

Storing Chillis:



Drying Chillis:

Dehydration is the quickest way to dry chillis as they are 92% water so dried chillis weigh a lot less and can be kept for a year without losing their flavour. Dehydrators can be bought online, I bought mine from a well known tv channel for about £30. The beauty of dehydrators is that you can also dry most fruits.

Air drying;

Most people just string up fresh chillis and let mother nature do the rest, this is the simplest way of drying chillis but the longest. The skin of the chilli is watertight so to speed up the process make some holes in the chillis to let the moisture out. If the weather is warm and dry leaving the chillis outside will speed up the process this is called sun drying, although with the weather in the UK not being great sun drying is used more abroad.

Oven drying:

A simple yet effective way to dry your chillis is in the oven. Make sure your oven is on its lowest setting, and leave the door slightly open. Keep your eye on them as you don't want to cook them, a fan oven is best. To speed up this process you might want to consider cutting your chillis in half.

Rehydrating Chillis:

To rehydrate your chillis, just place them in a bowl of warm water for an hour, they will soak up all the moisture they need, they will not look like they did on the plant, but will be better added to food this way in my opinion.

Making your own chilli powder:

Make sure that your chillis are crispy dry before you start, this will ensure better results, you can use a pestle and mortar, but I use a little handheld blender which can be bought from most cook shops. Then just simply store in a jar to be used at any time.

Pickling chillis:

One of my favourite ways is to pickle chillis. There are many ways but for me just keep it simple, I use kilner jars but any airtight jar can be used. Make sure that the jar is clean and sterilised. Wash your chillis first then make a few holes in them if you wish to help speed up the pickling process, then place in the jar. I add pickling spices but these are not essential, cover the chillis with distilled vinegar and close the lid. Job done, the pickling process will take 2-3 weeks, but the longer you leave them the better. Why not pickle some eggs or beetroot and add some chillis to spice it up!

Freezing chillis:

A simple way to store chillies is just to pop them in the freezer, but a better way is to blitz the chillis in a blender and pour the mix into ice cube trays, that way when heat is needed just pop a chilli ice cube out the freezer and add it to your food.....simple.

Alcohol and chillis:

Something I have stumbled upon recently is adding chillis to alcohol. My advice is not to use expensive stuff!! Just simply pop a chilli into your favourite bottle of tipples and shake, leave for a few days then try some.....very nice on a winters evening!