

Some Practical Experience in Dehydrating Vegetables

We have been dehydrating foods for a couple of years now and I thought you might like to hear how things went for us.

Green beans are dried down south and are called leather breeches. You can do a Google for recipes. Traditionally you use a sewing needle and sew a string through the green bean and then hang them to dry. We blanched the beans prior to drying in our dehydrator. After the beans were dried we wrapped a handful of the beans in a paper towel and shrink wrapped the package. The paper towel protects the plastic bag from the pointy beans.

To cook, simply soak in water overnight and cook as if you were cooking a fresh green bean. We made ours with pork hock, some shelled dried horticultural beans and potatoes. We cooked them for 12 hours in a crock pot, excellent. Be sure to freeze the beans for three days before putting them in storage because those pesky moths will hatch in them if they are around your area.

Potatoes. We recently came into some free potatoes, some will store in the root cellar but the biggest part needed worked on right away. Scrubbed them, sliced them and placed them in a salt brine for a few minutes. (this helps keep them from turning brown) then into the dehydrator for 24 hours. Dehydration rate is 5:1, for every 5 lbs of fresh potatoes you get 1 lb of dried. The next batch we'll run through the food processor and make hash browns, then we'll dry them like the slices. Vacuum packed, these, like the green beans will keep for years.

Tomatoes, we sun dried when there was Sun available and then finished the tomatoes pieces off in the dehydrator. We cut the tomatoes into roughly ¼” wedges and gave them a light coating of salt before setting them out. Use caution as they make a lot of juice at first , we filled a dehydrator without first air drying them in the sun first and drowned the dehydrator in tomato juice. After the wedges are dry but slightly rubbery tightly pack a jar and cover with olive oil. The olive oil keeps the oxygen off the tomatoes, we ate some from last summer last night six months later and they were great.

Eggplant, we sliced, dried and vacuum packed. After soaking in water to rehydrate we found the eggplant was every bit as good as fresh only it was slightly firmer.

We raise our own Shitake mushrooms and when we have a big bloom we will

slice and dry these also. If Abigail is making soup the mushrooms will go directly into the pot without soaking first.

We really like drying foods as an addition to our other methods of food preservation; it stores in a smaller area but does require some planning when fixing meals so as to allow enough time to rehydrate.

Yours, - John & Abigail Adams
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