

COMMON FRUIT PRETREATMENTS

Pre-treat apples and fruit for best quality. Soaking in a pretreatment solution preserves the color texture and flavor of dried fruits. Increases the destruction of bacteria during drying. Minimizes nutrient loss and slows down enzyme action.

The pretreatments can also change the flavor of the fruit. Honey or fruit juices if used can give unique flavors. Spices can be added to the pretreatment.

Ascorbic Acid Pretreatment

Pure crystals of ascorbic acid (Vitamin C) can be found at drug stores in the vitamin section. Stir 1½ Tablespoons pure ascorbic acid into 1 quart water. Soak 5 minutes, drain and dehydrate.

Citric Acid Pretreatment

Citric acid is available in canning sections of stores. Mix 1 tsp. with one quart of water. Add fruit, soak 5-10 minutes.

Fruit Juice Pretreatment

Soak fruit in a juice that is high in vitamin C. 100% orange, pineapple, grape or lemon juice. Soak 5 minutes.

Honey Dip Pretreatment

One cup honey mixed in 4 cups warm water to dissolve. I also add 1 tsp. citric acid which seems to preserve color better. Soak 5 minutes.

Sulfer and Metabisulfites

These methods work well at preserving color and are used by commercial producers. Some people are allergic to sulfites. We are not recommending these methods.

MISCELLANEOUS

Nutritional Benefits

Dried apples retain fiber, vitamins (A and some C) minerals (potassium). Contain antioxidants like polyphenols.

Cracking Skins

Some fruits have tough skins. These must be “cracked” before being dried as whole fruits. Crack the skins of grapes, plums, cherries, berries, blueberries. Dip fruits in boiling water 30 to 60 seconds, then rinse in cold water. Drain on towels place in dehydrator.

Test For Dryness

Fruit should be leathery and pliable. To test for dryness, remove a few pieces and allow to cool to room temperature. Squeeze fruit should spring apart when released. Cut a piece in half should not see moisture and should not be sticky. Like leather.

Packaging And Storing

Pack cooled dried fruits in small amounts in glass jars or moisture and vapor proof food safe freezer containers or bags. Store in dry dark place or in refrigerator or freezer. Lasts 6 to 12 months.

Uses

Use in baking, put in oatmeal or eat plain as a snack. Can reconstitute by placing fruit in pan and cover with boiling water until tender (about 10 minutes).

REFERENCES

NDSU extension, PennState Extension,
Montana state extension, PNW397.

No endorsement of any product/company listing within this document is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products/companies not included.

The University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR) is an equal opportunity provider. (Complete nondiscrimination statement can be found at: https://ucanr.edu/sites/default/files/2025-06/2025_ANR_NonDiscriminationStatement.pdf Inquiries regarding ANR's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to UC ANR, Civil Rights Compliance Officer, University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources, 2801 Second Street, Davis, CA 95618, (530) 750-1280