In yoga class we go within. As we continue on this path of inward journey we begin to appreciate with awe, the workings of this magical instrument we call our human body. This appreciation gives us the desire to understand and care for it right down to the cellular level.

As we appreciate this cellular level within we find ourselves on a quest to fuel our cells in the best way possible. We become more attuned to the needs and response of our body.

As we inform ourselves of the needs of the body, one of the things we learn is it's need for living foods and the enzymes they contain. When we consume enzyme rich food, our bodies vibrate with more health and vigor. This particular requirement addresses the thrust of this article which is the use of the dehydrator in preserving enzymes in food.

Why do we need enzymes?

Enzymes are the labor force of the body. They assist in breaking down food so that it can pass though the intestinal wall. Into the bloodstream and on to the cells. Unfortunately, through the use of antibiotics , processed food etc., we have lost much of the friendly flora and digestive enzymes that is naturally found in our bodies and that is necessary to process our food.

What causes initial lack of enzymes? As mentioned before the practice of eating cooked (anything over 110 degrees) and processed food has destroyed enzymes and thus our labor force, we then have to rely on our reserves. But over time these are exhausted as well. Resulting in less nutrition going to our cells. And as the saying goes "an army marches on its stomach". We begin to lose the war,and our body becomes diseased.

Why do we dehydrate food?

Cooking in temperatures higher than 115 degrees fahrenheit destroys the enzymes in food, and some vitamins and minerals as well. And so we use a dehydrator to conserve these elements.

Many Snack foods that are bought in stores, even health food stores are lacking in these living enzymes vitamins and minerals as they have been heated in most cases. Some even contain bactericidal agents to preserve freshness, and this acts to diminish our friendly GI bacteria, the natural biome of our bodies.

Fresh organic food is superior to dehydration of foods. But with our busy lifestyles we need to have the convenience of foods that are dehydrated, that we can use for work and travel.

How to dehydrate:

Blend all ingredients to the consistency of pancake batter. Spread blended ingredients not too thin or thick on teflon trays. Make sure to not overcrowd. Set dehydrator at 110 and dehydrate for 12 hours. Take out trays remove Teflon liners, and transfer crackers to mesh tray. This allows air to dry all sides of the cracker. Dehydrate another 6 hours or till crackers are dry and crispy.

It is important to drink plenty of water if one eats dehydrated foods as the natural water is removed through dehydration.

All natural and unpreserved food have a natural shelf life. Fully dehydrated food has the longest shelf life of all. Air, moisture and warmth determine how long your dehydrated food will last.

Moisture: the more moisture in your food the faster that unfriendly bacteria will be able to grow within and eat your food. As they eat your food they eat up all the nutrients and enzymes, overtime we will just be left with their waste products. Thoroughly dehydrate and keep moisture out. You can use silica packs. Refrigeration helps.

Air: oxygen in air will oxidase olds vitamins and enzymes Airtight containers can help slow this process Vacuum packing is best.

Warmth: all of the chemical or biological processes that will spoil dehydrated food can be slowed down with refrigeration. The colder you store the food the longer it will last. Even freezing cannot eliminate oxidation in the long term situation this constitutes "freezer burn".

As a general rule. Dehydrated food that has been vacuum packed will last 20 times longer.

If the food has been thoroughly dehydrated it will last at least one week in an airtight container, and one month in an air tight container in the fridge.

Recipes

flax crackers

1/2 c soaked flax
3/4 c soaked raisins to cover
1/2 c pumpkin seeds
1 cup soaked sunflower seeds

Be sure to soak for at least one hour and rinse to remove enzyme inhibitor that is naturally found in nuts and seeds.
Add water, coconut water / rejuvelac to create consistency of pancake batter.

Spread ingredients not too thin or thick. Turn over crackers after 12 hours and remove sheets and just use mesh so it dries on both sides. Dehydrate another 5 hours or until crackers are crisp. Dehydrate at setting of 105.

Vegan cheesy kale chips

Ingredients:

1 large bunch of kale

1 cup cashews, (soaked 2 hours)
1 red bell pepper, seeded and chopped
3-4 tablespoons fresh squeezed lemon juice
1 Tablespoon agave
2 Tablespoons nutritional yeast
1/4 teaspoon onion powder
1/4 tsp turmeric powder
1/2 teaspoon Himalayan sea salt

Preparation:
Rinse the kale and spin dry. Remove the stems and tear into bite size pieces. Let the kale air out as much as possible before coating. Blend the ingredients for the cheesy seasoning in the Vita-Mix until smooth. Transfer kale and seasoning to a large bowl and mix well using your hands to ensure the leaves are well coated. Place the kale on the dehydrator trays. Dehydrate at 118 degrees overnight or until coating is dry. Slide onto mesh screens and dehydrate until totally crispy. Note that not all nutritional yeast is vegan, so READ the label! Bragg's is vegan.

TIP for keeping Kale Chips Crunchy.
Take a small fabric bag, sachets for jewelry or aromatics work well, and fill it with uncooked rice. Place the it in an airtight glass container with a lid and seal up the kale chips. The rice soaks up any extra moisture in the container, keeping your kale chips crunchy for days!