

Drying the Surplus

MANY of us have canned fruits and vegetables until the available supply of sealers is about out. There is still a goodly amount of vegetables and fruit to do. Drying will economize space and sealers, so let us turn our attention to this method of preservation and conservation. There are three main ways of drying fruit and vegetables at home, namely, sun drying, drying by artificial heat and blast drying. For sun drying one has to have bright sunny days, the trays containing the fruit have to be taken in doors at night or at the first hint of moisture during the day. The trays must be well covered with cheese cloth, to prevent insects spoiling the fruit. In drying by artificial heat the dried fruit or vegetables are placed on trays and suspended over the stove or placed in the oven and exposed to a very gentle heat. In the air-blast method an electric fan is used to keep a current of air circulating over and under the tray. This is as efficient as sun drying and there is no danger of scorching. However, very few of us have electric current with which to drive the fan, fewer still have the fan. In using a hot oil stove for drying a soap stone should be placed over each burner to prevent the heat from becoming too intense. Turn the burners very low until the stones are heated through, then the heat may be turned off entirely. The stones will maintain the temperature of the oven. If the products do not dry in five or six hours the stones will have to be heated again.



Dry in a Kerosene Oven

cheese cloth to keep out insects and dust. The temperature should be from 110° to 150° F. starting at the lower temperature and gradually increasing the heat. A small thermometer may be purchased at little cost and helps very materially in making drying a success. If the temperature is too high at the beginning the products will form a hard skin on the outside and the inside will not be properly dried. Wire trays are advised for drying because these permit of a free circulation of air above and below the vegetables, this facilitates the rate of drying and does away with the formation of mould. Small vegetables such as peas and corn may be dried on plates in a cool oven.

Time of Drying

The time required for various vegetables varies and one has to learn partly by experience the time required for each fruit and vegetable. When sufficiently dry it is impossible to press water out of the freshly cut ends of the fruit and it will not show any of the natural grain of the fruit on being broken, and yet it does not want to be dry enough to be brittle or snap. It should be leathery and pliable. Certain products, especially raspberries, should not be dried too long, because if too much moisture is removed from them they will not assume their original form when soaked in water. Blanching is not essential for the successful drying of vegetables, but experiments have shown that blanching removes the strong odor and flavor of some vegetables and softens the fibre, so that they evaporate more readily.

Preparing the Food for the Drier

The next step is preparing the food for the drier, practically all fruits and vegetables have to be sliced before drying. The meat grinder can be used in some cases, but there are special vegetable slicers on the market that serve the purpose better. A large sharp kitchen knife may be used when a handier cutting device is not available. Care should be taken that the material be sliced thin enough, but not too thin, from one-eighth to one-quarter inch is a good thickness. If they are sliced too thin they appear to lose somewhat in flavor and cannot be used as advantageously.

Perfectly dried fruits depend largely on the condition of the fruits in the beginning. If the products are over ripe the fibres have softened and the dried product will not retain the original flavor or shape. Use only fresh, ripe perfect products.

Wash the vegetables carefully, taking special care with green and root vegetables that no grit be left on them. If a little salt is added to the water it will help remove insects. Fruits should be wiped carefully with a damp cloth before peeling or blanching them. If the vegetables are to be blanched this should be done in boiling water to cover, either a wire basket or a cheese cloth bag may be used. After blanching the required number of minutes, remove from the boiling water and turn out on dry towels. Pat them gently to remove all moisture.

Onions, carrots and turnips should be either scraped or a thin peeling removed. Then cut them into slices from one-

Time-Table for Drying

Food	Blanch or Seal	Approximate drying time	Temperature
Apples		4-6 hours	110°-150° F.
Apricots		4-6 hours	110°-150° F.
Asparagus	5-10 min.	4-8 hours	110°-140° F.
Beans (string)	5-10 min.	2-3 hours	110°-145° F.
Beans (limb)	5-10 min.	3-5 1/2 hours	110°-145° F.
Beets	5-12 min.	2 1/2-3 hours	110°-150° F.
Broccoli, parsnips and other		3 hours	110°-150° F.
Carrots	5 min.	2 1/2-3 hours	110°-150° F.
Cabbage	10 min.	3 hours	110°-145° F.
Celery		3 hours	110°-150° F.
Corn	2-5 min.	3-4 hours	110°-145° F.
Cherries		2-4 hours	110°-150° F.
Cucumbers	5 min.	2 1/2-3 hours	110°-140° F.
Okra	5 min.	2-3 hours	110°-140° F.
Potatoes	10-15 min.	4-5 hours	110°-145° F.
Peppers		3 hours	110°-145° F.
Pears	3-5 min.	2-3 1/2 hours	110°-145° F.
Pumpkins	5 min.	2 1/2-3 hours	110°-150° F.
Pumpkin and squash	5 min.	2 1/2-3 hours	110°-140° F.
Peas		4-6 hours	110°-150° F.
Plums		4-6 hours	110°-150° F.
Raspberries		4-5 hours	110°-140° F.
Turnips	5 min.	2 1/2-3 hours	110°-150° F.

To Make the Trays

To hang over a coal range the most convenient rack is a frame twenty-four inches high and twenty-seven inches wide. Four poles or strips of wood twenty-four inches high are used as the frame work, and the galvanized wire mesh trays held up by hooks so that they can easily be removed when placing the products on them. By attaching this frame to a pulley from the ceiling it may be removed to the required height and be out of the way. Four or five trays may be hooked on this frame work. Stretch cheese cloth over the trays before putting on the sliced fruit or vegetables and cover with



Vegetables should be Washed, Pared and Cut into Slices from one eighth to one quarter inch thick

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