

BLANCHING & FREEZING FRUITS & VEGGIES

PRESERVING BY FREEZING

- Frozen food is safe to eat well beyond the recommended 12 months, but quality will deteriorate.
- Freezing slows growth of microorganisms, enzyme activity and oxidation. It kills some, not all.
- Freezing causes little nutrition loss (small amounts of water soluble vitamins (Vit C & B)).
- Freezing affects texture of food; the more liquid in a food, the softer it becomes when thawed.
- Best quality and greatest nutrients are retained when food is fresh, frozen quickly, stored at 0°F (-18°C) and used by 6 – 12 months.
- Proper packaging extends the quality and storage time of frozen food.

FREEZING FRUIT

- Most fruit does not require blanching before freezing.
- Fruit can be safely frozen without sugar. It is often added to maintain color and texture. Fruit can also be frozen using unsweetened fruit juice instead of a sugar solution.
- After washing, dry fruit well before freezing to keep ice crystals from forming.
- Frozen fruit is best used when it has not been thawed completely, unless specified in the recipe. Thaw fruit only to the point where fruit pieces will separate.

Three options for freezing fruit:

1. **Dry Pack** – Freeze without any added sugar. Best for whole, small fruit or berries which will be cooked or baked (applesauce, jam, muffins, crisps).
2. **Dry Sugar Pack** – Freeze with sugar. Helps retain texture and shape of the fruit. Ideal for soft, sliced fruits like apricots, strawberries, plums and cherries or any fruit destined to become pie.
3. **Syrup Pack** – Freeze with a liquid sugar solution. Best method for retaining shape and texture. Ideal for uncooked desserts like fruit cocktail.

Freezer Tips

Freezer Temperature
0° F (-18° C)

Storage Rule
First In, First Out

In power failure
**Keep Freezer
Closed**
Food will last for
48 hours

For best efficiency
Keep Freezer Full

FREEZING VEGETABLES

- Most vegetables must be blanched before freezing to preserve colour, retain vitamins and reduce enzyme activity.
- Freeze veggies without seasoning.
- Follow recommended blanching times as shown on Blanching Guide.

BLANCHING & FREEZING

FRUITS & VEGGIES

FREEZER BURN & ICE CRYSTALS

- A food quality, not food safety issue.
- Occurs when moisture moves from food and refreezes on the inside of the package, leaving food with dry patches and a package full of ice crystals.
- Dry, grayish-brown spots on food are known as freezer burn and typically are accompanied by ice crystals in the frozen food package.
- Caused by excess moisture, exposure to air and/or frequent temperature fluctuations.

Prevention Tips

- Use freezer grade containers/packaging that are the correct size.
- Remove as much air as possible from packaging when freezing and after each use.
- Remove as much moisture from food as possible before freezing.
- Close freezers quickly when using.
- Ensure freezer is at correct temperature 0°F (-18°C).
- Freeze food in small quantities to promote quicker freezing because the faster food freezes the smaller the ice crystals. Smaller packages thaw quicker as well.

**AIR
&
MOISTURE**

The biggest enemies of frozen food. Do what you can to prevent these two elements from reaching food for best quality, long lasting food.

FREEZER CONTAINERS

- Use freezer grade containers that are moisture-vapor resistant, durable and easy to seal.
- Use correct size of containers to avoid having extra air trapped with the food.
- Freeze in small portions.
- Provide sufficient headspace to allow for expansion.
- Options include:
 - Rigid containers – plastic, tempered glass, aluminum
 - Flexible containers – freezer bags, freezer wrap, freezer paper or foil
 - Ice cube trays – for small servings
- Label packages – food, date, quantity and any other info

REFREEZING THAWED FOOD

“If food is thawed in the refrigerator, it is safe to refreeze without cooking, although there will usually be a noticeable loss of quality due to the moisture lost through defrosting.” Ntl Ctr for Home Food Preservation

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What To Freeze

The following foods freeze quite well. A great way to preserve, reduce food waste, extend shelf life, save money and have homemade convenience foods on hand.

Leftovers	Fruits & vegetables (blanched)	Freezer salsa
Whole grain flour, bran & germ	Cookie dough, pancake, waffle or muffin batter	Herbs (Parsley, Basil, Mint, Chives, Dill, Tarragon, Sorrel, Lemon/Lime Balm, Lovage)
Cooked whole grains & legumes	Leftover waffles & pancakes	Onions, peppers, ginger, garlic cloves
Bread crumbs	Whipped cream dollops	Leftover citrus
Freezer jam	Un-iced cakes	Leftover wine
Nuts & seeds	Herb butter	Casseroles
Bread, pizza, pie dough	Grated cheese	Meat loaf and meat balls
Baked goods	Hummus	Soups, stews and chili
Bread	Empanadas, samosas, calzones	Marinated meat

What Not To Freeze

It's safe to freeze the following foods, but texture and appearance become very poor.

Watermelon	Block of cheese	Mayonnaise or salad dressing
Cucumber	Soft cheese	Icing made from egg whites
Lettuce	Yogurt	Crumb toppings
Radishes	Sour cream	Gelatin/Jello
Bean sprouts	Meringue	Gravy with flour/cornstarch
Potatoes – raw or cooked	Eggs, cooked or in shell	Fried foods