



Homemade Fruit Leather: A Great Snack or Gift

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Fruit Leather is the term used by the USDA National Center for Home Food Preservation when talking about what we have come to know as Fruit Roll-Ups. Dehydrated pureed fruit, or Fruit Leather, can be rolled up, or it can be cut into portion sizes that fit nicely into snack bags, etc.

Fruit Leather makes a great, natural and healthy snack to send the kids to school with or to give as a gift. It's very light weight and takes up little space to store, so it's convenient to take on hikes or camping trips. This naturally sweet snack is a treat to kids and adults.

Fresh, frozen or canned fruit can be used to make Fruit Leather. After pureeing the fruit, to prevent browning of light colored fruits and to retain the nutrient content of fruit, it's recommended that ascorbic acid (Vitamin C) or lemon juice be added. Spread the pureed fruit on a solid dehydrator tray, or parchment paper on a baking sheet, spread out as evenly as possible to a thickness of about 1/8—1/4 inch. Fruit leather can be dehydrated in an oven, but a food dehydrator is much more efficient and will dehydrate the puree in about 4-6 hours.

Making Fruit Leathers gives you the opportunity to be creative with mixing different fruits, or adding flavorings such as spices, nuts or coconut flakes. I like to add honey to my purees for the flavor, but also because it makes a softer, chewier leather.

Store Fruit Leather by rolling between plastic wrap or waxed paper, and then placing in a plastic bag or glass jar to protect it from absorbing moisture from the air. Remember to label and date your product. As with all preserved foods, it's recommended that you consume it within a year, but properly stored leather will remain safe to eat as long as it has been stored properly in a dry, cool place. To extend the storage life and quality of your Fruit Leather store it in the refrigerator or freezer.

To learn how to make fruit leather view the recorded presentation on Dehydrating Fruits and Vegetables with a section on making fruit leather at: <http://ccesaratoga.org/nutrition-food/how-to-videos>. This video also includes a review of different types and features of dehydrators.

Or check out this YouTube video on Making Fruit Leather, by Julie Casio, University of Alaska Cooperative Extension: <https://www.youtube.com/MakingFruitLeather>

Or read the fact sheet *Leathers and Jerkies* by Colorado State University Extension at our web page under Fact Sheets: <http://ccesaratoga.org/nutrition-food/food-preservation>.

Read about dehydrator types and features at: <https://nchfp.uga.edu/how/dry/dehydrator.html>.