

How to Make Fruit Leathers

*This free tip sheet was produced by the Cheapskates Club –
www.cheapskatesclub.net*

Make your own fruit leather, it's an excellent low-waste school snack.

You will need:

Ripe fruit
Saucepan
½ cup water
Dehydrator
Baking Paper or a fruit leather sheet to fit your dehydrator

Instructions:

Use ripe fruit. Berries and stone fruit are ideal to make fruit leather. Choose strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, apricots, peaches, nectarines, plums, cherries - they all make delicious fruit leathers.

Wash, de-stone and chop fruit. Put the fruit in a saucepan and add 1/2 cup water. Cook over a low heat, stirring so the fruit doesn't stick to the bottom of the pan, until the fruit is soft and mushy and has released its juices.

Use a stick blender, vitamiser or food processor to turn the fruit into a smooth pulp.

Taste the pulp - if it needs it, add a drizzle of honey or maple syrup to sweeten. Ripe fruit is usually sweet enough, so always taste before sweetening and sparingly.

If you want to add other flavours, now is the time. Add cinnamon, vanilla sugar, cloves, nutmeg, mixed spice, ginger - even cayenne pepper or chilli - depending on your tastes. Or leave them out and enjoy the flavour of the fruit.

Spread in a thin layer - no more than 10mm thick - on the lined dehydrator trays. The layer will thin as it dries, but any thicker and it won't completely dehydrate and could mould before it's used up.

Turn dehydrator to 70 degrees Celsius. Dehydrate trays, rotating them every 2 hours, until the fruit layer is sticky to the touch but not completely dry. Depending on your fruit, the thickness of the layers, your dehydrator and even the weather, this can take up to 24 hours.

Turn the dehydrator off and let the fruit leather cool completely. Use a pizza cutter or a very sharp knife to cut into strips. You can leave them flat or roll up.

Store in an air-tight container with layers of baking paper between them so they don't stick together.

If you have stonefruit trees, MOOing fruit leathers will cost you just a few cents – so much cheaper than buying them. If you have to buy the fruit – wait until it is on sale at a greengrocer or go to your local market and buy in bulk to keep the cost down. However you make it, it will be cheaper than buying them from the supermarket.

