



Packaging and Storing Dried Foods¹

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Dried foods are susceptible to insect contamination and moisture reabsorption and must be properly packaged and stored immediately. First, cool completely. Warm food causes sweating which could provide enough moisture for mold to grow. Pack foods into clean, dry insect-proof containers as tightly as possible without crushing.

Glass jars, metal cans or boxes with tight fitted lids or moisture-vapor resistant freezer cartons make good containers for storing dried foods. Heavy-duty plastic bags are acceptable, but are not insect and rodent proof. Plastic bags with a 3/8-inch seal are best to keep out moisture.

Pack food in amounts that will be used in a recipe. Every time a package is re-opened, the food is exposed to air and moisture that lower the quality of the food.

Fruit that has been sulfured should not touch metal. Place the fruit in a plastic bag before storing

it in a metal can. Sulfur fumes will react with the metal and cause color changes in the fruit.

Dried foods should be stored in cool, dry, dark areas. Recommended storage times for dried foods range from 4 months to 1 year. Because food quality is affected by heat, the storage temperature helps determine the length of storage; the higher the temperature, the shorter the storage time. Most dried fruits can be stored for 1 year at 60°F, 6 months at 80°F. Vegetables have about half the shelf-life of fruits.

Foods that are packaged seemingly "bone dry" can spoil if moisture is reabsorbed during storage. Check dried foods frequently during storage to see if they are still dry. Glass containers are excellent for storage because any moisture that collects on the inside can be seen easily. Foods affected by moisture, but not spoiled, should be used immediately or redried and repackaged. Moldy foods should be discarded.

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