



Tomato Powder

What You Need:

To make tomato powder, you obviously need dehydrated tomatoes. If you happen to have some on hand already, then you are well on your way to tomato heaven. But if not, here are the steps for dehydrating tomatoes in a standard dehydrator.

Dehydrating Tomatoes - Tips:

Make slices uniform in thickness so they dry evenly.

Use firm, ripe tomatoes. Over ripe or overly soft tomatoes are difficult to slice uniformly.

Roma tomatoes are excellent for drying because they are firm, packed with flavor and have low water content.

Cherry tomatoes only need to be cut in half.

I do not peel or seed my tomatoes for drying. But some people do.

Steps:

1) Rinse: and dry your tomatoes.

2) Slice: If you are working with large (beefsteak-type) tomatoes, core them and slice them into 1/2-inch slices. Keep your slices as uniform as possible. Smaller tomatoes (like cherry tomatoes) can be cut in half and Roma tomatoes can be sliced into round disks.

3) Place: the tomatoes on the trays of a dehydrator in a single layer so they are not touching. (If using your oven, lay slices on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper.)

4) Dry: Follow your dehydrator's instructions for times and temperatures, but the basic idea is to dry the tomatoes at about 140 degrees F. (If you are using an oven, set your oven to the lowest setting. Leave the door ajar if possible.)

5) Timing: This is the tricky part. The amount of time needed is based on the number of tomatoes you are doing, the water content of those tomatoes, the temperature you use, the humidity of the air and the efficiency of the dehydrator you are using.

In other words, you have to keep your eye on it. Once you have done this a few times, you will know what works for your situation. It can take anywhere from 4 hours to 15 hours depending upon the factors mentioned. Just check the dehydrator ever few hours and pull completed tomatoes out as you get toward the end.

6) Determining dryness: When completely dry, the tomatoes should feel crisp or hard. They should not feel sticky at all on the surface.

7) Storage: If you are not going to make powder right away, let the tomatoes cool and then store them in an airtight container. (I use a canning jar.) If left for long periods exposed to air, the tomatoes will absorb moisture and will oxidize quickly.

Making Tomato Powder:

This is the easy part!

Use a high-powered blender (like a Vitamix), a coffee grinder or a food processor to pulverize the dried tomato into a powder. That is it!

It only takes a few minutes to grind it until it is like a rough-cut grain. Now that you have opened the tomato up to more surface area, it will pop with flavor. But, it will also lose that flavor more quickly. So I recommend doing this in small batches so that you use up what you grind in a month or two. After than, it does not have as much flavor.