



## Drying Seeds, Popcorn and Nuts<sup>1</sup>

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### PUMPKIN SEEDS

Drying seeds and roasting seeds are two different processes. To dry carefully wash pumpkin seeds to remove the clinging fibrous pumpkin tissue. Pumpkin seeds can be dried in the sun, in a dehydrator 115-120°F for 1 to 2 hours, or in an oven on warm for 3 to 4 hours. Stir them frequently to avoid scorching.

To roast, take dried pumpkin seeds, toss with oil and/or salt and roast in a preheated oven at 250°F for 10 to 15 minutes.

### POPCORN

Certain varieties of popcorn can be dried at home. The best varieties are Japanese Hull-less, Hybrid South American Mushroom, Creme Puff Hybrid, White Cloud and Dynamite.

Leave the ears of popcorn on the stalks until the kernels are well-dried. Harvested ears of corn can be air-dried at a temperature below 130°F. When the kernels are dry, remove them from the ears and package.

Dried corn will appear shriveled. Pop a few kernels to test. Popcorn will dry down to about 10 percent moisture. No pretreatment is necessary.

### SUNFLOWER SEEDS

Sunflower seeds usually are left on the flower to dry. The flower may have to be wrapped with cheesecloth to prevent the birds from eating the seeds.

Seeds may be dried in the sun or in a dehydrator at 100°F. Higher temperature affects the flavor.

When seeds are dried, they can be roasted in a shallow pan at 300°F for 10 to 15 minutes.

### PEANUTS

Peanuts are actually a legume instead of a nut and can be dried and roasted at slightly higher temperatures. Peanuts can be dried shelled or unshelled. Spread in single layer and dry at 130°F. Peanuts are dry when their shells have hardened to a brittle state. Crack one. The nut meat should be tender, but not shriveled.

To roast peanuts in the shell, place them in a shallow pan at 300°F for 30 to 40 minutes. If they are shelled, roast them for 20 to 25 minutes and stir frequently to prevent scorching.

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