

**Process optimization for dehydrated Brinjal (*Solanum melongena*) to improve sensory and keeping quality.**

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Processing conditions were established to produce a ready-to-use product from Brinjal (*Solanum melongena*) by cabinet air-drying. Changes in moisture, colour, rehydration ratio during dehydration were determined. The acceptability of the product was tested by using a sensory evaluation panel and a Five Point Hedonic Scale. A suitable packaging material for storage of the product was selected based on the moisture content, colour and rehydration ratio of the product.

Immersing the wedge shape pieces, 3 mm thickness and 5 cm long, in 0.15% SMS and 0.5% Citric Acid solution for 45 minutes and hot water blanching at 60 °C for 3 minutes was successful as a pre treatment to improve the physical properties of the dehydrated product. Drying at 55°C for 10 hours was sufficient to reduce the moisture content from 78% to 8% and to obtain a shelf stable product with good physicochemical properties.

Dehydrated product packed in pouches made out of Low Density Poly Ethylene (0.04 mm thickness) could be stored at 29±2° C and 78±2% RH for 6 months without significant changes in the moisture content, product colour and rehydration ratio.

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