

Dehydrating in Your Dacor Oven

Cooking temperatures for Fruits and Vegetables: 135° on Pure Convection.

Equipment Needed:

Half sheet pan or jelly roll pan with ½" rim all the way around it

Baking rack that fits inside the half sheet pan

Cheesecloth

4 quart saucepot with lid

Steamer basket that fits inside 4 quart saucepan- one that is perforated and

opens up will work well

Slotted spoon

Paper towels

A sharp knife

Notes for dehydrating fruits:

- You can add honey, spices, lime juice or orange juice to give the fruit a different flavor.
- To prevent darkening during dehydration and storage, steam blanch the fruits. Apple, apricots, peaches, nectarines, pears or foods that will oxidize should be steam blanched. To do this, add 1 inch of water to a 4-quart saucepot. Insert the steam basket and Place fruit in the steamer basket. Cover the pot. Steam for 1-2 minutes, then remove with a slotted spoon. Dab with a paper towel to remove excess moisture before dehydrating.
- To prevent browning or darkening of fruits that will easily oxidize during dehydrating, dip fruits in pineapple juice or lemon juice after steam blanching. Apples, pears, and pineapple are a few examples.
- To give the fruit a candied effect and to help retain color- blanch them in simple syrup*. The above fruits, along with figs and plums can be done in this way.

*The basic ratio for a simple syrup is 1 cup sugar to 1 cup water. Add these ingredients to a 4-quart stockpot and bring to a boil. Stir until all the sugar dissolves. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Dip fruit into simple syrup after it has cooled and proceed to dehydrate.

- Items with tough skins, such as grapes, prunes, dark plums, cherries, figs and some berries should be water blanched to crack the skins. This allows moisture to escape and dehydration to be done more effectively. To water blanch, bring 2 quarts water to boil in 4 quart pot. Drop the fruit in for 1-2 minutes, or until the skin begins to crack. Remove with slotted spoon

and dab dry with a paper towel before dehydrating. The pit can be left inside or removed half way through the dehydrating process.

- Always wash and remove excess moisture from all fruits and vegetables before dehydrating.
- It is best to dehydrate on a baking rack with a pan underneath to catch juices. If fruits are small, use cheesecloth over the rack. This will allow for maximum air circulation around the fruit. Cheesecloth will also prevent the fruits from sticking to the rack.
- Always cut fruits and vegetables in uniform pieces.

Good fruits to dehydrate:

Apples- soak in lemon juice and water; steam blanch, drain and pat dry

Apricots- soak in lemon juice and water; steam blanch, drain and pat dry

Peaches- soak in lemon juice and water; steam blanch, drain and pat dry

Nectarines-soak in lemon juice and water; steam blanch, drain and pat dry

Pears- soak in lemon juice and water; steam blanch, drain and pat dry

Grapes (red or green)- water blanch

Cranberries- water blanch

Bananas- soak in lemon juice and water; drain and pat dry

Berries- blackberry, boysenberry, raspberry, strawberry, blueberry-
reconstitute before using

Cantaloupe- reconstitute before using

Dates or figs- steam blanch

Cherries- water blanch

Grapefruit- slice, blanch in simple syrup solution for best results

Lemon- slice, blanch in simple syrup solution for best results

Lime- slice, blanch in simple syrup solution for best results

Oranges and tangelos- slice, blanch in simple syrup solution for best results

Papayas- cut into 1/2" strips

Mangoes- cut into 1/2" strips

Pineapple- cut into wedges or 1/4" slices

Plums- water blanch; drain and pat dry

Fruits that can be dehydrated are not limited to this list. These are just a few suggestions.

Good vegetables to dehydrate:

Artichoke Hearts- quarter the hearts and steam blanch

Asparagus- snap off woody end; steam- blanch

Avocados- add citrus juice to prevent browning

Green Beans- steam blanch

Onion- cut into small dice and lay on top of cheesecloth

Garlic- cut into small dice and lay on top of cheesecloth

Celery- cut into small dice and lay on top of cheesecloth

Tomatoes- slice into 1/4" slices, lay on top of cheesecloth

Broccoli- steam blanch

Carrots- water blanch

Potatoes- soak in water/ lemon juice solution

Mushrooms- chanterelles, button, shiitake, etc.- slice into ¼" slices and dehydrate right away

Corn- water blanch for 4 minutes, drain, and remove kernels

Eggplant- slice into ½" slices, **do not** soak in lemon juice

Ginger- peel and cut into ¼" slices

Peas- steam blanch and drain; lay on top of cheesecloth

Peppers (red or green)- seed and slice into ¼" strips or small dice

Again, dehydrated vegetables are not limited to this list. These are just a few suggestions.

- Most vegetables are used in stews and soups and should be reconstituted before adding to these products. They can be placed in cold, unsalted, covered water for 2-8 hours. The soak time will depend on the density of the food itself. For instance, a small dice of onion will take less time to reconstitute than a large dice of potatoes.
- To cook before adding to soups and stews, bring to a boil, cook until soft. Add salt for flavor.

1 cup dried vegetable = 2 cups reconstituted vegetable

1 cup dried fruit = 1 ½ cups reconstituted fruit

How long will it take to dehydrate fruits and vegetables?

This will depend on many factors:

- the moisture content of the food-- the more moisture, the longer it will take
- the size of the cuts- bigger cuts will take longer to dehydrate
- the amount of air circulation around the food- raising the foods up on a baking rack will allow maximum air circulation all the way around the food, decreasing time to dehydrate.
- In general, 2-8 hours will be required for proper dehydration. To tell when the product is properly dehydrated, remove a handful from the oven and allow it cool. Remember that fruits and vegetables will be softer and moister when they are hot and will be more leathery and pliable when they are cool. Feel for dryness, leathery and pliability.
- Always cool completely before storing, and make sure the container is airtight. Glass jars, plastic containers and heavy plastic freezer bags are best. Store at room temperature in a dry place. They can also be stored in the refrigerator or freezer.

Meat or Poultry Jerky

Cooking temperatures for meats: 150° on Pure Convection.

The reason meats need a higher temperature is to keep them out of the Temperature Danger Zone (40°-140°). This temperature range can harbor harmful bacteria in the meats or other protein foods. 150° will provide a gentle enough heat for dehydrating while preventing bacteria from forming.

- Lean cuts of beef or poultry will dehydrate best. London Broil, flank steak, or top round steak are good choices. Turkey and chicken breasts will work well.
- Trim away any visible fat and remove bones.
- Partially freeze meats to make slicing easier. Slice very thinly against the grain- the thicker the slice, the longer the dehydration time.
- Meats can be marinated to add flavor. Marinate for a minimum 1 hour, then drain marinade before dehydrating.
- Dry rubs also add flavor to jerky, please see recipe below.
- Dried meats should be cooked until the meat is dry, yet pliable, usually about 6 hours.
- Store jerky in an airtight container or plastic ziploc bag. It may also be frozen.

How long will the dehydrated food last?

Store beef jerky in an airtight container at room temperature for about 1 month.

Fruits and vegetables can be kept for about 6 months at room temperature. Both of these times will increase if refrigerated or frozen.

Check foods for mold or if it discolors, discard the dehydrated food. Citrus fruits that are dehydrated without simple syrup tend to mold more quickly than other dehydrated foods.

Can I dehydrate fresh herbs or flowers in my Dacor oven?

Fresh herbs and flowers require a drying temperature of 95° to 100°. The lowest temperature possible in this oven is 135°. Therefore, I would recommend another method for dehydrating fresh herbs and flowers than in your oven.

Oven-Dried Tomatoes

10 Roma tomatoes, cut into ¼" slices

Preheat oven to 135° on Pure Convection. Using a flat oven rack on a rimmed cookie sheet, lay the coated tomato slices on the rack. They can be touching each other, if necessary. Bake for 4 hours, or until the tomatoes dry and become slightly tacky to the touch.

These tomatoes can be reconstituted and added to soups, stews, and pasta sauces. They can also be packed in a jar with fresh herbs, such as basil,

thyme, and oregano, and then covered with olive oil. Refrigerate until use. This works well in pasta dishes or salad dressings.

Dried Cranberry and White Chocolate Chip Cookies

To dry Cranberries:

2 cups fresh cranberries

Discard any soft or discolored cranberries. Bring a 4-quart pot to boil, and blanch cranberries for 1 to 2 minutes, or until skin cracks. Drain and pat dry with paper towels. Preheat oven to 135° on Pure Convection. Wrap baking rack with cheesecloth, then place on a cookie sheet with a rim. Spread cranberries onto cheesecloth-covered rack, and bake for 6 hours, or until slightly tacky to the touch and leathery. Allow to cool before using.

1 cup vegetable shortening
 ¾ cup brown sugar
 ¾ cup granulated sugar
 ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
 2 eggs
 1 ¼ cups flour
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
 ¼ teaspoon ground allspice
 1 cup dried cranberries
 1 cup white chocolate chips

Preheat oven according to the chart below. In a mixer, cream together vegetable shortening, brown sugar and granulated sugar. Add vanilla extract and eggs and beat on low speed. In a small bowl sift together flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and allspice. Gradually add to the mixer. Mix until combined. Stir in cranberries and white chocolate chips. Drop by rounded tablespoonfuls on two lightly greased cookie sheets. Bake until light golden in color.

Makes about 2 dozen.

	Pure Convection	Convection Bake	Standard Bake
Rack Position	3	2	2
Temperature(°F)	325	325	350
Time (minutes)	11-13	11-13	14-15

Spicy Beef Jerky

3 lb. Beef London Broil
4 T paprika
1 T dried ancho chile powder
2 T dark brown sugar
1T ground cumin
2 1/2 T dried oregano
2 T fresh cracked black pepper

Freeze London Broil for about 1 hour. Trim visible fat from meat, then slice very thinly against the grain. In a large ziploc bag, combine paprika, ancho chile powder, brown sugar, cumin, and oregano. Add meat and close to seal, releasing all the air. Refrigerate for minimum 1 hour. Preheat oven to 150° on Pure Convection. Place meat on rack inside cookie sheet and sprinkle slices with cracked black pepper. Bake for 4-6 hours, or until pliable, yet dry.