



## Drying Strawberries

Before refrigeration berries were dried for use throughout the year. Drying concentrates the flavor of berries making them a quick and delicious snack.

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If you are interested in dehydrating foods but have never tried it, strawberries are a good food to start with as they are easy to dry and yield excellent results.

### Drying Procedure:

To dry strawberries, select one of the sweeter varieties that are firm, ripe, uniform in color, and free of defects for best

drying results. Wash the strawberries and remove caps. Berries may be cut in half lengthwise or sliced about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch thick. Dry skin side down to prevent sticking to the drying racks. Sliced berries will dry faster but the cut side may stick to the rack. Turning the berries over halfway through drying helps to prevent sticking. Small berries may be dried whole. However, they will take longer to dry because the skin reduces area for moisture to evaporate.

The ideal drying temperature is 130°F to 140°F. Use a dehydrator and follow recommendations or [dry in an oven](#) if able to set the oven temperature low enough.

**Drying Time:**

The drying time depends upon the size of the berry pieces, exposure of air to cut surfaces, temperature, air circulation, and method of drying. Berries may take anywhere from 9 hours for small slices to 36 hours for whole berries. When sufficiently dry, strawberries should be pliable and leathery with no beads of moisture when pressed between your fingers. If desired, berries may be dried further until almost crisp. Unlike other fruits, strawberries should not be rehydrated because they will lose their firm texture.

### Conditioning:

Condition dried fruit by packing it loosely into an air-tight glass or plastic container for several days to distribute the remaining moisture evenly. If condensation forms inside the container, further dehydration is needed.

### Storage:

Store dried strawberries in an air tight or a vacuum sealed container to avoid rehydration from humidity in the air. The shelf life of the dried berries is increased when they are stored in the freezer or refrigerator.

## Uses of Dried Strawberries:

Besides snacking, sprinkle dried strawberries on cereal. Use them in puddings, ice cream, milk shakes, smoothies or yogurt. Add to pancake or muffin batter or into quick breads. Combine with granola for a one-of-a-kind treat.

## Strawberry Leather:

For a special treat make [Strawberry Leather](#) otherwise known as a fruit roll up. These sweet treats won't remain long!"