens. Reviewed for use in Florida by Mark L. Tamplin, associate professor, Food Safety Specialist, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville, 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap, or national origin. For information on obtaining other extension publications, contact your county Cooperative Extension Service office. Florida Cooperative Extension Service / Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences / University of Florida / Christine Taylor Waddill, Dean

Table 1. Drying Fruits At Home

Fruit	Preparation	Pretreatment (Choose One)			Other	Drying Times Dehydrator (hours)*
		Sulfur (hours)	Blanch			
			Steam (minutes)	Syrup (minutes)		
Apples	Peel and core, cut into slices or rings about 1/8-inch thick.	¾	3-5 (depending on texture)	10	-ascorbic acid solution -ascorbic acid mixture -fruit juice dip -sulfite dip	6-12
Apricots	Pit and halve. May slice if desired.	2	3-4	10	-ascorbic acid solution -ascorbic acid mixture -fruit juice dip -sulfite dip	24-36**
Bananas	Use solid yellow or slightly brown-flecked bananas. Avoid bruised or overripe bananas. Peel and slice ¼-inch to 1/8-inch thick, crosswise or lengthwise.				-honey dip -ascorbic acid solution -ascorbic acid mixture -fruit juice dip -sulfite dip	8-10
Berries	Wash and drain berries.					
Firm:	With waxy coating - blueberries, cranberries, currants, gooseberries, huckleberries.				-Plunge into boiling water 15-30 seconds to "check" skins. Stop cooking action by placing fruit in ice water. Drain on paper towels.	24-36
Soft:	Boysenberries and strawberries				-No treatment necessary.	24-36
Cherries	Stem, wash, drain, and pit fully ripe cherries. Cut in half, chop or leave whole.			10 (for sour cherries)	-Whole:dip in boiling water 30 seconds or more to "check" skins. -Cut and pitted:no treatment necessary.	24-36

Table 1. Drying Fruits At Home

Fruit	Preparation	Pretreatment (Choose One)		Other	Drying Times Dehydrator (hours)*	
		Sulfur (hours)	Blanch			
			Steam (minutes)			Syrup (minutes)
Citrus peel	Peels of citron, grapefruit, kumquat, lime, lemon, tangelo and tangerine can be dried. Thick-skinned navel orange peel dries better than thin-skinned Valencia peel. Wash thoroughly. Remove outer 1/6-to 1/8-inch of peel. Avoid white bitter pith.			-No pretreatment	8-12	
Figs	Select fully ripe fruit. Immature fruit may sour before drying. Wash or clean whole fruit with damp cloth. Leave small fruit whole, otherwise cut in half.	1 (whole)		-Whole:Dip in boiling water 30 seconds or more to "check" skins. Plunge in ice water to stop further cooking. Drain on paper towels.	6-12**	
Grapes					12-20	
Seedless:	Leave whole			-Whole:Dip in boiling water 30 seconds or more to "check" skins. Plunge in ice water to stop further cooking. Drain on paper towels.		
With Seeds:	-Cut in half and remove seeds			-Halves:No treatment necessary.		
Nectarines and Peaches	When sulfuring, pit and halve; if desired, remove skins. For steam and syrup blanching, leave whole, then pit and halve. May also be sliced or quartered.	2-3 (halves) 1 (slices)	8	10 -ascorbic acid solution -ascorbic acid mixture -fruit juice dip -sulfiting	36-48**	

Table 1. Drying Fruits At Home

Fruit	Preparation	Pretreatment (Choose One)			Other	Drying Times Dehydrator (hours)*
		Sulfur (hours)	Blanch			
			Steam (minutes)	Syrup (minutes)		
Pears	Cut in half and core. Peeling preferred. May also slice or quarter.	5 (halves) 2 (slices)	6 (halves)	10	-ascorbic acid solution -ascorbic acid mixture -fruit juice dip -sulfiting	24-36**
Persimmons	Use firm fruit of long, soft varieties or fully ripe fruit of round drier varieties. Peel and slice using stainless steel knife.				-may syrup blanch	12-15**
Pineapple	Use fully ripe, fresh pineapple. Wash, peel and remove thorny eyes. Slice lengthwise and remove core. Cut in ½-inch slices, crosswise.				-No treatment necessary	24-36
Plums (Prunes)	Leave whole or if sulfuring, halve the fruit.	1			-Sun drying:(whole) dip in boiling water 30 seconds or more to "check" skins. -Oven or dehydrator drying:rinse in hot tap water.	24-36**

* Because of variations in air circulation, drying times in conventional ovens could be up to twice as long. Drying times for sun drying could range from 2 to 6 days, depending on temperature and humidity.
** Drying times are shorter for slices and other cuts of fruit.