

How to Use Dehydrated Foods

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Dehydrated vegetables and fruits provide convenient and delicious additions to family meals. They can be used alone, in combination with other foods or as an accent to add flavor. Most uses require that the food be rehydrated, a process usually referred to as refreshing.



Refreshing is done by soaking or cooking (or a combination of both) the dehydrated food in water until the desired volume is restored. The amount of water and the length of time needed to refresh 1 cup of dried food can be found in Table 1. If properly pretreated with steam or water blanching before drying, vegetables need a minimum of refreshing. Vegetables such as spinach, kale, cabbage, chard or tomatoes are refreshed by covering with hot water and simmering to desired tenderness. Root, stem and seed vegetables are soaked ½ to 1½ hours in enough cold water to keep them immersed. After soaking, they are simmered until tender and excess water is allowed to evaporate. If dehydrated vegetables are added to boiling water, refreshing takes less time.

Dehydrated fruits are soaked in hot water and then cooked, if appropriate, in the soaking water. If extra water is needed for preparation, it can be added after the soaking period.

Note
 Do not add sugar until fruit is tender, because sugar will toughen the product.

Dehydrated vegetables are best used as ingredients for soups, casseroles, sauces and stews. However, they may be served alone with the addition of butter, cheese sauce or herbs to enhance flavor. Dehydrated vegetables that have been refreshed take less time to cook than fresh vegetables. Vegetables should be simmered to the desired degree of firmness.

Dehydrated fruits can be eaten as is or refreshed and cooked until tender. Spices or flavorings such as cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg can be used to enhance flavor. Dried fruits can be used in cobblers, breads, pies or puddings.

Dehydrated foods should be refreshed only when ready to use. Do not store rehydrated foods. Drying temperatures are not high enough to destroy all microbes, and, after rehydration, spoilage can occur quickly.

Table 1
 Refreshing dried food

| Product | Amount of water per 1 cup dried food (in cups) | Minimum soaking time (in hours) |
|-------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Beans, green snap | 2½ | 1 |

| Product | Amount of water per 1 cup dried food (in cups) | Minimum soaking time (in hours) |
|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| Beets | 2¾ | 1½ |
| Carrots | 2¼ | 1 |
| Cabbage | 3 | 1 |
| Corn | 2¼ | ½ |
| Okra | 3 | ½ |
| Onions | 2 | ¾ |
| Peas, green | 2½ | ½ |
| Squash | 1¾ | 1 |
| Spinach | 1 | ½ |
| Sweet potatoes | 1½ | ½ |
| Turnip greens, other greens | 1 | ¾ |
| Apples | 1½ | ½ |
| Pears | 1¾ | 1 |
| Peaches | 2 | 1¼ |

Note

For vegetables, use boiling water; for fruits, use water at room temperature.

Campfire corn chowder

- ½ cup dried corn
- 1½ cups water
- 4 strips bacon
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cups water
- 1 medium potato, diced
- 2½ cups water
- 2 cups nonfat dry milk
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- ⅛ teaspoon pepper

Yield

4 to 6 generous servings

Procedure

- Rehydrate corn in 1½ cups of water. Allow to stand for at least 30 minutes.
- Brown bacon in soup pot until crisp. Remove and drain. Brown onion in bacon fat until tender. Add onion to bacon.

- Discard all fat except for 2 tablespoons.
- Place undrained rehydrated corn into soup pot. Add 2 more cups of water. Boil for 45 minutes. If necessary, add more water to maintain volume.
- Add diced potato and cook until tender.
- Combine premeasured milk, flour, salt and pepper mixture with 2½ cups water; mix well.
- Add milk mixture to the pot; bring to a simmer, stirring occasionally.
- Add onions and crumbled bacon. Stir well. Serve with crackers or homemade bread.

Note for backpackers

Save trouble by mixing dry milk, flour, salt and pepper before leaving home.

Creamed corn

- 1 cup dried corn
- 4 cups boiling water
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ cup cream
- 1 tablespoon butter
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper

Yield

6 servings

Procedure

- Add dried corn to boiling water. Allow to stand for 20 minutes.
- Simmer corn until tender, about 1 hour. Drain off excess water (save for soup or gravy).
- Add sugar, cream, butter, salt and pepper to the drained corn.
- Bring to a simmer, stirring frequently.

Corn fritters

- 1 cup dried corn
- 4 cups boiling water
- 1½ cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 2 eggs, beaten
- ½ cup milk

Procedure

- Rehydrate corn by adding to boiling water. Allow to stand for 20 minutes.
- Simmer corn until tender, about 1 hour. Drain off excess water (save for soup or gravy).
- Sift flour, baking powder and salt into a bowl. Combine the beaten eggs and milk, mixing well.
- Add the liquid to the flour mixture all at once, and stir the mixture until smooth. Fold in the corn.
- Drop batter from a teaspoon into a well-greased frying pan, and cook until brown on all sides.
- Remove and drain on absorbent paper. Serve hot.

Pork and apple bake

Rehydrate dried apple rings by soaking 1 hour or until soft in boiling water (just enough to cover). Brown pork chops, season and pour off grease. Arrange one-layer deep in a casserole. Cover chops with apple slices; add water in which apples were soaked and enough more to barely cover chops. Bake at 350 degrees F for 35 to 40 minutes.

Winter corn pudding

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup dried corn
- 3 cups boiling water
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted and slightly cooled
- 2 cups light cream
- 2 tablespoons onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon pepper

Yield

6 servings

Procedure

- Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Grease a 1-quart casserole.
- Rehydrate corn by adding to boiling water. Allow to stand for 20 minutes.
- Simmer corn until tender, about 1 hour. Drain off excess water (save for soup or gravy).
- In a large bowl, combine corn, eggs, melted butter, light cream, onion, sugar, salt and pepper.
- Pour into the greased casserole and bake for 35 minutes, or until knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

Green bean casserole

- 2 cups water
- 1 cup cut green beans, dried
- 1 can mushroom soup
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon onion powder

Yield

4 servings

Procedure

- Bring water to a boil.
- Add beans and cook to desired degree of firmness.
- Add soup as is, do not reconstitute.
- Add onion powder.
- Simmer in saucepan until heated through. Serve.

Variation

Place in 1-quart casserole. Top with bread crumbs or french-fried onion rings. Bake in 325 degrees F oven for 30 to 35 minutes.

Vegetable soup

- 4 cups water
- $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup dried vegetables (green beans, corn, peas, tomatoes, onions, etc.)
- 2 packages beef bullion granules, or 4 cubes
- Seasonings to taste such as herbs, soy sauce or curry

Procedure

- Bring water to a boil. Add dried vegetables, bouillon and seasonings.
- Simmer about 20 minutes, or until vegetables are tender though chewy. (Freshly dried vegetables will not take as long to reconstitute as those that have been stored for a long time.)

Variation

Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked rice, noodles or barley with the other ingredients, or add $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried jerky, cut in bite-size pieces. Using low-sodium soup granules or bouillon cubes will allow people on low-sodium diets to enjoy this versatile recipe.

Beef vegetable soup

- 1 soup bone (with some meat)
- 1 cup assorted dried vegetables (corn, peas, beans)
- If not among dried vegetables:
 - 1 large celery stalk
 - 2 carrots
 - 1 medium onion
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- 1 tablespoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper

Procedure

- Cover soup bone with water. Cook 1 hour over medium heat.
- Pour boiling water over dried vegetables.
- Dice celery, carrots, and onion; add all vegetables, dried parsley and seasoning to beef bone. Simmer 1 to 1½ hours.
- Remove bone. Dice meat and return to pot. Season to taste, and serve hot.

Instant soup cup

- 1 tablespoon powder from dried vegetables (such as peas)
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dried milk
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup boiling water

Procedure

- Pulverize dried vegetables into powder in a blender or food processor at the highest speed.
- Mix powder with dried milk. Place in cup and add boiling water. Stir.
- For better flavor, soup may be simmered. Dried potato flakes may be added, if desired, to thicken soup.

Apple pie

- One 9-inch pie crust

- ¼ pound dried apple slices (3½ cups)
- 2 cups water
- ⅓ to ½ cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon

Crumb topping

- ½ cup flour
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 2½ tablespoons butter or margarine

Procedure

- Cook dried apples in water until soft, about 1 hour. Add additional water, but not an excessive amount. Do not drain.
- Add sugar and cinnamon.
- Pour into prepared pie shell.
- Mix topping until crumbly, and sprinkle over pie.

Note

Either sweet or sour apples may be used in drying. Sweet apples such as Red Delicious are used for sweet schnitz (dried apples), and the peel is left on to ensure a rich flavor. If a tart flavor is preferred, use late-fall or early winter fully matured apples. No research is available on the suitability of current commercial varieties of apples. Dry a small amount of a variety, and test by using it in one of your favorite recipes before drying large amounts of that variety.

Apple coffee cake

- 2 cups dried apples
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- ½ cup margarine
- ¾ cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1½ cups flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ cup milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Topping

- ½ cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon

Yield

18 servings

Procedure

- Place dried apples and lemon juice in a bowl. Add enough water to cover, and soak for 1 hour.
- Cream margarine and sugar. Add eggs and beat well.
- Sift together flour, salt and baking powder. Add to creamed mixture. Add milk and vanilla. Beat well.
- Pour into two 9-inch greased and floured cake pans. Top with drained, rehydrated apple slices.
- Combine sugar and cinnamon. Sprinkle evenly over apples.
- Bake at 375 degrees F for 35 to 40 minutes.

