



PERSIMMON TIME

(The Dried Orbs Taste as Sweet as Candy)

Dried Whole Persimmons become a natural confection; their dense chewy flavor is much like dates yet less overpowering. Dried persimmons are a long-standing delicacy in the Orient and are found in many Asian markets. But the process is simple, particularly in warm dry climates.

Clip bright orange but still firm *Hachiya*- type persimmons from the tree, leaving about 1-½ inches of stem. The stem forms a “T” for hanging while the persimmon dried. *Fuyu*- type persimmons may also be dried in this manner. Choose brightly colored firm fruits to dry.

Next, break off or trim off the calyxes (green ruffled tops) without losing the stems. Rinse off the persimmons and then peel using a vegetable peeler. Tie a 10 to 12 inch length of cotton string to each stem and suspend from nails in the rafters or a drying rack that you might design for the purpose.

Remember, to hang the fruit so that it is free on all sides so air can circulate evenly to dry the fruit. Let the persimmons hang until they feel leathery, but are still pliable, about 1 month. Remove the string.

Eat dried persimmons whole or cut into slices. For short storage, place in airtight containers and store in the refrigerator. For longer storage, place in airtight containers and freeze. During storage, dried persimmons may develop a white sugary surface; this is quite natural and does not harm the product.

Dried Persimmon Slices are done in a similar manner. Stems to suspend the slices are not needed but peeling helps the fruit to dry evenly. Rinse and peel firm ripe, brightly colored persimmons. Slice into ¼ inch slices.

Dehydrator Method: Lay slices slightly apart on dehydrator trays. Set thermostat at 100°F, turning occasionally, until edges are nearly crisp and centers are leathery but pliable. This should take about 24 hours in most well designed dehydrators.

Oven Method: Arrange fruit slices on cooling racks that have been placed upon cookie sheets or jelly roll pans. Place cheesecloth over the metal racks to prevent darkening of the fruit. Make sure that the pieces do not touch one another to allow for even drying. Bake at the lowest temperature your oven allows (usually about 150°F). Turn occasionally. Continue baking until the edges are nearly crisp and the centers are leathery but pliable, about 8 hours. You may wish to prop open the oven door slightly and turn on your exhaust fan to dry out the moisture from the oven more quickly. If the oven seems too hot, turn it off occasionally. Set timer for no more than 1-hour and resume baking and turning the persimmon slices. Let Dried Persimmon slices cool and then pack into airtight containers, storing in the refrigerator for short term (up to 3 months) or in the freezer for longer storage.

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