

Unique Methods of Preserving Herbs

Many of you have tried drying herbs in a food dehydrator, or a paper bag, or in a microwave. Here are a few creative techniques that work extremely well.

HERB FAN DRYER

I saw this on Alton Brown's "Good Eats" on the Food Network. I have been using it for 2 years, and it works great on Thyme and Rosemary. I also use it on Oregano and small leaf herbs. I wouldn't recommend it for large leaf herbs like Basil, because there are better methods. It sure is cheaper than a dehydrator and works as good.



I layout my furnace filters with the wire reinforced side down. I then spread the leaves and small stems out in the V-grooves of the filters. I remove large stems, because they contain a lot of moisture.



After I have filled each filter with herbs, (except one), I stack them, sandwiching the leaves between the layers. I then place the empty filter on top to complete the "Dagwood" club sandwich. Next I lay the stacks of filters on the box fan (on the air-in side), and strap it in place with two bungee cords. I run the fan on medium for 24 hours. Then I remove the stack of filters and move the stack to the other side of the fan (air-out side). After another 24 hours on Medium, I remove the dried herbs, and load it up for another batch.

VACUUM SEALING HERBS



I dry large quantities of herbs and vacuum seal them to keep them fresh. Foodsaver makes an attachment for vacuum sealing canning jars.

HERB ICE CUBES

I also make a lot of sauce and scampi, where I need parsley and basil. I really would prefer not to use dried basil or Parsley. I chop fresh basil or Parsley, pack it into ice cube trays, add water and freeze it. I then place the cubes in resealable vacuum bags. When I make sauce I open the bag, and pop a basil cube into my sauce, and vacuum seal the bag up again. It's the closest thing to fresh herbs you can get.

