

Dehydrating

Remove moisture to preserve produce at room temperature

DIFFICULTY Easy
TYPE Seasonal batch technique
TIME 4–24 hours per batch



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Easy



TIME
4–24 hrs/batch



COST
Low–moderate
(dehydrator)



BEST SEASON
At harvest peaks



FREQUENCY
Several batches
per season

01 Thin slices, steady airflow

Dehydrating works by removing enough moisture that spoilage organisms can't grow — thin, even slices and consistent airflow are what make the difference between a good batch and an unevenly dried one.



02 What you'll need

- A food dehydrator, or an oven on its lowest setting with the door ajar
- A sharp knife or mandoline for even slicing
- Airtight storage containers for the finished product

03 Method

1. Wash and slice produce evenly and thinly — consistency in thickness matters more than the exact thickness chosen.
2. Pretreat if needed (e.g. a brief blanch for some vegetables, a lemon dip for fruit prone to browning).
3. Arrange in a single layer with space between pieces for airflow.
4. Dehydrate at the appropriate temperature for the food, checking periodically.
5. Cool completely before storing in an airtight container — any residual warmth causes condensation and spoilage.

04 Troubleshooting

- **Uneven drying** — inconsistent slice thickness; aim for uniform pieces, and rotate trays if using an oven.
- **Mould after storage** — not fully dried before storing, or stored while still warm; ensure produce is completely dry and cool first.
- **Leathery instead of crisp** — often still has some residual moisture; extend drying time.
- **Off flavours** — some produce benefits from pretreatment (blanching, acid dip) to preserve colour and flavour; research the specific food.

05 Timing & maintenance

BEST TIME	At harvest peaks, especially for fruit and produce with a short fresh shelf life.
DURATION	4–24 hours per batch depending on the food and method.
MAINTENANCE	None once dried and stored correctly — check periodically for any moisture getting in.
SIGNS OF SUCCESS	Produce is leathery to brittle depending on the food, with no cool or damp spots remaining.

06 Tips & variations

PAIRS WELL WITH

Root Cellaring

Freezing Produce

COMMON MISTAKES

Storing before produce and containers have fully cooled

Slicing unevenly, leading to some pieces over-dried and others under-dried

PRO TIP

Tomatoes, herbs, and stone fruit are particularly rewarding first projects — the flavour concentration from drying is dramatic.