

Eating W.E.L.L.™

FREEZER AND FRIDGE CLEAN OUT AND RESTOCK

It's important to **optimize the quality, freshness, and shelf life of the food that goes into our refrigerators and freezers.**

Being aware of the right storage information for different types of foods will increase your confidence when it comes to stocking your refrigerator and freezer.

Keep It Clean

Wipe up any spills immediately. Once a week, wipe down the interior walls, shelves, and rubber gaskets with a weak cleaning solution to sanitize.

Questioning Your Condiments?

Most open jars stay fresh for about two months on the door of the refrigerator.

If You are in Doubt, Throw it Out

You can't always tell if food has spoiled by the way it looks or smells. If you have any doubt that a food item is spoiled, don't risk tasting it.

Some mold is visible on the surface of foods, but there could be poisons under the surface that are not visible.



Prevent Food-Borne Illness

Foods kept too long or at unsuitable temperatures can become dangerous to eat.

- Ensure your **refrigerator is set at 40 degrees or less** and your **freezer is at 0 degrees or less**. The most accurate way to check the temperature is by putting a thermometer inside each. It is advised to not put the thermometer on the door.
- Store items quickly after purchasing at the grocery store. Check the labels to determine the best way to store your food.

Keep an Inventory

Take an inventory and keep a list of what you have in your freezer. Use your inventory list to help with weekly meal planning.

FOOD STORAGE TIPS



Wrap foods tightly with freezer wrap or shrink wrap before storing in the freezer.



Store eggs in their cartons. Eggs should not be kept on the refrigerator door.



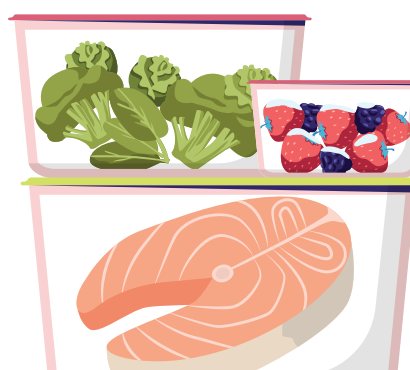
In order to extend the life of your fresh produce, **wait to wash it until you are ready to use it.** Fresh produce can be stored in perforated plastic bags, and should be used within a few days.

Bananas should not be stored in the refrigerator.



Don't overfill the refrigerator and freezer so that air is able to circulate.

If the air cannot circulate, it will be difficult to maintain proper temperatures.



Store leftovers in tightly covered containers **within two hours after cooking.**

Discard after 3-5 days.

BEST USED BY: 12/30/2021
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Check use-by or sell-by dates on packages.



Keep raw meat on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator.

Keep the meat in a plastic bag to keep the juices from dripping onto other foods.

STOCK UP!

FREEZER:

Meat and seafood

(chicken, pork, beef, shrimp, fish)

Frozen fruits

Frozen vegetables

REFRIGERATOR:

Raw meats and poultry

Fruits and vegetables

If you have two crisper drawers, it's best to set one at high humidity and one at low humidity. Low humidity is for produce that ripens quickly (apples, pears, avocados) and the high humidity is for produce that wilts easily (leafy greens and fresh herbs)



Breads, doughs, tortillas

(breads freeze well and can be bought in duplicate - room permitting)

Nuts and seeds

(nuts and seeds can become rancid, so freeze those you don't use as often)

Eggs

Dairy

(cow's milk, cottage cheese, hard and soft cheeses, and yogurt)

Condiments and sauces

FREEZE FOR LATER

Have too much of something you can't use all at once, found a great deal of in-season produce, or getting prepared for an event?

There can be a benefit to freezing your own foods.

Fruits

Be sure to wash and cut the fruit, and place on a baking sheet in a single layer. This allows the pieces to freeze solid on their own instead of stuck together in a group.

Now you can transfer the frozen pieces into a freezer container or bag and store up to 3 months.

This makes it easy to use for smoothies, oatmeal, or baking.

Vegetables

If you are freezing your own vegetables, you must blanch the vegetables before freezing them. Blanching is briefly boiling and then immediately plunging the vegetable into ice water. Blanching gets rid of bacteria and stops enzyme actions in the vegetables that can affect how the vegetable tastes. Visit the National Center for Home Preservation at nchfp.uga.edu for more information on the process of blanching.

Grains

Most grains can be frozen in their uncooked state - even flour. The freezer life of uncooked grains is about six months.

Freezing portions of cooked rice, quinoa, or oatmeal can be a time saver as well. Store cooked rice or quinoa in freezer bags. Freeze individual portions of oatmeal in muffin pans and then keep the frozen oatmeal pucks in a freezer bag to be microwaved for breakfast.

Garlic

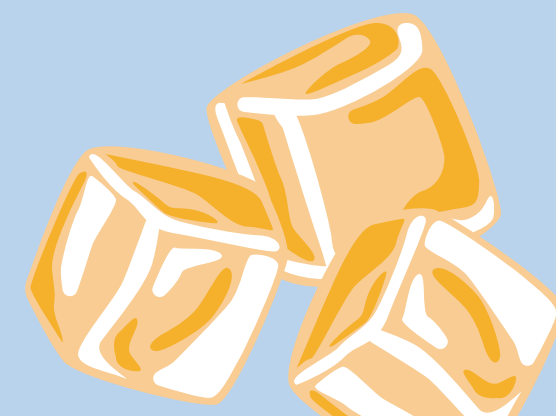
Garlic can be frozen in almost any form - from whole bulbs to unpeeled or peeled cloves.

Herbs

Wash, separate, and freeze individual stalk and leaves using the same method of freezing fruit. Move the frozen leaves to a freezer bag and use it in the same way you would use fresh herbs in recipes such as stews, soups, and pastas.

Broth

Always be sure to cool homemade broth to room temperature before putting it in the freezer. Freeze the portion you usually need for your favorite recipes. Leave at least 1 inch at the top for expansion. Frozen broth will last up to 6 months.



HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

Food that has been frozen so long that ice crystals form is safe to eat, and the nutritional quality remains the same, but the quality and the taste will not be ideal.

To prevent freezer burn, make sure the food is tightly wrapped, and get as much air out from between the food and the wrap.

Use the chart below for guidelines on how long you can safely keep food in the refrigerator or freezer.

FOOD STORAGE TIPS

Use the chart for guidelines on how long you can safely keep food in the refrigerator or freezer.

PRODUCT	IN REFRIGERATOR 40 ° F (5 ° C)	IN FREEZER 0 ° F (-18 ° C)
FRESH MEAT:		
Beef:		
Ground	1-2 days	3-4 months
Steaks and Roast	3-5 days	6-12 months
Pork:		
Chops	3-5 days	4-6 months
Ground	1-2 days	3-4 months
Roasts	3-5 days	4-6 months
CURED MEATS:		
Lunch Meat:	3-5 days	1-2 months
Sausage	1-2 days	1-2 months
Hot Dog	2 weeks, unopened 1 week, opened	
PREPARED SALADS (EGG, TUNA, ETC.)	3-5 days	Don't freeze
GRAVY	1-2 days	2-3 months
SOUPS OR STEWS	3-4 days	2-3 months
FISH:		
Lean (such as cod, flounder, haddock)	1-2 days	up to 6 months
Fatty (such as blue perch, salmon)	1-2 days	2-3 months
CHICKEN		
Whole	1-2 days	12 months
Parts	1-2 days	9 months
Giblets	1-2 days	3-4 months
DAIRY PRODUCTS:		
Swiss, brick, processed cheese	3-4 weeks	*
Soft cheese	1 week	6 months
Milk	5 days	1 month
Ice cream, ice milk	-	2-4 months
Butter	1-3 months	6-9 months
Buttermilk	7-14 days	3 months
Cream cheese	2 weeks	-
Cream	3-5 days	4 months
Sour cream	7-21 days	-
Yogurt	7-10 days	-
EGGS:		
Fresh in the shell	3 weeks	-
Hard-boiled	1 week	-
PASTEURIZED LIQUID	3 days (opened) 10 days (unopened)	1 year
MAYONNAISE	2 months	don't freeze
TV DINNERS	-	3-4 months
STORE-BOUGHT CONVENIENCE MEALS	1-2 days	-
COOKED MEAT LEFTOVERS	3-4 days	2-3 months
PIZZA	3-4 days	1-2 months
STUFFING, COOKED	3-4 days	1 month
DOUGH - TUBE CAN, COOKIES	use-by date	2 months (don't freeze tube cans)

*Cheese can be frozen, but freezing will affect the texture and taste.

SOURCES: Food Marketing Institute for fish and dairy products, USDA for all other foods