

DEHYDRATED vs. FREEZE DRIED FOOD PRODUCTS

A lot of people ask about the differences between dehydrated foods and freeze dried foods. Both options are favorable for long term storage and have equivalent shelf life although dehydrated beans, rice and grains have a very long and stable shelf life.

Taste

Dehydrated foods do not typically have any additional ingredients (i.e., seasonings), and usually require cooking and seasoning. Cooking times vary, but most are added to hot boiling water. By adding water, the food is "rehydrated" back into its original natural state before dehydration.

Most dehydrated food will benefit from adding seasonings and other items (i.e., dehydrated vegetables, rice, meat, potatoes, etc. and seasoning, such as salt, pepper, Tabasco® sauce, garlic). Pasta doesn't taste like much until something is added (Spaghetti is a favorite, but it's all in the sauce). Any ingredients or topping can be added to dehydrated foods. Seasoning is recommended simply for taste.

Freeze dried foods, on the other hand, are usually foods containing a multitude of ingredients and seasonings. No additional ingredients are needed—just a little cook time in hot water to rehydrate and be ready to eat. Freeze-dried foods are typically pre-seasoned, pre-cooked, and pre-mixed with other ingredients, making fast, easy, and tasty meals.

Cooking

Cooking times are pretty short, usually 10–15 minutes for most foods. Some items, such as rice, legumes, and wheat (whole grains) take longer to cook and can be simmered for 30 minutes to an hour or more. Dehydrated and freeze dried foods are rather easy to prepare and cook.

Seasoning

Dehydrated food should be seasoned for best taste. Freeze dried entrees don't require additional seasoning.

Ingredients

Freeze dried foods don't require additional cooking or adding ingredients to make a complete meal. With freeze dried items, you simply add hot water and cook for about 10 minutes. This rehydrates the food completely and it's ready to eat!

Dehydrated foods are usually single ingredients. You can mix any dehydrated food with any other food product for a combination of tastes, textures and varieties.

Best Value

Dehydrated and freeze dried foods are highly concentrated, compared to what you find in the supermarkets. Dehydrated foods usually cost less than freeze dried food but, if you don't like to cook and want great food with great taste, freeze dried food is the hands-down winner.

DEHYDRATED VS. FREEZE DRIED FOOD PRODUCTS (continued)

What is Freeze Drying?

Freeze-dried products make up the majority of ingredients used for Gourmet Reserves. For instant or quick rehydration of certain dried foods and for products, which retain their shape and texture, freeze-drying is the preferred method. The first step in freeze-drying is to rapidly freeze the food.

The water content, now frozen, is turned directly into a gas and withdrawn from the food during the next steps, vacuum and heat, thus avoiding the shrinkage. Freeze-drying uses a very low heat temperature. Many of Gourmet Reserves products are custom freeze-dried to suit our strict quality requirements. Freeze-dried products include: grains, beans, fruits, meats, seafood, pastas, vegetables and eggs. Using this process, 98% of the moisture is removed.

Key advantages of freeze-dried products:

- Retains the original taste and nutritional value of the food due to very low heat temperature that is used
- Foods are quick and easy to prepare
- No waste
- Ideal method for maintaining flavors of meat, poultry and fish
- Extends the shelf life of the product
- No preservatives are necessary
- Results in a super-lightweight/compact product
- A wide variety of foods are available
- Use hot or cold water to rehydrate

What is Dehydration?

The standard method of dehydrating vegetables and spices is to place the items on a conveyor belt and run them through an oven at a high temperature for a relatively short time. Between 90% and 95% of the moisture is removed.

Some vegetables are more suited to this form of drying than others. This means that with the addition of water, the product rehydrates back to its original state more easily. Preferable items include: onions, bell peppers, tomatoes, celery, carrots and mushrooms. Dehydrated items such as peas, corn and green beans do not rehydrate as well as freeze-dried.

Some items such as dried beans (i.e., Lentils, Navy Beans, Black Beans, Pinto Beans) are dehydrated in uncooked form which will require some cook time.