

Freezing Fruits and Vegetables

Sometimes the hardest part of eating enough fruits and vegetables is keeping them from spoiling before you can eat them. A great way to always have fruits and vegetables around is to freeze them. Here are some facts about freezing:

- Keep frozen foods at 0° F (-18° C).
- Freezing produce temporarily stops the process that makes food spoil. Bacteria that cause foods to spoil cannot live easily in frozen produce. This means that frozen foods last longer than foods stored in the refrigerator or on the counter.
- Freezing helps keep the vitamins in fruits and vegetables.
- Freezing does not change the color or texture (except in some fragile berries) as much as canning does.



How to Freeze Vegetables

1. Clean the vegetable and cut off any stems or leaves that may be on it.
2. Blanch the vegetable, if desired. See back of sheet to learn how to blanch.
3. Place in an air-tight container such as a freezer-safe plastic container with a tightly fitting lid or a plastic freezer bag.
4. Put in freezer.
5. Vegetables can be kept in the freezer for up to 12 months.

How to Freeze Fruits

1. Clean the fruit and cut off any stems or leaves that may be on it.
2. Cut up larger fruit (apples, pears, pineapple).
3. Place in an air-tight container such as a freezer-safe plastic container with a tightly fitting lid or a plastic freezer bag .
4. If putting into bags, make sure to lay fruit on a flat surface. This is important so that fragile fruits like raspberries or strawberries do not crush each other.
5. Add a small amount of sugar if desired. Adding sugar to the fruit before freezing helps preserve texture when thawed, but is not necessary.
6. Put in freezer.
7. Fruits can be kept in the freezer for up to 12 months.



Blanching Basics

Blanching is done before freezing vegetables. Fruits are not usually blanched because it makes them mushy. Blanching helps stop the loss of vitamins during storage and also helps keep the vegetables' color that can be lost when frozen. Here is how to blanch:

1. Bring a pot of water to a boil. Make sure there is enough water in the pot so the vegetables can be completely covered.
2. Put the vegetables in boiling water for 1–2 minutes. Remove quickly.
3. Place in ice water for one to two minutes.
4. Drain and remove any extra water.
5. Pack vegetables in an air-tight container.
6. Freeze right away.



Thoughtful Thawing

Here are some things to know about thawing fruits and vegetables:

- Frozen vegetables can go right into boiling water to cook. No thawing is needed for frozen vegetables used in hot dishes or casseroles.
- Allow fruits to thaw in the refrigerator.
- Some berries (such as frozen strawberries and raspberries) get very mushy when thawed all the way. Eating them when half thawed is a good way to avoid the mushy texture.

One way to use frozen fruit:

Berry Delicious Smoothie



Ingredients:

- 2 cups frozen mixed berries
- 1 cup strawberry flavored yogurt
- 1 banana, sliced
- 1 cup milk

Directions:

1. Combine mixed berries, strawberry yogurt, banana and milk in a blender. Cover and blend until smooth.
2. Pour into glasses and serve.