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EC9906 Methods of Drying Food Products

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Nebraska
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

Extension
Circular
9906

METHODS OF DRYING FOOD PRODUCTS

Drying in the open air

Drying food products in the sun in the open air is both the oldest and the simplest method of drying. Bright, hot, sunny days are essential. Some protection against insects and dust should be provided. Cheese cloth, mosquito bar or wire screen are satisfactory. Small quantities of food may be dried by spreading it upon clean boards, canvas, heavy wrapping paper or cloth. A sloping roof with a south exposure is an excellent place. Trays may be used if desired. Window screens or screen doors resting on boxes and placed in an open space make good drying trays. Of course, the screens must be covered with a thin cloth before the products are put in place for drying.

Material dried in the sun should be stirred several times during the day. Do not place material in the sun until the dew is well dried in the morning and remove before it starts to form in the evening.

Before storing, sun-dried products should be placed in a slow oven for 20 minutes. Keep the oven below browning temperature. This is done to complete drying by artificial heat and to destroy any germs that may have collected during the drying period.

Drying by artificial heat

Drying may be done in the oven. Care must be taken to keep the heat low and even and to stir often to insure even drying. The oven door must be left open to allow escape of moisture.

DIRECTIONS FOR SPECIAL PRODUCTS

Apples--Wash, pare, core, and slice apples. Drop apples as they are prepared into water to which table salt has been added at the rate of 3 to 5 teaspoons per gallon. Dry the material until when a handful of slices gripped firmly in the hand has an elastic feel and leaves no visible moisture upon the hand. The salt water dip may be omitted, if desired.

Beans--Gather when full grown and before pods are dry, then shell and blanch for three minutes in boiling water. Drain, dry, and spread out thin on trays. Stir frequently during the drying process. Dry until brittle. This includes lima beans.

For string beans, gather when ready for table use, wash and cut in one inch lengths. Blanch or steam, then place on trays and dry until brittle.

Kale--Gather when ready for table use. Wash thoroughly, strip out the heavy mid-rib, dry off the water and place on drying trays. Dry until brittle.

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Peas--Gather peas when in ideal condition for table use; that is, when the seed are full size. Place pods in boiling water for three minutes, then spread on a wire screen having a mesh large enough to permit peas to pass through into a box beneath. By rubbing the pods vigorously over the screen, they will burst and the peas fall into the box beneath the tray.

The shelled peas are dipped for about two minutes in boiling water to which table salt has been added at the rate of two tablespoonfuls to the gallon. Drain and spread thin on drying trays. Stir often while drying. When dry and brittle, they are ready for storage.

Pumpkin and Squash--Use mature products. Cut into strips two inches wide, and peel, remove seeds, and then cut into slices about one-half inch thick. Blanch in boiling water or steam for about six minutes. Dry until the pieces become leathery in texture, yet do not show any moisture when the pieces are cut or broken.

Seasonings--Celery leaves, parsley and sage. Wash and dry. Place on drying trays and dry until brittle.

Sweet Corn--Remove husk and silk from corn, and place in a basket and plunge into boiling water for 8 to 12 minutes, allowing the corn to remain in the water until the milk is set. Drain the corn, cut from the cobs and spread material out to dry. Dry until the kernels are hard and semi-transparent.

PREPARATION OF DRIED PRODUCTS FOR THE TABLE

The principle of drying lies in the removal of sufficient moisture to prevent spoilage. The replacement of this moisture is accomplished by soaking the product in cold or warm water for a time. In general, over night soaking is recommended. The product is then simmered until tender in the water in which it was soaked.

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