

Herbs: Preservation



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Preserving herbs

- Dry
- Freeze
- Submerge
- We don't 'can' herbs - This is probably another feature that distinguishes herbs from vegetables.

Freezing

Herbs that freeze well:

- Mints
- Cilantro (ok to freeze small stems)
- Dill (ok to freeze small stems)
- Basil
- Parsley
- Leaves only (strip from stem), wash, pat to dry, chop (large) or keep whole. Pack in a small freezer bag.

Freezing - cubes

- May chop or use a food processor to get a finer chop or puree.
- Add a bit of oil
- Some people prefer water
- Put in an ice cube tray and freeze.
- Store frozen cubes in a plastic bag.
- Useful because you can access just a little at a time.
- I make pesto and freeze this way.

Submerge

- Some herbs do not keep well with either freezing or drying.
- Tarragon is the typical example.
- Stuff short stems of tarragon in a pint jar, cover with organic white vinegar. “pickles”
- Cover with lid – store for a year.

Submerge

- Garlic cloves
- If you keep the paper 'wraps' on it will keep well in a cool dark dry place for almost a year.
- Or keep long stems on and braid many bulbs together.
- Otherwise, if the papers are stripped, garlic will begin to lose its oils and dry out and spoil.
- Try submerging cleaned cloves in a jar of light oil to preserve them.

Drying

Herbs that are preserved well by drying:

- Rosemary
- Sage
- Thyme
- Oregano

drying

- In general, keep leaves on the stems until they are dry
- Try to harvest clean plant cuttings and do not wash unless needed
- Do not dry in direct sun – try to find a warm, dark, well ventilated spot
- Try to store in glass with dust screen caps that are not air tight – they still need to ‘breathe’.

Drying

- Hanging – small branches, tie the bundle with string, twist-ties, rubber bands. After the herbs are dry, store upside down - inside a cupboard or brown paper bag or a dust free area.
- Screen drying – an old window screen will do, this will work for individual leaves. Store in jars or paper bags after drying.

Drying - Microwave

- Start with a paper plate full of mostly leaves or very thin stems.
- Keep a cup of water inside the microwave to prevent burning.
- Dry 1 minute, then 'fluff'.
- Dry in 20-30 second intervals after that.
- Very easy to burn!
- Cool, but don't allow to re-accumulate moisture
- Store in a paper bag or jar

Storage

- In general, once herbs have been dried store them in a place where they can still breathe, but where dust will not gather on them.
- If they have a little dust on them, blow on them or rinse before adding to cooking dishes.
- Use them up within the year.

Experience

- Just try it
- It's not rocket science, it's hard to mess it up
- People have been storing herbs for thousands of years.
- Practice and try what works for you.