**Making Fruit Leather**

* **Prepare the Drying Surface:**First check to see if your fruit dehydrator comes with special trays for leather, if it does, follow the manufacturers’ instructions.  If it does not, consider covering each drying tray with a sheet of parchment paper – fruit leather can be sticky and you don’t want to ruin your machine!
* **Prepare the Fruit Puree:**  The great thing about fruit leather is that you can combine different fruits to create new taste sensations.  Just add your fruit in a blender or food processor and blend until nice and smooth. You may have to scrape the sides in order to ensure all the fruit gets pureed.
	+ Ingredients
		- Fresh fruit (apricots, peaches, plums, berries, apples, pears, grapes)
		- Water
		- Lemon juice or sugar (if needed)
		- Spices such as cinnamon and nutmeg (optional)
	+ Method
	+ 1 Rinse the fruit. If you working with stone fruit, take out the pits, chop the fruit. If working with apples or pears, peel and core them, then chop. If working with grapes, de-stem them.
	+ Taste the fruit before proceeding. Note how sweet the fruit is. If very sweet you will not need to add any sugar.
	+ 2 Place fruit in a large saucepan. Add a half cup of water for every 4 cups of chopped fruit. Bring to a simmer, cover and let cook on a low heat for 10-15 minutes, or until the fruit is cooked through. Uncover and stir. Use a potato masher to mash up the fruit in the pan. Taste the fruit and determine what and how much sugar, lemon juice, or spices to add SLOWLY.
	+ Continue to simmer and stir until any added sugar is completely dissolved and the fruit purée has thickened, another 5 or 10 minutes (or more).
* **Pour the Puree:**Take great care and pour one cup of puree onto the prepared surface (as directed in bullet one) and spread evenly to about ten inches square.  For even drying, try to form the puree so that it is slightly thicker around the edges than in the center.
* **Dry the Puree:** Read your fruit dehydrator manufacturer’s instructions (most dry in five to ten hours) and dry puree until it feels leathery and pliable and the top is no longer sticky or gluey to the touch.  You should be able to peel it off with none of it sticking to the tray.
* **Cut into Strips:** When the fruit leather is still a touch warm, cut it into smaller strips – just perfect for snacking!  Wrap each piece tightly in plastic wrap.
* **Store for Future Snacking -** You have two choices for storing.  You can store each piece flat or roll them up enclosing the wrap.  For optimum freshness place inside a paper bag and seal the bag with tape!  Store in a cool, dry place for up to two months or place in the freezer for up to a year!