

Reading Comprehension

Dried Food

Centuries ago, man discovered that removing moisture from food helps to preserve it, and that the easiest way to do this is to expose the food to sun and wind. In this way the North American Indians produce pemmican (dried meat ground into powder and made into cakes), the Scandinavians make stockfish and the Arabs dried dates and 'apricot leather'.

All foods contain water - cabbage and other leaf vegetables contain as much as 93% water, potatoes and other root vegetables 80%, lean meat 75% and fish anything from 80% to 60% depending on how fatty it is. If this water is removed, the activity of the bacteria which cause food to go bad is checked.

Fruit is sun-dried in Asia Minor, Greece, Spain and other Mediterranean countries, and also in California, South Africa and Australia. The methods used vary, but in general, the fruit is spread out on trays in drying yards in the hot sun. In order to prevent darkening, pears, peaches and apricots are exposed to the fumes of burning sulphur before drying. Plums, for making prunes, and certain varieties of grapes for making raisins and currants, are dipped in an alkaline solution in order to crack the skins of the fruit slightly and remove their wax coating, so increasing the rate of drying.

Nowadays most foods are dried mechanically. The conventional method of such dehydration is to put food in chambers through which hot air is blown at temperatures of about 110°C at entry to about 43 °c at exit. This is the usual method for drying such things as vegetables, minced meat, and fish.

Liquids such as milk; coffee, tea, soups and eggs may be dried by pouring them over a heated horizontal steel cylinder or by spraying them into a chamber through which a current of hot air passes. In the first case, the dried material is scraped off the roller as a thin film which is then broken up into small, though still relatively coarse flakes. In the second process it falls to the bottom of the chamber as a fine powder. Where recognizable pieces of meat and vegetables are required, as in soup, the ingredients are dried separately and then mixed.

Dried foods take up less room and weigh less than the same food packed in cans or frozen, and they do not need to be stored in special conditions. For these reasons they are invaluable to climbers, explorers and soldiers in battle, who have little storage space. They are also popular with housewives because it takes so little time to cook them. Usually it is just a case of replacing the dried-out moisture with boiling water.

Questions:

1. The open-air method of drying food

- A. is the one most commonly used today.
- B. was invented by the American Indians.
- C. has been known for hundreds of years.
- D. tends to be unhygienic.

2. The water content

- A. does not vary from food to food.
- B. is greater in green vegetables than in lean meat.
- C. is greater in fish than in vegetables.
- D. has never been accurately calculated.

3. Bacteria which cause food to go bad

- A. cannot live in sunlight.
- B. are killed by drying.
- C. are in no way dependent on the water content.
- D. have their activity greatly reduced by drying.

4. Fruit is sun dried

- A. always by the same method.
- B. generally on trays.
- C. in every country in the world.
- D. by spreading it out under glass panels.

5. Sulphur fumes are used before drying some fruits

- A. to dry them more quickly.
- B. to preserve their color.
- C. to prevent the skin from cracking.
- D. to kill off bacteria.

6. Nowadays vegetables are most commonly dried

- A. on horizontal cylinders.
- B. in hot-air chambers.
- C. in the sun and wind.
- D. using the open tray method.

7. Powdered coffee is made

- A. by spraying the liquid over a cylinder.
- B. in one of two different ways.
- C. in the same way as minced meat.
- D. by passing through a grinding machine.

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8. If soup requires recognizable pieces of meat, they are

- A. treated separately.
- B. allowed to fall to the bottom of the drying chamber.
- C. mixed in later as a fine powder.
- D. sold separately in sealed plastic bags.

9. Dried foods

- A. are often packed in cans or frozen.
- B. are used by soldiers and climbers.
- C. need more storage space than soldiers usually have available.
- D. are much cheaper than canned or frozen products.

10. Housewives like dried foods because they

- A. are quick to prepare.
- B. taste better.
- C. can be preserved by boiling in water.
- D. look fresh and appetizing when cooked.

11. expose to (line 2)

- A. leave out in
- B. protect from
- C. open out
- D. demonstrate to

12. stockfish (line 5)

- A. **dried** fish
- B. salted fish
- C. cooked fish
- D. stored fish

13. apricot leather (line 5)

- A. dried dates
- B. dried apricots
- C. dried leather
- D. cloth made from **dried** fruit skins

14. checked (line 10)

- A. looked over
- B. supervised
- C. stopped
- D. verified

15. prunes (line 16)

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- A. dried plums
- B. dried sulphur
- C. types of grape
- D. fruit cuttings

16. conventional (line 20)

- A. most common
- B. old-fashioned
- C. hygienic
- D. obsolete

17. dehydration (line 21)

- A. heating
- B. airing
- C. mechanization
- D. drying

18. relatively (line 29)

- A. in the same way
- B. fairly
- C. similarly
- D. extremely

19. invaluable (line 35)

- A. worthless
- B. inexpensive
- C. very useful
- D. free of charge

20. case (line 37)

- A. box
- B. matter
- C. cooking container v
- D. Example

21. Para. (lines 1-5)

- A. Drying fruit.
- B. Different methods of preserving things.
- C. Preserving **food** by drying.

22. Para. 2 (lines 6-10)

- A. The relationship between water content and food decay.
- B. The relative water content of different types of food.
- C. The water content of vegetables.

23. Para. 3 (lines 11-19)

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- A. The use of sulphur in preserving food.
- B. The sun-drying method of preserving fruit.
- C. The relative geographical distribution of food preservation techniques.

24. Para. 4 and 5 (lines 20-32)

- A. Heat drying of liquids and minced meat.
- B. Hot-air chamber drying of food.
- C. The three principal methods of mechanical food drying.

25. Para. 6 (lines 33-38)

- A. The general convenience of dried foods.
- B. Why housewives like dried foods.
- C. The advantages of canned, frozen and dried foods

Key Answers

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
C	B	D	B	B	B	B	A	B	A	A	A	B	C	A	A	D	B	C	B	C	A	B	C	A

With best regards,



Mr. Talal N. Slaiman

M.A – Methods of Teaching English
 PEDAGOGUE & RESEARCHER

E-mail: talns2005@yahoo.com

Website: www.freewebs.com/prof-english

Address: West Bank / Palestine