

DRYING CITRUS PEEL TO USE LATER

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Try drying citrus peel to get the most out of citrus fruits this winter.

During the winter months citrus fruits are in abundance, why not dry some of those flavorful peels? The peels of citron, grapefruit, kumquat, lime, lemon, tangelo, and tangerine can be dried. Citron is a yellow-green lumpy looking subtropical fruit similar to a lemon. It is harvested for its peel, which is candied and used in fruit cake. Michigan State University Extension recommends washing, rinsing, and sanitizing any cutting boards, equipment, utensils, and work areas before preparing any food to lessen the possibility of cross-contamination.

How to dry orange peel

1. Select brightly colored fruits. When selecting an orange for its peel, choose a thick-skinned navel orange peel over a thin-skinned Valencia orange. The Navel orange peel will dry better.
2. Rinse the fruit thoroughly.
3. Remove the outer 1/16 to 1/8-inch of the peel. Do not use any of the bitter white pith. The white pith will become even more bitter when dried and ruins the flavor of the peel.
4. To dry the peel in an electric food dehydrator, place the peel in a single layer on the drying trays. Place parchment paper or wax paper on the drying trays so the peel does not fall through the openings in the tray.
5. The pieces should not touch or overlap because this will slow down the drying process. The estimated drying time is about eight to twelve hours. The time it takes the fruit peel to dry will depend upon the initial moisture content of the peel and the type of food dehydrator used.
6. To test the peel for dryness, cut the peel to look for any visible moisture. Also, try to squeeze any moisture out of the peel. When the peel is bent in half, it should not stick to itself. Allow the peel to cool for 30 to 60 minutes or until completely cool before packaging for storage.

By taking advantage of the abundance of citrus fruits during the winter, it is possible to have dry orange peels or other citrus peels for recipes all year round. It takes just a little time and energy.

CANDIED LEMON PEEL USING A DEHYDRATOR

Steps as shown in the Candied Lemon Peel slide show

By Sacramento County UCCE Master Food Preservers, February 17, 2021

1. Clean lemons to remove dirt.
2. Juice lemon and remove pulp.
3. Cut peel to 1/4" thick slices.
4. Weigh the peel to estimate the amount of sugar is needed. Use 50% of the weight of the peel or adjust to your liking (sugar is used in step 8, but you need to weigh the peel before immersing it in water).
5. Soak the peel in cold water for 1-2 hrs to lessen the bitter taste in the peel.
6. Bring water and lemon peel to a boil, drain water.
7. Repeat the boiling process with fresh cold water:
 - i. 2 x for orange
 - ii. 3 x for lemon
 - iii. 5 x for grapefruit
8. Drain the liquid, add sugar, and simmer the peel for 20 minutes.
9. Turn off the heat and let the peel soak in syrup for a few hours.
10. Drain the syrup.
11. Dehydrate the peel at 135° for 5 to 6 hours.
12. Peel is done when it is dry, but pliable.