



## UCCE Master Food Preservers of El Dorado County

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*"Preserve today, Relish tomorrow"*

*Alas, the watermelon season is far too short. But if you're a fan of this tasty summer fruit, there's an easy way to preserve it, and that's by dehydrating it. Sure, the drying process means that you'll lose all of that juicy goodness, but that same process will deeply intensify the flavor of the melon.*

*Watermelon jerky makes a great snack for kids and adults alike. You can also make a savory or spicy jerky by seasoning the watermelon before drying it. A little sprinkling of coarse sea salt is delicious. Lime juice and chili powder – judiciously applied – pair wonderfully with watermelon. Orange juice and finely chopped almonds or pistachios would be really good too (and perhaps a bit more kid-friendly).*

*The jerky can also be snipped into small, thin pieces to top sorbet and ice cream, or yogurt or oatmeal or granola. Watermelon pairs well with feta and goat cheeses, so a few slices of jerky added to a cheese board would be lovely, and a wonderful way to bask in the memory of summer.*

*Be prepared when making watermelon jerky: The high water content of the melon means that it takes a long time to dehydrate. Loooooonngg. Expect 18-24 hours for it to fully dry.*

## Watermelon Jerky

Rinse melon under cool running water, then scrub with a firm vegetable brush.

Cut the melon, remove the rinds, and slice into wedges or strips about ¼" thick.

Season if you like. Try coarse sea salt, chili powder, a sprinkle of lime juice – whatever appeals to you. But go sparingly! A little goes a long way.

Place melon on dehydrator trays and dry at 135°F for 18-24 hours.

The watermelon jerky is done when it feels dry and leathery, but is still a bit flexible. There should be no signs of moisture.

Store the jerky in an airtight container. For long-term storage, or if you've purposely under-dried the jerky for a softer texture, store in the refrigerator or freezer.



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