

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 prevent ice crystals.
- 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.

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.

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

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

BLANCHING VEGGIES

~PUTTING GOOD FOOD ON TABLES AND AGENDAS~

Getty's Blanching Guide

For best flavor, color & texture blanch vegetables according to times recommended by the National Center of Home Food Preservation, particularly if storing beyond 3 months. Count when water returns to boil.

VEGETABLE	MINUTES TO BLANCH	VEGETABLE	MINUTES TO BLANCH
ASPARAGUS	2-4 (small-large)	OKRA	3-4 (small-large)
BEANS Snap, Green or Wax Lima, Butter or Pinto	3 2-4 (small-large)	ONIONS Whole (blanch until center is heated) Diced or sliced*	3-7 no blanching
BEETS	Cook fully	PEAS-EDIBLE POD	1 ½ -3 (thin-thick)
BROCCOLI	3	PEAS-GREEN	1 ½
BRUSSEL SPROUTS	3-5 (small-large)	PEPPERS (diced)*	2
CABBAGE (shredded)	1 ½	PUMPKIN	Cook fully
CARROTS Small, whole Diced, sliced Shredded	5 3 2	RUTABAGAS	3
CAULIFLOWER	3	SOYBEANS-GREEN	5
CELERY	3	SQUASH-SUMMER	3
CORN Corn-on-the-cob For Whole Kernel or Cream Style	7-11 (small-large) 4	SQUASH-WINTER Diced* Pureed	no blanching Cook fully
EGGPLANT	4	SWEET POTATOES	Cook fully
GREENS Collards Others (kale, spinach, Swiss chard)	3 2	TOMATOES Whole* To peel	No blanching 30 seconds
KOHLRABI (diced)	1	TURNIPS/PARSNIPS (diced)	2
MUSHROOMS*	4 (sauté)	ZUCCHINI (shredded)*	2

* Veggies commonly frozen without blanching.

Helpful Hints...

- Use fresh, high quality produce.
- Remove air to reduce freezer burn.
- Remove moisture to reduce ice crystals.
- Cool food before freezing.
- Leave enough headspace for expansion.
- Freeze food quickly for best quality.
- Keep freezer at 0°F or -18°C.
- Keep freezer full to run efficiently.
- Practice First In, First Out.
- Use within 6-12 months.

How to Blanch & Freeze Veggies

- Wash** drain, sort and cut veggies as desired.
- Bring** large pot full of water (1qt water per 1 cup veggies) to boil.
- Add** veggies and bring to boil. Boil for recommended time.
- Shock** veggies in ice water bath to stop cooking process.
- Drain** and dry well.
- Lay** on tray to freeze separately. Place in freezer for 1 hour.
- Add** to freezer container, remove air and leave proper headspace.
- Label** containers and freeze.