

Dehydrated Food

Dehydrating Meat: Ground Beef & Turkey

Use only lean or extra lean ground meat. Meat with high fat content produces beads of oil as it dehydrates which you have to blot off throughout the dehydration process. Also, fatty meats may spoil on the trail, so stick with the skinny stuff. Pork is not recommended for dehydrating, with the exception of lean ham, because of its high fat content. Ground turkey breast is naturally low in fat. Check the labels for ground beef and shoot for a fat content of 15% or less, even though it costs a little more. Ground beef with 15% fat content is often labeled as Ground Round. Ground Chuck and Hamburger will have higher fat content.

Servings: 8

Amount	Measure	Ingredient -- Preparation Method
1	lb.	Hamburg, extra lean
1	Tbsp	Flour
1	tsp	Garlic powder
1	tsp	Onion powder
1	tsp	Salt
1	tsp	Black pepper

Brown the hamburger. Stir well to crumble things up. Cook until it's almost done. Drain off the grease. Add the garlic powder, flour, onion powder, salt, and pepper. Cook another minute or two. Remove from heat. Put everything on a solid sheet and dry at 135°. Pat remaining grease with a paper towel and put in a Ziploc bag. Rehydrate by soaking in water for 1/2 hour and then add to the meal you are cooking.

Spaghetti Sauce

Servings: 6

Amount	Measure	Ingredient -- Preparation Method
1	32 oz jar	Spaghetti sauce

Spread the spaghetti sauce on a solid sheet. Dry at 135° F. Put it in a Ziploc freezer bag. Store in the freezer until you leave. On the trail add the dried sauce to water and simmer and stir until reconstituted.

Dehydrating Vegetables

Your mamma wasn't kidding when she said, "Eat your vegetables." Dehydrating vegetables at home is the easy way to nourish your body on the trail. In addition to providing necessary vitamins, minerals, fiber, and complex carbohydrates, veggies brighten your backpacking meals with color and flavor. Beef and rice is okay, but it's not a real meal until you add dark green broccoli, a medley of corn, carrots, peas, and green beans, or some peppers-- red, yellow, orange, and green peppers. So listen to your mamma and start dehydrating vegetables! If you don't have any fresh produce on hand, use frozen produce. Most grocery stores carry a variety of frozen vegetables and vegetable mixes. Frozen vegetables from the store dehydrate well because they are already uniformly cut, saving you prep time in the kitchen.

Classic Mixed Vegetables: (corn, carrots, peas, green beans)

- Place the thawed, uncooked vegetables directly on the dehydrator trays in a single layer and dehydrate at 125° for approximately six hours. A one pound package weighs approximately three ounces when dry and amounts to just under one cup.

Pepper Medley:

- Green peppers are the workhorses of the pepper family, but the yellow, orange, and red cousins add color to backpacking feasts. Peppers combine well with beef, beans, or shrimp and make themselves at home in pasta, rice, couscous, and grits.

- Cut fresh peppers into 1/2" pieces, trimming away the white fleshy part on the inside. Raw peppers retain their color better than cooked peppers, so don't bother cooking them before dehydrating.
- Place cut peppers on dehydrator trays in single layers and dehydrate at 125° for approximately six hours.

Onions:

- The favorite onions for dehydrating are Vidalia Onions from South Georgia because of their sweet and mild flavor.
- You can achieve more complete and faster drying times when the onions are diced.
- Spread out in a single layer on the dehydrator trays and dehydrate at 145° for two hours and reduce to 135° for approximately six hours or until pliable.
- Onions can smell pretty strong when dehydrating, so you might want to open a window or set up the dehydrator on the front porch.

Broccoli:

- A nutritional power food, broccoli supercharges many of backpacking meals with extra vitamins, fiber, and minerals.
- After washing and soaking the broccoli for ten minutes in salt water to remove any contaminants, rinse and cut the florets into 1/2" bouquets and the stems into small pieces 1/2" or smaller.
- Steam the broccoli for about five minutes to break down the fibrous walls of the stems and to bring out the dark green color. Broccoli dehydrates best when firm, not mushy.
- Dehydrate at 125° for approximately eight hours. Dehydrated broccoli will be brittle when done.

Mushrooms:

- Use a variety of mushroom for your backpacking recipes.
- Thoroughly wash all the dirt off in cold water and cut into 1/8 inch slices.
- Place pieces on the dehydrator tray in a single layer and dehydrate at 125° for six to eight hours until leathery.
- An eight ounce package will weigh less than an ounce when dry and amount to one cup.

Tomatoes:

- Cut tomatoes into 1/8 inch slices using a sharp knife and place in a single layer on the dehydrator trays sprinkled with a little salt.
- Tomatoes can also be diced depending on how you like them and how you plan to use them.
- Dehydrate at 145° for two hours and reduce to 135° for approximately six more hours until pliable.

Carrots:

- When dehydrating carrots for snacking or for use in dried salads, peel large carrots and cut into 1/8 inch slices.
- Dehydrating sliced baby carrots will result in very small dried carrot pieces.
- That's fine for cooked recipes, but for snacking you'll want larger pieces you can grab with your fingers.
- Dehydrate at 125° for approximately six to ten hours or until leathery.

Dehydrating Fruit

Dehydrating fruit is easy and fun. Cut the fruit into small, equal-sized pieces; spread in a single layer on the dehydrator trays, and crank up the dehydrator. It takes from 6 to 36 hours to dry fruit, depending on the juiciness of the fruit, but the wait is worth it when you taste the final product.

Dehydrating fruit concentrates the natural sugars so your pineapples and bananas will taste extra sweet on the trail. Choose mature, firm fruits for the highest sugar and nutritional content, but avoid bruised or overripe fruit. When dehydrating fruits such as apples with the skins on, thoroughly wash and rinse the fruit to remove any wax and pesticides.

On the trail, you'll maintain peak energy by snacking on dried fruit throughout the day. There are simple ways to incorporate dehydrated fruit into your breakfasts, desserts, and trail mixes. Try cooking oatmeal with dried apples, raisins, and cinnamon, topped with crunchy granola for a quick-energy breakfast.

The range of drying times listed below for dehydrating fruit are what you could expect using most food dehydrators. Factors such as humidity, the size and thickness of your fruit pieces, and the juiciness can all affect how fast fruit dries. Most fruit will be pliable or leathery when done, meaning you can bend it and it won't break. You can easily

tear a piece of dried fruit in half and if no moisture beads up on the inside and there is no stickiness on the outside, it's done.

Dehydrating Bananas

- Choose yellow bananas with some brown speckles on the peel for maximum sweetness.
- Peel the bananas and cut into 1/8" slices.
- Dehydrate at 135° until leathery and the banana slices do not stick together. (6 – 10 hours)

Dehydrating Apples

- Thoroughly wash apples and peel off the skin.
- You can core and slice apples into rings or cut them into whatever size pieces you like. Whichever you choose, make sure you cut the apple into slices no thicker than 1/8".
- Dehydrate at 135° until pliable (7 – 15 hours).
- Because the flesh of apples turns a little brown when exposed to air (oxidation), some people dip their cut apples into a bath of water and sodium bisulfate or ascorbic acid for a couple of minutes before dehydrating. Treating apples with either of these anti-oxidants is safe and will prevent the fruit from browning.

Dehydrating Pineapples

- Remove the fibrous skin and core. You can cut up a pineapple any way you like, such as into 1/4" thick rings, but it is easier to cut the pineapple into 3/4" thick rings first and then slice the rings cross-wise into thinner 1/8" pieces. The smaller pieces dry faster than larger chunks or rings and are the perfect size to use in recipes and trail mixes.
- Dehydrate at 135° until pliable (10 – 18 hours). If you are dehydrating canned pineapple, it will take up to twice as long because of the extra juices.

Dehydrating Peaches

- Thoroughly wash peaches to remove any pesticides if you plan to dehydrate with the skins on.
- The skin can be easily removed by dipping the peaches in boiling water for one minute and then dipping in cold water. The skins will come right off.
- Cut the peaches in half, remove the pit, and then cut the halves into 1/8" slices. There is no absolute right or wrong way to slice and dice your fruit. Peel and slice one peach at a time to minimize browning.
- Dehydrate at 135° until pliable (20 – 36 hours).

Dehydrating Cherries

- Wash the cherries and remove the stems
- Cut the cherries in half, remove the pit, and then cut the halves in two.
- Place cherries on the dehydrator tray with the skin side down and begin dehydrating at 145° for two hours. Reduce temperature to 135° and dehydrate until leathery (12 – 15 hours).
- Dehydrated cherries feel like raisins in your mouth.

Dehydrating Mangos

- Remove the skin with a sharp knife and try to slice large chunks away from the pit. This is tricky because it's hard to tell exactly how the large, flat pit is oriented inside the flesh. Cut whatever size chunks you end up with into 1/8 inch thick slices.
- Spread in a single layer on the dehydrator tray and begin dehydrating at 145° for two hours and then reduce the temperature to 135° until pliable (18 – 24 hours depending on the juiciness of the mangos you are working with).

Dehydrating Blueberries

- Wash blueberries and remove the stems.
- Place blueberries in a colander and dip in boiling water for 15 to 30 seconds to check the skins.
- Cut the berries in half before dehydrating. Place the berries in a single layer on the dehydrator tray with the skin side down. Your blueberries will turn out crispier using this method.
- Dehydrate at 125° until leathery (12 – 18 hours).

Dehydrating Strawberries

- Wash strawberries and cut off the leafy crown.
- Cut into 1/8 to 1/4 inch slices.
- Place sliced strawberries in a single layer on the dehydrator tray and dehydrate at 135° until leathery and crisp (8 – 12 hours).