FRESH HERB PRESERVATION: DRYING & FREEZING GUIDE

Tender vs Woody Herb Botany | Olive Oil Freezer Cubes | Hanging Dehydration & Moisture Controls

BOTANICAL LAW: TENDER SOFT HERBS (BASIL/CILANTRO) MUST BE FROZEN IN OIL | WOODY HERBS (ROSEMARY/THYME) DRY BEAUTIFULLY

MASTER 10 CULINARY HERBS PRESERVATION SPECTRUM

Herb & Botanical Type	Best Preservation Method	Preparation & Technique	Shelf Life	Best Use
Sweet Genovese Basil (Tender)	Purée in EVOO & freeze in cubes	Blanch 3 secs in hot water, shock, purée with oil	9 - 12 Months	Pesto, tomato pasta sauces
Rosemary (Hardy Woody)	Bundle hanging air dry / Dehydrate	Tie stems in small bunches; hang upside down in dark	1 - 2 Years	Roast potatoes, lamb, focaccia
Garden Thyme (Hardy Woody)	Air dry or freeze on stem in bag	Strip dried leaves from woody twigs after crisping	1 - 2 Years	Stocks, stews, poultry rubs
Cilantro / Coriander (Tender)	Chop & freeze in oil / Water bouquet	Never air dry (loses 90% flavor); freeze in olive oil	6 Months	Salsas, curries, guacamole
Flat-Leaf Parsley (Tender)	Freeze flat in zip bag or oil cubes	Wash, spin dry completely, roll tightly in freezer bag	9 Months	Soups, garlic butter, chimichurri
Common Sage (Hardy)	Dehydrate at 95 F or brown butter	Leaves dry flat between paper towels or dehydrator	1 Year	Stuffing, butternut squash
Fresh Mint (Tender)	Freeze in water ice cubes or dry	Freeze whole leaves in ice cubes for tea or cocktails	6 - 9 Months	Mojitos, iced tea, lamb sauce
Garden Oregano (Hardy)	Hanging air dry (Superior dry flavor)	Drying concentrates thymol and carvacrol aromatic oils	2 Years	Pizza sauce, Greek salads
French Tarragon (Tender)	Freeze in white wine vinegar or oil	Preserve in vinegar bottle or blend with unsalted butter	6 Months	Bernaise, chicken salad
Fresh Dill (Tender)	Chop finely & freeze in airtight jar	Snip with kitchen shears; pack into glass jar in freezer	6 Months	Salmon, potato salad, tzatziki

BOTANICAL PRESERVATION SCIENCE

The Oil Immersion Barrier:
When tender herbs freeze bare, ice crystals pierce cell walls and enzymes turn leaves black. Oil coats cell walls, locking in vibrant green chlorophyll.

Morning Harvest Volatile Oils:
Harvest herbs in the early morning after dew evaporates but before the afternoon sun heats the leaves and evaporates essential oils.

Low Heat Dehydration (95-105 F):
Never dry herbs at oven temps above 115 F. High heat cooks volatile aromatics, rendering herbs flavorless. Use a dehydrator or warm dry room.

Stem vs Leaf Storage:
Keep woody stems attached during drying to draw residual moisture outward; strip leaves only after stems snap cleanly like dried twigs.

HERB HARVEST & PRESERVATION LOG (FILLABLE)

Herb Harvested	Method (Oil/Dry)	Batch Date	Cured
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			☐
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