

Fruit Leather

Think you need a special dehydrator to make your own fruit leather? Think again! You can actually make a delicious version of this popular kid's snack in your own oven. Cooking in the kitchen is a great way to give kids a hands-on activity and math lesson. They'll even learn shapes and letters if you cut it with fun cookie cutters. It's the most "fruitful" activity we can think of!

What You Need:

- 1 pound of any berries
- 1/4 cup water
- Sugar (optional)
- Lemon juice (optional)
- Butter knife
- Saucepan
- Potato masher or fork
- Food processor or blender
- Plastic wrap (microwave safe)
- Cookie sheet
- Cookie cutters
- Non-toxic marker
- Scissors

What You Do:

1. Head to the kitchen with your little chef, and have her wash the berries. if you're using strawberries, cut off the tops.
2. Place the berries in a saucepan with the water, and cook it over medium heat.
3. Have your child stir the berries frequently. As they heat up, they will soften and start to break down.
4. Reduce the heat to low and mash the berries with a potato masher or fork.
5. Spoon a small amount of mashed berries out of the pan and allow it to cool for a couple of minutes. When it's cool enough, taste it. If it needs more sweetness, add a little sugar to taste. If it needs tartness, add lemon juice.
6. Simmer the mashed berries for a few more minutes, and then turn off the heat and let them cool for about 30 minutes, so it's no longer hot.
7. Preheat the oven to 150 degrees F.
8. Pour the berries into a food processor or blender, and purée until smooth.
9. Have your child line a cookie sheet with plastic wrap.
10. Pour the berry purée over the plastic wrap, and spread it into a thin layer with a butter knife.
11. Place the cookie sheet in the oven to dry for 2 to 3 hours, or until it's no longer sticky or soft. With thicker fruit leather, you may have to bake it longer.
12. Allow the fruit leather to cool, and then leave it to dry at room temperature overnight.
13. Roll the fruit leather up together with the plastic wrap, to store. Or lay the fruit leather on a plate and use cookie cutters or a knife to cut out letters and shapes.

Don't forget to remove the plastic wrap before you dig in!

