Dried Chili Peppers
A Fun and Easy Dehydrating Project

• Chilies – the most widely used spice and condiment in the world.

• Members of the large and diverse nightshade family in the genus *Capsicum*. 

*University of California*
Agriculture and Natural Resources

*UCCE Master Food Preserver Program*
Sacramento County
Selection

• Look for firm, brightly colored, shiny peppers with no signs of bruising or rotting.

• Store fresh pods in paper towels inside of a plastic bag in the refrigerator crisper for one or two weeks.
Preparation

- Rinse and dry the pods.
- Remove the stems.
- Wearing gloves, especially when cutting hotter varieties, will help avoid skin irritation.
Preparation Continued

• Larger peppers, including bell or pimento, may be halved, quartered or diced prior to drying. This will help the peppers to dry faster.

• You can slightly decrease the heat of a dried chili by removing the seeds and veins.
Dehydrating with an Electric Dehydrator

- An electric dehydrator will give the best quality product.

- An appropriate electric dehydrator will have:
  - An enclosed heat source.
  - A thermostatically-controlled temperature dial with settings between 130°F to 150°F. (Different foods are best dried at different temperatures).
  - Fan to distribute the air evenly over the trays.

- There are many good electric dehydrators with many features. When selecting a dryer, keep in mind the products you wish to dry and investigate the capabilities of the models under consideration.

- The Master Food Preservers do not recommend any particular model or models. The photographed dehydrator is just an example.
Loading the Dehydrator

- Some dehydrators have different types of trays. Choosing a tray with smaller holes or using a suitable mat will help prevent the peppers from falling through the holes in the trays.
Temperature and Time

- Drying temperature: 130°F
- Dryness test: Tough to brittle
- These peppers took over 30 hours to dry, which is why I cut them in half part of the way through the process. Next time I will cut them right at the start.
How to Use

- Powder or whirl in a blender or food processor to make crushed red peppers.
- Great for seasoning meat, poultry or other dishes.
A Few Books for Ideas

- *How to Dry Foods* by Deanna Delong
  Revised edition 1992

  2009

- *Mary Bell’s Complete Dehydrator Cookbook* by Mary Bell
  1994

- *Food Drying with an Attitude* by Mary T. Bell
  2008

- *High Trail Cookery: All-Natural, Home-Dried. Palate-Pleasing Meals for the Backpacker* by Linda Frederick Yaffe
  1997