<dryingMethod>Step One: Slice or Dice Your Eggplants, One at a Time

Select firm, fresh eggplants, as they will preserve better than ones that are already wrinkled or deteriorating.

Prepare only one eggplant at a time, as the flesh discolors extremely fast.

I have chosen to dice mine. You may slice them, or cut them into any shape you please. You may peel your eggplants, if you wish.

Step Two: Blanch Your Eggplant Pieces

You may steam blanch your eggplant pieces 3 minutes, or boil them 1 minute. Add citric acid or Fruit Fresh to the water, to help the eggplants hold their color. Blanching is supposed to help vegetables keep better once frozen or dried.

Immediately put the eggplant pieces in ice-cold water (called "shocking"), to stop the cooking. I usually use a sinkful of water, but a bowl works, too.

After a few batches, the water will discolor. That's alright. Add ice cubes with each batch, or pour off the water and get fresh.

Step Three: Dry Your Eggplant Pieces

I use a commercial dehydrator to dry many of my foods. I have never tried sun-drying eggplant. Scoop each batch onto the screen then spread around as evenly as you can.

You don't need much room between pieces (they will shrink a lot, you know), but make sure you don't have any "clumps" of stuck-together pieces. Set dehydrator temperature to 140\* F., and dry until quite hard.

Step Four: Remove from Screens or Trays, and Package in Bags or Jars

After most of the pieces are dry, pick out any that aren't, to dry some more. Tip remaining pieces to the center of the screen and place in an airtight bag or glass jar. In this bag are about three large eggplants.

Jars are usually better than bags for keeping dried food in. If there is a pinhole leak, or you don't get the bag sealed 100%, that means your food is steadily deteriorating.</dryingMethod>