



# *Make your own dehydrated meals for the trip!*



## *Premise:*

\* You can go **lightweight** and very **simple** at camp, get the calories you need, and still carry rich, varied foods that you **love to eat!**

– Adds to your enjoyment of any long trip, on the trail and at camp

\* It's **easy to prepare** your own dehydrated meals even if you're too busy to cook

# Making your own dehydrated meals for the trip

## ***Lots of options – easy way to start a dehydrated meal***

- Purchase your favorite frozen or deli-counter casseroles, vegies and meats – chop and pop them in the dehydrator overnight. Will be ready to bag up in the morning.
- When you make a favorite recipe to eat at home, double it and dehydrate the leftovers overnight.

**➔ *YOU control the flavor, nutrition and variety – choose only foods that you already know you love to eat!***

**➔ *By removing the water, dehydration, (the heaviest component of any food), you reduce the weight and volume of the meal per unit of nutrition***

# Some common types of dehydrators

**Excalibur Dehydrator - 4 or more  
Tray Horizontal fan, with timer**



**Nesco American Harvest 700-  
watt with vertical fan, multiple  
temp settings, expandable -  
with trays included**

**L'equip 6-tray, expands to 12  
Horizontal fan, multiple temp  
settings**

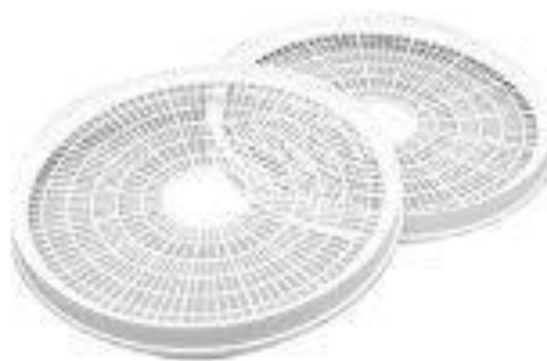


**Nesco American Harvest  
Snackmaster – Vertical fan,  
expandable**



**How about your oven?  
\* Usually can't set below  
170 degrees – and very  
energy inefficient**

# Dehydrator Trays



Stackable racks – can add up to 7



Mesh and solid plastic trays



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## Foods that work well:

- Casseroles, stews, soup bases with thick sauces
- Grains & beans (but test them to be sure they rehydrate in a timely way)
- Thick sauces or purees that can be served over ramen, instant rice, mashed potatoes or polenta – or turned into soup at camp!
- Deli-counter Rotisserie chicken, pressure-cooked canned meats
- Vegetable mixtures (fine dice) – (freezer packs with sauce or butter packs are great!)

**Key to success is uniform, small pieces.**

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## Foods that don't work as well:

- Large pieces – the outside dried before the inside
- Recipes with high oil content, or oil-packed (fish)
- Smelly foods – make the whole house smelly when dehydrating
- Thin soups (thicken the soup before dehydrating it)

Layered dishes (enchiladas, lasagna) ok, but must be chopped up

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## Different ways to assemble a dehydrated meal

- Dehydrate prepared meals (home made or store bought)
- Dehydrate ingredients; fruit, vegetables, meat
- Mix with dried store bought ingredients (e.g. egg crystal, instant rice, ramen, couscous)
- Store bought dry soups and mixed spices

***EXPERIMENT!!! (Preferably at home first)***

## Some of our favorite meals

- Pea soup - Karen
- Chicken Taco - Karen
- Chicken and quinoa – Karen
- Enchilada - Karen
- Vegetable soup – Diane
- Pizza sauce – Diane
- Apple and cinnamon - Diane
- Vegetarian Thai curry - Felicia
- Pad see ew - Felicia
- Vegetable biryani - Felicia
- Ratatouille - Felicia
- Korean glass noodle (Chap jae) – Felicia

***Some of the recipes are available in print, otherwise contact the person***



# Tips for successful dehydrated meals

- Prepare casseroles, stews or sauces as you would to eat at home. Cook all components thoroughly.
  - Can prepare-dehydrate sauces, vegies, meats separately – gives you the flexibility to mix them in different combinations at camp
- Chop or puree all components to uniform small size
- Measure the food/ingredients into servings before you put it in the dehydrator (Note the original volume before dehydrating. Add water at camp to bring the food to the original volume.
- Spread the food/ingredients thinly & uniformly over the dehydrator trays – key for fast, thorough drying.
  - Use solid plastic tray for runny sauces, mesh tray for drier recipes
  - Foods dry faster on mesh trays. Transfer from solid tray midway.

# Tips for successful dehydrated meals

- The optimum temperature range for dehydrating is 140°F (vegies, fruits) to 160°F (meats, eggs)
  - Higher temps can ‘harden’ the food on the outside before it dries the inside, and the remaining moisture can breed pathogens.
  - Check your dehydrator (empty) with a food thermometer
- Don’t scrimp on drying time (overnight or longer).
  - Food should be crisp-brittle, no moisture or stickiness to the touch, after cooling. (jerky, fruit will be hard but pliable)
- May want to re-chop sauces or stews in food processor after most of the liquid has evaporated.
  - The closer you can get sauces to a powder consistency, the richer the sauce will taste when rehydrated.
  - The smaller the pieces, the faster it will rehydrate (but you may prefer a bit more texture).

# Tips for successful dehydrated meals

- The fully dried product should be crispy, brittle dry. Test for brittleness (or, for fruit, lack of stickiness) after fully cooling. Cool down fully before packaging.
- After the food is fully dry, let cool, then chop, process or crumble, place in a zip-loc freezer bag, and store it in a cool, secure place until time to pack.
- Use sturdy freezer bags with a very secure seal.
  - Particularly useful if you plan to rehydrate and eat out of the bag at camp.
- Put a tag into the bag with name of the food, # servings and date it was packed.



# Safe Storage of Dehydrated Foods

- Seal tightly to keep the food from re-absorbing moisture or contaminants during storage, which could allow bacteria growth.
  - Package in single serving bags – don't dip out of larger bag.
- If dried to the brittle stage it is not necessary to freezer-store the food (though colder is better). Can safely store most foods for 4-6 months or longer if kept dry.
- Vacuum-sealing may add some length to storage

# Preparing Your Dehydrated Meal At Camp

- Rehydration strategies at camp:
  - Put (treated) cold water in the bag mid-afternoon and let it soak for 1-2 hours or more before eating.
  - Heat (treated) water to almost boiling, then rehydrate for 5-30 minutes in freezer bag, mug or pot. OR.....
  - Boil the dehydrated food in a pot of water for 4-5 minutes (can use untreated water for this).
- For most foods my rule of thumb is to add enough water to cover the dry food with a little extra.
  - Powderized sauces or soups will need more water.
  - Can check, stir and add more if needed.

## Preparing Your Dehydrated Meal At Camp

- **CAMP TIP:** The hotter you can keep your food packet while rehydrating, the more quickly the food will be ready.
  - Use a cozy or foil, keep in closed pot or insulated mug, or continue to apply heat.
- **CAMP TIP:** Heat just enough water for rehydrating, rinsing – does not need to boil if you've treated it (conserves fuel).
- **CAMP TIP:** Bring 'goodies' to spice up your dehydrated meal!
  - Spices, sauce packets, cheese, hot sauce, lemon/lime

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I encourage you to email one of us if you have more questions or get results you're not happy with.

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