<dryingMethod>1. Selection &amp; Ingredients

Select vegetables at peak quality and flavor. Do not use vegetables that show signs of decay, mold, or bruising. These defects may affect all pieces being dried.

Ice is needed for cooling the Brussels sprouts following blanching

Citric acid (optional)-1 teaspoon (4 grams) in a gallon of water for blanching step as an anti-microbial agent

2. Equipment

Clean, food-grade dehydrator or oven with drying trays or racks that allow for good air circulation.

Many types of food dehydrators can be used and are explained in detail in Food Dehydrators.

Conditioning containers

Large, clean plastic or glass container with lid

Storage containers

Clean, dry home canning jars, plastic freezer containers with tight-fitting lids or plastic freezer bags

Vacuum packaging is also a good storage option

Large covered cooking pot (for blanching)

Metal blanching basket, cheesecloth or mesh bag (for blanching vegetables prior to drying)

Colander, slotted spoon or strainer

Large bowl (for cooling blanched vegetables in ice water)

Hot pads

Cutting board

Knife

Timer or clock

3. Prepare Ingredients

Pre-treating vegetables by blanching is recommended to enhance quality and safety. Blanching improves color and texture, relaxes tissues so pieces dry faster, reduces the time needed to rehydrate vegetables, and helps to destroy potentially harmful bacteria.

Thoroughly wash Brussels sprouts.

Cut in half lengthwise through the stem.

Fill large cooking pot with 1 gallon of water and bring to a rolling boil.

If desired, add 1 teaspoon (4 grams) citric acid to the water as an anti-microbial agent.

Put no more than four cups of the vegetable pieces in a blanching basket, or a piece of cheesecloth or cloth mesh bag with ends secured.

Lower vegetable bag into boiling water, making sure water covers the vegetables. Shake bag so hot water reaches all pieces, if necessary.

Blanch for time shown in table below for your elevation:

Blanching Time for Drying

Below 5,000 ft. 5,000 ft. and above

4 1/2- 5 1/2 minutes 5 1/2- 6 1/2 minutes

Start timing as soon as water returns to a boil.

Montior heat to ensure continuous boiling.

Remove vegetables from boiling water and submerge briefly in a large bowl of ice, only long enough to stop the cooking action.

NOTE: Do not cool to room temperature.

Drain on paper towel or cloth.

Repeat process until entire batch is blanched and cooled.

4. Dry

Arrange blanched Brussels sprouts in single layers on drying trays.

Dry at 140 degrees F (60°C) in an oven or dehydrator.

If necessary, turn large pieces over every 3 to 4 hours during the drying period.

Vegetables can scorch easily toward the end of drying, so monitor more closely as drying nears completion.

Dried Brussels sprouts should be tough to brittle.

Total Drying Time: 12-18 hours in a dehydrator (may take up to twice as long in a conventional oven)

5. Condition

Condition Brussels sprouts by placing cooled, dried vegetables loosely in large plastic or glass containers, about two-thirds full.

Lightly cover and store in a dry, well-ventilated place for 4 to 10 days.

Stir or shake containers daily to separate pieces.

NOTE: If beads of moisture form inside the container return Brussels sprouts to drying trays for further drying, then repeat the conditioning step.

6. Store

Store small amounts of cooled, conditioned dried vegetables in moisture-vapor-proof containers or bags.

Label packages with name of product, date and method of pretreatment and drying.

Store in a cool, dry, dark place or in the refrigerator or freezer.

Properly stored, dried vegetables keep well for six to 12 months.

Discard foods that have off odors or show signs of mold.

7. Using Dried Vegetables

Dried vegetables can be eaten ‘as is’ as a snack or part of a meal.

Adding dried vegetables directly to soups and stews is the simplest way to rehydrate vegetables.</dryingMethod>