

Delicious Dried and Fresh Fruit Fun!

Do you have a budding scientist in your home? Want to find an entertaining way to develop her observation and analysis skills? This experiment is a fun and delicious way to teach your child about the effects of dehydration (removal of water) and re-hydration on fruit. It will get your child thinking about everyday objects in a more scientific way and may even encourage your child to take part in a healthier diet!

What You Need:

- Seasonal fresh fruit (that are also available in a dried form), such as apples, raisins, peaches, plums, prunes, figs, etc.
- White plate for the re-hydrated fruit
- Large white tray or silicone sheet



What You Do:

1. Hydrate some of the dried fruit by soaking it in water for a few hours before beginning this activity. Once the dried fruit is plumped, drain it and put each type of fruit into separate piles on the plate.
2. Make sure that your little scientist has washed her hands before getting started, and that her work surface is clean.
3. Cut up the larger fresh fruit into pieces. Make the pieces the same shape as the dried versions. Leave the smaller fruit, such as the grapes, as they are. Put each type of fresh fruit into separate piles on the tray.
4. Have your child put the dry fruit into separate piles on the same tray.
5. Invite your child to guess which type of dry fruit is matched up to each type of fresh fruit by looking, touching, and tasting the fruit and noting her observations. How many did she guess correctly?
6. Ask her what she thinks has happened to make the taste and the look of the fruit change.
7. Get her to think about what will happen if the dry fruit was re-hydrated. Would it go back to looking like the fresh fruit?
8. Bring out the re-hydrated fruit and get your child to look at and taste it and compare it to the two other versions you have been analyzing and again to note of the differences. Which version of each fruit does she like the best? Why?

What's Going On?

The dried fruit has a stronger, sweeter flavor, as there is no water to dilute it. The dried fruit is a lot smaller in volume.

The dried fruit has changed color due to a chemical process called "oxidation." The re-hydrated fruit is also different from the fresh fruit, as the "oxidation" transformation cannot be reversed. Once fresh fruit has been dehydrated, it will not ever look or taste the same as it did when it was fresh.

Now What?

Ask your child why she thinks that fruit is dried. When you are shopping with your child at a supermarket, look at various fresh and dried ingredients and products.

This experiment can also be a good way to start a discussion about the importance of water in making human bodies function properly! Start a discussion about how much healthier and full of life the fresh fruit looked than the dehydrated fruit. If she were a piece of fruit, would she rather be fresh or dried?

