COOKING PASSION SINCE 1877

3 ways to preserve stonefruit

Ingredients

Method

1. Drying

Drying is one of the simplest ways to preserve stone fruit and makes for a great snack all year round. With this type of preserving, the natural flavour of the fruit is concentrated by dehydration and generally the longer you leave the food to be dried, the better it will be preserved. You can dry your stone fruit using a dehydrator, but a NEFF CircoTherm® oven works just as well.

1. To begin with, wash your unblemished stonefruit thoroughly then halve and remove stones. To avoid discolouration while dehydrating, rinse your stonefruit into a bowl of salted water then drain and dry.

2. Next, line your oven wire rack with greaseproof paper or parchment paper and place your stone fruit onto the dish with the sliced surfaces facing upwards, ensuring that your fruit is not overlapping.

3. Set your oven to 80°C, then place your tray of stonefruit into the oven and leave for 8-10 hours, turning several times during the process.

NEFF Tips:

- The thinner the slices are, the quicker the drying process will be and the more aromatic the dried food will remain.
- You can tell if your stonefruit is ready when they are wrinkled and dry but not stiff. They should have a leathery but pliable texture. If there are moisture beads still on the fruit after it has been torn open, then they need more time in the oven.
- After drying, remove the dried stonefruit from the paper immediately. When cooled, store in an airtight container to make sure no moisture gets in.

2. Alcohol

Alcohol is great at fighting bacteria which makes it excellent for fruit preservation. One of our favourites has to be brandied cherries which are delicious in cakes and desserts and for a variety of sweet treats.

You'll need:
1kg cherries
4 cups of brandy
1 cup brown sugar
1 cup unrefined sugar
1 cinnamon stick
2 cloves

1. Wash cherries, removing stems and set aside in a large heat proof bowl. If you have a cherry pitter, you may also wish to remove the seeds.

2. In a pan whisk brandy and sugar together and stir until the sugar has dissolved before adding in the cinnamon and cloves. Bring to the boil then simmer for 10 minutes before removing the spices.

3. Pour the boiling liquid over the cherries and set aside.

4. Sterilise your jars by placing them into a pot of boiling water. Once ready, pour the cherries and hot liquid into the jars until overflowing. Seal the jars and set aside to cool before storing in a dark cupboard.

These cherries will be ready to eat in 4 weeks and should be consumed within a year.

3. Sugar

Sugar is an excellent preserver as it binds to the water in food reducing the growth of microorganisms. There are several ways to go about preserving with sugar including this simple process you can do at home using your stove and oven.

A note on jars:

- Use only clean and undamaged preserving jars. Only use heat-resistant, clean and undamaged rubber rings. Check clips and clamps in advance.
- For each preserving process, only use preserving jars that are the same size and contain the same food. In the cooking compartment, you can preserve the contents of a maximum of six 1/2 , 1 or 11/2 litre preserving jars at the same time. Do not use jars that are larger or taller than this. The lids could rupture.
- Preserving jars must not touch one another in the cooking compartment during the preserving process.

Method:

1. Start by washing your unblemished stonefruit thoroughly then peel, core and halve your fruit before placing them in preserving jars up to approx. 2 cm below the rim.

2. Next prepare the hot skimmed sugar solution by bringing equal parts of water and sugar to the boil, stirring well to dissolve sugar. Continue boiling for one minute. For one litre of water:
Approx. 250 g sugar for sweet fruit
Approx. 500 g sugar for sour fruit

3. Pour the hot sugar solution over the fruit, leaving at least 1cm space at top. (Use approx. 400 ml for a 1-litre jar). Wipe the rims of the jars, as they must be clean then place a damp rubber ring and a lid on each jar and seal the jars with clamps.

4. Set your NEFF CircoTherm® oven to 160-170°C. Place jars into the universal oven pan allowing enough space around each jar so that they do not touch each other. Pour 500 ml hot water (approx. 80 °C) into the pan and place in oven.

5. After a short while, small bubbles will form at short intervals. Once the the contents of the jars start bubbling after approx. 30-40mins, turn off the oven and continue boiling in residual heat for 30mins.

6. Remove the jars from the cooking compartment after cooling. As the ingredients cool, the jar will seal tight and the fruit will be preserved.

Once you've preserved your stonefruit, you can use them all year long in cakes, pies, tarts.. the list goes on! So make the most of stonefruit season and try these DIY techniques for preserving this summer's bounty.

NEFF CircoTherm® ovens:

CircoTherm® works by drawing air in from the oven via a powerful fan. It then heats up the air and forces it right back into the oven cavity through strategically placed ducts in the rear wall. By continuously circulating hot air around the oven in this way the desired temperature is achieved more quickly and evenly than in a normal oven, saving time and energy as little or no preheating is required.

Find out more

Notes

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