

*Optimum*  
QUALITY YOU CAN TRUST

# USER'S MANUAL



FOOD DEHYDRATOR

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# WELCOME TO YOUR NEW KITCHEN ASSISTANT

Congratulations on your purchase of the natural health food assistant, the Optimum Stainless Steel Food Dehydrator. Dehydration is one of the oldest and most effective forms of food preservation. The North American Indians preserved meat by sun-drying, the Japanese dried fish and rice and the Chinese have been drying eggs for centuries. Dehydration allows you to preserve many types of food for indefinite periods by removing the moisture in meats, fruits and vegetables, enabling them to last for months instead of days without refrigeration. There are numerous health benefits associated with dehydrated foods, including concentrated taste, retention of valuable vitamins and minerals and no added preservatives, additives or chemicals.

With your new Dehydrator, you will be able to create natural, healthy snacks and robustly flavoured meals brimming with goodness for you and your family.

Foods are considered RAW with the majority of phytonutrients, vitamins and minerals intact when it is unheated and remains under 40-48°C (105-118°F) for an extended period of time. Dehydration is a popular gourmet food preparation method which creates a natural crisp and crunchy texture.

Many variables can affect the results of food dehydration such as room temperature, humidity and the moisture levels in the food you are drying. To master the various dehydration techniques, it will be necessary to experiment with your drying processes. Too much heat may harden your food, whilst too little heat may increase the time taken to achieve your desired results. Just about anything can be dehydrated, so start experimenting to discover a whole new world of healthy food possibilities.

**TO ENSURE YOUR SAFETY AND TO GET THE BEST PERFORMANCE FROM YOUR DEHYDRATOR, PLEASE READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.**

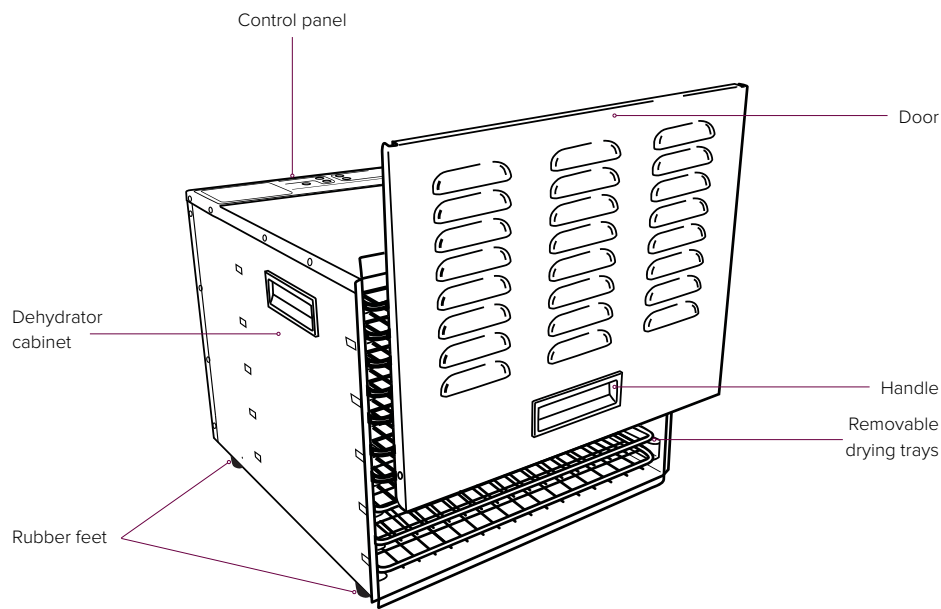
# SAFETY FIRST



**READ THIS USER MANUAL CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU USE THE APPLIANCE AND KEEP THE MANUAL FOR FUTURE REFERENCE. WHEN USING THE APPLIANCE, BASIC SAFETY PRECAUTIONS SHOULD BE FOLLOWED AT ALL TIMES, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:**

1. CHECK FOR DAMAGED PARTS. Before using the appliance, check that all parts are operating properly and perform their intended functions. Check for any conditions that may affect the appliance's operation. DO NOT use if the power cord is damaged or frayed.
2. To avoid starting the appliance unintentionally, ensure the power switch is in the "OFF" position before connecting the appliance to the power outlet.
3. ALWAYS DISCONNECT the appliance from the power outlet before servicing, changing accessories, disassembling or cleaning the appliance. Unplug the appliance when not in use.
4. KEEP CHILDREN AWAY. NEVER LEAVE THE APPLIANCE UNATTENDED. Always monitor the appliance while in use.
5. The Manufacturer is relieved of any responsibility in case of improper use of the appliance. Improper use of the appliance will void warranty.
6. Electrical repair must be conducted by the authorised Service Centre. Use only original factory parts and accessories. Modification of the appliance voids warranty. NEVER open the rear panel of the appliance. NEVER remove the back screen from the appliance.
7. DO NOT pull the power cord to unplug the appliance. You are strongly advised to NOT use extension cords with the appliance. If an extension cord is used, ensure the marked electrical rating is at least as great as the electrical rating of this appliance.
8. Ensure the appliance is stable during use. All four rubber feet of the appliance are placed securely on a level surface. The appliance should not move when in use.
9. DO NOT use the appliance outdoors or near any flammable or combustible material. The appliance is for INDOOR USE ONLY. NOT FOR COMMERCIAL USE.
10. USE IN A WELL VENTILATED LOCATION.
11. DO NOT block air vents on the door or at the rear of the appliance. Keep the appliance at least 12" (30.5 cm) away from any wall to allow for proper air circulation.
12. DO NOT operate the appliance on flammable surfaces, such as carpeting, etc.
13. To prevent electric shock, DO NOT IMMERSE THE APPLIANCE AND CONTROL PANEL IN WATER OR OTHER LIQUIDS. This could result in serious injury from electric shock. DO NOT use appliance with wet hands or bare feet. DO NOT operate the appliance near running water.
14. Disconnect the appliance from the power outlet before cleaning components. READ ALL INSTRUCTIONS before cleaning the appliance.
15. After cleaning, ensure the appliance is completely dry before reconnecting to the power outlet to prevent ELECTRIC SHOCK.
16. DO NOT place or use the appliance or any parts on or near hot gas, electric burner, in a heated oven, or on a stove top. DO NOT let the power cord hang over the edge of a table, counter or touch any hot surfaces.
17. BEWARE! Surfaces on the appliance may become HOT during use! Serious burns and injury may result! Use handles or knobs only.
18. Do not use the appliance for other than its intended use.
19. If the appliance malfunctions during use, shut down the appliance IMMEDIATELY and discontinue use. DO NOT attempt to open the Control Panel. This product has no user-serviceable parts. Always contact the authorised Service Centre if the appliance malfunctions or for servicing. DO NOT use or replace with any unauthorised parts not intended for this unit. All parts for this appliance must be used according to this Instruction Manual. ONLY use manufacturer approved parts from the authorised Service Center. Any other parts or accessories not intended for use with this appliance is strictly prohibited and will void warranty.
20. The use of accessory attachments not recommended by the Manufacturer is forbidden and may cause injuries.

# GETTING TO KNOW YOUR DEHYDRATOR



## INCLUSIONS

### Tray insert

5 x Small hole trays, ideal when drying smaller ingredients.

5 x Large hole trays, ideal when drying larger ingredients.

2 x Mesh inserts, reusable and ideal for placing on top or underneath ingredients being dried.

# USING YOUR DEHYDRATOR

**For your safety and the best results, read all operating instructions before using the appliance.**

1. Operate the appliance on a clean, dry surface.
2. Plug the appliance into a standard 230V, 50Hz power outlet.
3. Position the appliance at least 12" (30.5cm) from any wall during operation to allow for proper air circulation. **DO NOT** block air vents at the rear or on the door of the appliance.
4. Remove Racks from the appliance. Load removable food trays with food to be dried. Position pieces so they do not overlap or touch each other. Allow ample space between pieces of food for proper air circulation. Remove any excess water from food by patting it with a paper towel. Excess moisture may cause the temperature of the appliance to drop.
5. Press the 'up' or 'down' button under the Temperature Setting of the Control Panel to adjust the temperature to your desired setting. It is recommended to place an oven thermometer (not included) into the appliance to monitor the temperature.
6. Press the 'up' or 'down' button under the Timer of the Control Panel to adjust the time to your desired setting of up to 15 hours.
7. Press 'Power' to start drying process.
8. Preheat the appliance for 5-10 minutes before loading the trays into the appliance.
9. Install the Door onto the Dehydrator Cabinet by attaching the door onto the lip on top of the Cabinet and sliding the door downwards. Ensure the sides of the Door are attached securely against the Cabinet. **CAUTION: SHARP EDGES.**
10. Water droplets may form on the surface of the food while dehydrating. Excess humidity can be removed by blotting food with a paper towel. **CAUTION: the appliance can become hot!**

**NOTE:** Drying time may vary depending on several factors, including relative humidity, air temperature, product thickness and fat content. Actual temperature in the appliance is based on room temperature of 70°F (21°C). If the appliance is not used in room temperature setting of 70°F (21°C), temperature indicated on Temperature Setting may not be achieved or may be exceeded.

## Control panel



# INGREDIENT PREPARATION

## TOOLS YOU NEED TO GET STARTED

- Paring knife (Stainless Steel Blade)
- Cutting board
- Storage containers

## ADDITIONAL TOOLS TO SPEED UP THE PROCESS:

- A food processor or other similar appliance for faster and consistent slicing
- A steamer and basket, or kettle and collapsible steamer for blanching
- Blender for making fruit puree for fruit leather
- A small notebook to keep track of the length of time and recipes which work and do not work for you.

## BASIC FOOD PREPARATION TIPS

- Fruit and vegetable peels often contain most of the food's nutritional value. Therefore, it is better not to peel if the dried food is to be eaten as snack or used in cookies. On the other hand, you will want to peel apples intended for a pie or tomatoes intended for soup. Generally, if you usually peel the food for a specific recipe, then peel the food before it is to be dehydrated.
- One of the most important factors in successful dehydration is how the food is sliced. When drying fruits, it helps to ensure all the slices have the same thickness so they dry evenly. Also, keep in mind that thick slices dry more slowly than thin slices.
- During dehydration, moisture escapes best from a cut or broken surface absent of the skin. Therefore, the larger the cut area, the faster and better the food will dehydrate.
- For example, thin stalked vegetables, such as green beans, asparagus and rhubarb should be cut lengthwise, or with an extreme diagonal cut to expose as much of its flesh as possible.
- Fruits should be sliced across the core and not down through the core. Try to always make thin, flat cuts.
- Broccoli stems should be halved or quartered depending on its diameter. Small fruits, such as strawberries, can be halved. Even smaller berries should either be halved or blanched slightly to break the skin.

## FILLING THE DRYING TRAYS

- When loading food on the trays, you can make use of all of the tray's surface, while allowing some airflow to be maintained. Place food in a single layer whenever possible to ensure uniform dehydration.
- Dehydration removes moisture and will cause food to shrink as it dries. This allows you to store the same amount of food in a smaller space. Chopped food should not be spread thicker than 1cm.
- It may be necessary to stir the finely chopped food once or twice during dehydration to ensure even drying of all the pieces. To do so, turn the machine off, unplug it, remove the trays, stir, then reassemble and restart the machine according to the instructions on page 5.

## PREVENTING DRIPPING

- Some foods such as very ripe tomatoes and citrus or sugared fruits may drip juices. Dripping can change the flavour of different foods on lower trays. To lessen dripping, tap the tray firmly downward on a towel laid on the counter top repeatedly for a few times to remove excess moisture before inserting the tray into the appliance.

# FOOD STORAGE AND REHYDRATION

## FOOD STORAGE

Dried foods should be allowed to cool before being sealed in an airtight container. This will prevent the formation of condensation and ensure your produce has the longest possible shelf life.

When properly used, vacuum-sealed bags provide ideal storage. The lesser the air present, the less conducive it is for bacteria and micro-organisms. Stored foods should be checked monthly for bacteria, insects and mould. If any mould is detected, it is best to dispose of the produce and revisit your dehydration process. Use a clean, dry container in the future to prevent facing the same problem.

## REHYDRATION

Rehydration is the replacement of moisture to bring the food back to its natural state. Although some dried foods, such as fruits, are excellent in their dehydrated state, you will often want to reconstitute other dried foods before eating them. Here are some tips on rehydration:

### Adding Water

- For chopped or shredded vegetables, and for fruits to be used in cookies, no rehydration is usually needed. If the pieces are quite crisp and dry, you can try sprinkling with 1 tbs. water per cup of dried food.
- For vegetables and fruits to be used in souffles, pies, quick breads, doughs or batter, use 2 parts water to 3 parts (by volume) dried food.
- For vegetables and fruits which will be cooked in a liquid such as vegetable side dishes, fruit toppings and compotes, use 1 to 1½ parts water to 1 part dried food. Extra liquid may be required during cooking.

### Duration

- Chopped and shredded foods reconstitute quickly. Generally, 15 to 30 minutes is sufficient.
- Larger vegetables, fruit slices or meat cubes can be reconstituted overnight in water, left in the refrigerator. Alternately, you can also chose to place the food in boiling water, remove from stove, and let it stand for 2 to 3 hours.
- Whole pieces of fruit take the longest to reconstitute, and are best left to soak overnight.

### Other Tips

- If you drain reconstituted foods, save the liquid. This liquid has great nutritional value. Freeze this liquid for later use in soups, leathers, pies or compotes.
- There is no need to reconstitute ahead of time when making soups. Dried vegetables can be added directly to the soup about one hour before serving.
- Do not add spices, salt, bouillon cubes or tomato products until vegetables are reconstituted and cooked. These items hinder rehydration considerably.
- Some foods take longer to reconstitute than others. Carrots and beans require more time than green peas or potatoes. A rule of thumb: Food which take the longest to dehydrate will take the longest to reconstitute.
- Try not to use more liquid than necessary for rehydrating as nutrients will be drained away with the excess water. Place dehydrated food in a container and use just enough water to cover the food. Add more water later as needed to replace what the food absorbs.

# FOOD DRYING GUIDE

## VEGETABLES : SET TEMPERATURE TO 52°C (125°F)

| FOOD                           | PREPARATION   | CONSISTENCY | TIME       |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------|------------|
| <b>Artichokes</b>              | Cut into 1/3" strips. Boil about 10 minutes.              | Brittle     | 6-14 hours |
| <b>Asparagus</b>               | Cut into 1" pieces. Tips yield better result.             | Brittle     | 6-14 hours |
| <b>Beans</b>                   | Cut and steam blanch until translucent.                   | Brittle     | 8-26 hours |
| <b>Beets</b>                   | Blanch, cool, remove tops and roots. Slice.               | Brittle     | 8-26 hours |
| <b>Brussel Sprouts</b>         | Cut sprouts from stalk. Halve, lengthwise.                | Crispy      | 8-30 hours |
| <b>Broccoli</b>                | Trim and cut. Steam until tender, about 3 - 5 minutes.    | Brittle     | 6-20 hours |
| <b>Cabbages</b>                | Trim and cut into 1/8" strips. Cut core into 1/4" strips. | Leathery    | 6-14 hours |
| <b>Carrots</b>                 | Steam until tender. Shred or cut into slices.             | Leathery    | 6-12 hours |
| <b>Cauliflower</b>             | Steam blanch until tender. Trim and cut.                  | Leathery    | 6-16 hours |
| <b>Celery</b>                  | Cut stalks into 1/4" slices.                              | Brittle     | 6-14 hours |
| <b>Chives</b>                  | Chop.   | Brittle     | 6-10 hours |
| <b>Cucumbers</b>               | Pare and cut into 1/2" slices.                            | Leathery    | 6-18 hours |
| <b>Eggplant/<br/>Squash</b>    | Trim and slice into 1/4" – 1/2" slices.                   | Brittle     | 6-18 hours |
| <b>Garlic</b>                  | Remove skin from clove and slice.                         | Brittle     | 6-16 hours |
| <b>Hot Peppers</b>             | Dry whole.  | Leathery    | 6-14 hours |
| <b>Mushrooms</b>               | Slice, chop or dry whole.                                 | Leathery    | 6-14 hours |
| <b>Onions</b>                  | Slice thinly or chop.                                     | Brittle     | 8-14 hours |
| <b>Peas</b>                    | Shell and blanch for 3 - 5 minutes.                       | Brittle     | 8-14 hours |
| <b>Peppers</b>                 | Cut into 1/4" strips or rings. Remove seeds.              | Brittle     | 4-14 hours |
| <b>Potatoes</b>                | Slice, dice or cut. Steam blanch for 8 - 10 minutes.      | Brittle     | 6-18 hours |
| <b>Rhubarb</b>                 | Remove outer skin and cut into 1/8" lengths.              | No moisture | 6-38 hours |
| <b>Spinach, Kale,<br/>etc.</b> | Steam blanch until wilted, but not soggy.                 | Brittle     | 6-16 hours |
| <b>Tomatoes</b>                | Remove skin. Cut in halves or slices.                     | Leathery    | 8-24 hours |
| <b>Zucchini</b>                | Slice into 1/4" slices.                                   | Brittle     | 6-18 hours |

## FRUITS : SET TEMPERATURE TO 57°C (135°F)

| FOOD                | PREPARATION   | CONSISTENCY | TIME        |
|---------------------|---|-------------|-------------|
| <b>Apples</b>       | Pare, core and cut into slices or rings.                          | Pliable     | 5-6 hours   |
| <b>Apricots</b>     | Clean, cut in halves or in slices.                                | Pliable     | 12-38 hours |
| <b>Bananas</b>      | Peel and cut into 1/8" slices.                                    | Crisp       | 8-38 hours  |
| <b>Berries</b>      | Cut strawberries into 3/8" slices.<br>Other berries, leave whole. | Pliable     | 8-26 hours  |
| <b>Cherries</b>     | Pitting is optional, or pit when 50% dry.                         | Leathery    | 8-34 hours  |
| <b>Cranberries</b>  | Chop or leave whole.  | Pliable     | 6-26 hours  |
| <b>Dates</b>        | Pit and slice.  | Leathery    | 6-26 hours  |
| <b>Figs</b>         | Slice.  | Leathery    | 6-26 hours  |
| <b>Grapes</b>       | Leave whole.  | Pliable     | 8-38 hours  |
| <b>Nectarines</b>   | Cut in half, dry with skin side down.<br>Pit when 50% dry.        | Pliable     | 8-26 hours  |
| <b>Orange Peels</b> | Peel in long strips.  | Brittle     | 8-16 hours  |
| <b>Peaches</b>      | Pit when 50% dry. Halve or quarter with cut side up.              | Pliable     | 10-34 hours |
| <b>Pears</b>        | Peel and slice.   | Pliable     | 8-30 hours  |

## MEATS : SET TEMPERATURE TO 63-68°C (145-155°F)

| FOOD                | PREPARATION  | CONSISTENCY                     | TIME       |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Beef Jerkies</b> | Lean flank or round steak slices about 1" to 1 1/2" thick. | Slightly chewy, but not brittle | 6-15 hours |

# CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

## CLEANING

After each use, clean the drying trays and dehydrator door with warm soapy water. Do not wash trays, door or base in dishwasher. Stubborn particles may be removed by soaking and/or using a plastic scrubber. Do not use abrasive materials or solvents to clean stainless steel! To clean the dehydrator's base (the bottom part with the motor and heating element), unplug and wipe clean with a damp sponge or cloth. NEVER immerse the base in water or allow liquid to flow into the area containing the electrical parts.

## STORAGE

After the appliance is cleaned, dry all parts, stack drying trays on the base, and store in a clean and dry place.

# SPECIFICATIONS

|                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Product</b>        | Food Dehydrator   |
| <b>Model</b>          | P300              |
| <b>Power</b>          | 1000 WATTS        |
| <b>Voltage</b>        | 220-240V          |
| <b>Product weight</b> | 15 kg             |
| <b>Dimensions</b>     | 435 x 515 x 355mm |



**Only for EU countries.** Do not dispose of electric appliances together with household waste material! In observance of European Directive 2002/96/EC on waste electrical and electronic equipment and its implantation in accordance with national law, electric appliances that have reached the end of their life must be collected separately and returned to an environmentally compatible recycling facility.



This warranty as outlined below solely covers distributors of the Optimum range of appliances. Please contact your distributor for full product warranty.

## Effective as of 1st January 2014

1. Optimum® warrants this appliance to be free from defects in materials and workmanship and to perform satisfactorily in household use for a period of 2 years and in commercial use for a period of 12 months from the date of purchase when used in accordance with the accompanying instruction book.
2. Any warranties exceeding this standard period are offered as extended terms by the selling distributor and claimable only through that provider.
3. Defects that occur within this manufacturer's warranty period, under normal use and care will be repaired or replaced at our discretion only if the selling distributor is unable to do so. This is done solely at our option with no charge for parts. This warranty does not extend to accessories included or purchased separately. Replacements can be offered for major faults as determined by your distributor and at their own discretion.
4. In the event that the goods requiring repair are under warranty, and this distributor is unable to provide the repairs, the customer is responsible for the cost of the return of the product to Optimum® (or their approved service provider) and also the cost of return to the customer.
5. Whilst in transit, the goods are at the owner's risk and any further damage during this transportation is not covered under warranty.
6. Customers should ensure that the product being returned is properly packaged so as to ensure that no damage occurs to the product during transit. To be able to process the warranty claim, ensure you have included an explanation of any problem; Optimum® will not fault-find and will only repair described faults as covered under warranty.
7. This full warranty is void if this appliance has been subjected to abuse, negligence, accident, alteration, failure to follow operating instructions, or the product has been exposed to abnormal or extreme conditions.
8. Cosmetic changes that do not affect performance, such as discolouration of parts of the product in the hands of the user or the effects of the use of abrasive cleaners will not be warranted or considered defects. The cleaning or removal of food products along with any damage caused by allowing them to build up is not covered by this full warranty.
9. This warranty does not cover normal wear and tear of the product or parts.
10. This warranty does not cover any defect caused by an accident, misuse, abuse, improper installation or operation, lack of reasonable care, unauthorised modification, loss of parts, tampering or attempted repair by a person not authorised by Optimum®.
11. The warranty will not apply if damage, malfunction or failure resulting from alterations, accident, misuse, abuse, fire, liquid spillage, maladjustment of customer controls, use on an incorrect voltage, power surges and dips, thunderstorm activity, acts of God, voltage supply problems, tampering or unauthorised repairs by any persons, use of defective or incompatible accessories, exposure to abnormally corrosive conditions or entry by any insect, vermin or foreign object in the product.
12. Warranty does not cover damage done to any product by using the machine with an alternate power source (solar, inverter, generator, etc.) and the use of these devices to power your appliance is not recommended.
13. You must keep your purchase docket/receipt as proof of purchase and as proof of the date on which the purchase was made. The purchase docket or receipt must be presented when making a claim under this warranty.
14. In the event the receipt of purchase is not presented, then this warranty is invalid. Consumer Law allows us to request reasonable proof of purchase to service a warranty claim.
15. This warranty does not imply, intend to or detract any consumer rights listed in and able to be enforced from Regulated Consumer Law, any condition which is found to be in breach of the consumer law, the single condition shall be void only and all other conditions remain in place.

Please contact the distributor located in the Country where you made your original purchase for all Support, Servicing and Warranty.



