

**Food safety note:** incorrect canning or preserving method, timing, or acidity can allow harmful bacteria (including botulism) to survive. Always follow a tested, reputable process exactly for this specific food — this isn't an area to improvise. See our [Terms of Use](#) for more.

HOLLY'S HOMESTEAD — PRESERVING & STORAGE

# Dehydrating

Remove moisture to preserve produce at room temperature

**DIFFICULTY** Easy

**TYPE** Seasonal batch technique

**TIME** 4–24 hours per batch



**DIFFICULTY**  
Easy



**TIME**  
4–24 hrs/batch



**COST**  
Low–moderate  
(dehydrator)



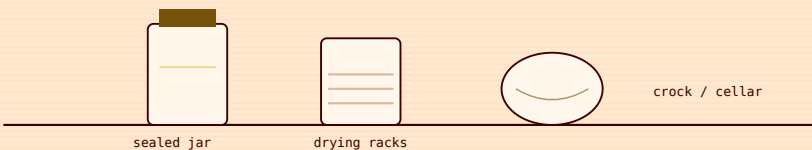
**BEST SEASON**  
At harvest peaks



**FREQUENCY**  
Several batches  
per season

## 01 Thin slices, steady airflow

Dehydrating works by removing enough moisture that spoilage organisms can't grow — thin, even slices and consistent airflow are what make the difference between a good batch and an unevenly dried one.



## 02 What you'll need

- A food dehydrator, or an oven on its lowest setting with the door ajar
- A sharp knife or mandoline for even slicing
- Airtight storage containers for the finished product

## 03 Method

1. Wash and slice produce evenly and thinly — consistency matters more than the exact thickness.
2. Pretreat if needed (e.g. a brief blanch for vegetables, a lemon dip for fruit prone to browning).
3. Arrange in a single layer with space between pieces for airflow.
4. Dehydrate at the appropriate temperature for the food, checking periodically.
5. Cool completely before storing in an airtight container — any residual warmth causes condensation and spoilage.

## 04 Troubleshooting

- **Uneven drying** — inconsistent slice thickness; aim for uniform pieces, and rotate trays if using an oven.
- **Mould after storage** — not fully dried before storing, or stored while still warm; ensure produce is completely dry and cool first.
- **Leathery instead of crisp** — often still has some residual moisture; extend drying time.
- **Off flavours** — some produce benefits from pretreatment (blanching, acid dip) to preserve colour and flavour; research the specific food.

## 05 Timing & maintenance

|                         |                                                                                             |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>BEST TIME</b>        | At harvest peaks, especially for fruit and produce with a short fresh shelf life.           |
| <b>DURATION</b>         | 4–24 hours per batch depending on the food and method.                                      |
| <b>MAINTENANCE</b>      | None once dried and stored correctly — check periodically for any moisture getting in.      |
| <b>SIGNS OF SUCCESS</b> | Produce is leathery to brittle depending on the food, with no cool or damp spots remaining. |

## 06 Tips & variations

PAIRS WELL WITH

Root Cellaring

Freezing Produce

COMMON MISTAKES

Storing before produce and containers have fully cooled

Slicing unevenly, leading to some pieces over-dried and others under-dried

PRO TIP

Tomatoes, herbs, and stone fruit are particularly rewarding first projects — the flavour concentration from drying is dramatic.

## 07 Best suited for

### Annual Herbs

Drying leafy herbs for storage.

### Perennial Herbs

Drying woody herbs for storage.

### Pome & Stone Fruit

Dried fruit like apple rings and stone fruit leather.

### Nuts

Curing nuts fully before storage.

### Grains & Staples

Drying grains fully for storage.