

Dehydrating 101 Basics

4 Key Factors in Dehydration

1. **Time** – Drying time varies based on food type, moisture content, and dehydration method.
2. **Temperature** – Most foods dry at **130°F**, herbs at **110°F**, meats at **155°F**.
3. **Air Speed** – A dehydrator with good fan speed to ensure even results.
4. **Raw Material Prep** – Proper slicing, blanching, and uniformity help with consistent drying.

Advantages of Dehydrating Food

- ✓ **Reduces spoilage** – Prevents microorganisms from thriving.
- ✓ **Long-term storage** – No refrigeration needed.
- ✓ **Lighter weight** – 5 lbs of potatoes dry to only 1 lb.
- ✓ **Natural transformation** – Grapes → raisins, fruit puree → fruit leather.
- ✓ **Year-round use** – Extends homegrown harvests.
- ✓ **Rehydrates easily** – Works well in soups, stews, and casseroles.
- ✓ **No preservatives/additives** – Healthier alternative to store-bought options.

How to Choose a Dehydrator

- 🌀 **Get a model with a fan** – Speeds up drying and ensures even results.
- 🔥 **Heating capacity:**
 - **500 watts** → Small batches.
 - **1,000 watts+** → Large batches, multiple trays.

🔧 **Size & expandability** – 8+ trays recommended for frequent use.

💡 **Extra features** – Look for digital displays & easy-to-clean parts.

Drying Tips for Best Results

- ✓ **Over-dry rather than under-dry** – Prevents spoilage.
- ✓ **Adjust drying times** – Go by feel, not just time charts.
- ✓ **Use parchment paper** – Works when fruit leather trays aren't available.
- ✓ **Keep a notebook** – Record drying times, temperatures, and results.

Proper Storage for Dried Foods

- 🏺 **Airtight containers** – Prevents moisture reabsorption.
- ⚠️ **No light, no humidity** – Store between **50°F-70°F**.
- 🔴 **Use oxygen/moisture absorbers** – Helps prevent spoilage.
- 🔒 **Vacuum seal options** – Jars, pouches, or containers extend freshness.

Rehydration & Cooking with Dried Foods

- 🍌 **Eat as-is:** Banana chips, apple rings, jerky, fruit leathers.
- 🍅 **Best rehydrated:** Potatoes, tomatoes – soak 10-15 minutes.
- 🍲 **Use in meals:** Perfect for soups, stews, casseroles, sauces.
- 🔥 **Some foods need cooking** before adding to a recipe.

