

Ways to Preserve Herbs

By Joseph Parish



Being able to preserve food does not stop with the usual fruits and vegetables. There are a host of other produces that blend in well with preserving nature's bounty. Take herbs as an example.

Herbs have been preserved since the beginning of time. Explorers have discovered valuable herbs and spices in the tombs of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs. The same principles as use in the commercial production of containers of herbs will apply to those you make at home except yours will be fresher and more than likely healthier. No longer do you have to rush to the grocer's shelves to get your own thyme or oregano when you can easily create your own supply in the comfort of your home.

In my home we use a lot of herbs and spices to liven up our foods. If you were to inspect our pantry you would think you were in the spice department of the local grocery store. We have rack after rack of both fresh and store-bought products.

We have found that it can be very economical to dry our own herbs as opposed to purchasing them in the grocery store. Some we grow ourselves while others we merely buy and dry in our dehydrator. Regardless of how one goes about getting their herbs one thing is for sure,

it is a fairly simple procedure to preserve them for your future use. Let's quickly review the two methods used to preserving herbs so they do not lose their flavor.

First, there is the freezer method. Some people brag this technique up and down as they contend that it retains the herbs essential oils much better than any other means. If you freeze the herbs or spices you do not need to blanch them first. Simply rinse them under cool water and remove those leaves attached to the stem and dry them. When the drying process is complete you can package them in a Ziploc bags and place them in your freezer.

The next method used is drying the herbs and this is the method which I prefer. I use my dehydrator and once they are complete, I place them in an air-tight container. If there is a chance that I will not use them up in a reasonable amount of time I will place an oxygen absorber in the container as well. This will remove the air and prevent the herb mixture from going bad.

Now that you know how to do it, I suggest you get out there and gather some herbs and try it yourself.