

Summary:

Drying (dehydrating) food is one of the oldest and easiest methods of food preservation. In the beginning, people used a lot of salt to preserve foods, and they dried their food in the sun or on stove tops. Today we have the food dehydrator to help in the process of drying.

Dehydration is the process of removing water or moisture from a food product. Removing moisture from foods makes them smaller and lighter. Dehydrated foods are ideal for backpacking, hiking, war fields, space travels and camping because they weigh much less than their non-dried counterparts and do not require refrigeration. Drying food is also a way of preserving seasonal foods for later use.

Foods can be spoiled by food microorganisms or through enzymatic reactions within the food. Bacteria, yeast, and molds must have a sufficient amount of moisture around them to grow and cause spoilage. Reducing the moisture content of food prevents the growth of these spoilage-causing microorganisms and slows down enzymatic reactions that take place within food. The combination of these events helps to prevent spoilage in dried food. There is, however, a loss of vitamin A and C in dried foods due to heat and air.