

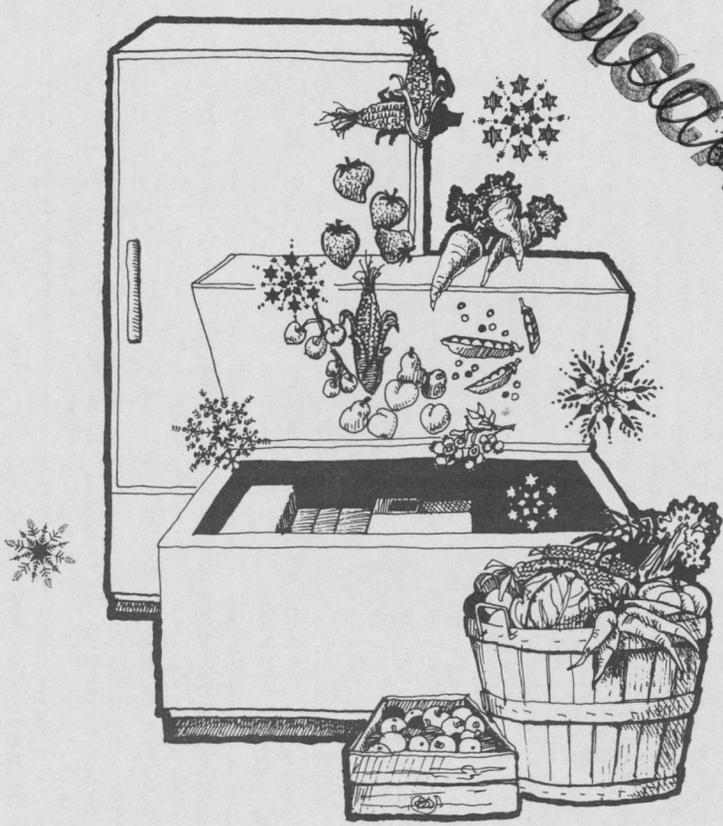
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Home Freezing of Fruits and Vegetables

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Home Freezing of Fruits and Vegetables

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Freezing Fruits

Selecting Fruit

- Select fully ripe fruit, but not soft or mushy.
- Tree or vine ripened fruit has best flavor, color, and food value.

General Preparation Methods (see inside pages for specific directions)

- Sort fruits carefully, discarding parts that are green, bruised, or poor quality. Carefully wash in cold water. Do not let fruit soak in water. Drain well.
- Prepare fruit as you use it—stemmed, pitted, sliced, halved, etc.

Methods of Freezing

Sirup Pack

The sirup may be prepared from either cane or beet sugar and water. If desired, up to one-third of the sugar may be replaced by corn sirup or honey. What strength sirup to use on any fruit depends on individual preference and the maturity and variety of fruit. Allow approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of sirup for each pint of fruit; $1\frac{1}{3}$ cups of sirup for each quart of fruit. Chill sirup well before using.

Strength	Water	Sugar	Yield	Approximate coverage
Light	4	2	5 cups	7 pints
Medium	4	3	5½ cups	8 pints
Heavy	4	4	6¼ cups	9 pints

Dry Sugar Pack

The amount of sugar to add is governed by each family's preference. Common practice is to use either 4 pounds of fruit to 1 pound of sugar (4:1) or 3 pounds of fruit to 1 pound of sugar (3:1). Sugar and fruit should be gently but thoroughly mixed together until the sugar has dissolved in the juice. Then package.

Dry Pack

Some fruits such as berries, cherries, and grapes freeze well dry. Washed fruit can be placed on a cookie sheet in the freezer to freeze before packing into containers. This will prevent fruit from sticking together. This is an ideal method for finger snacks and frozen topping for salads or desserts. Serve fruit frozen.

You can freeze any fruit without sugar. The texture and flavor will vary with the product frozen. As a filler, juice from the fruit itself or extracted juice like orange or berry juice can be used.

Ascorbic Acid

When freezing light-colored fruits that tend to darken, such as peaches, apples, apricots, etc., add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ascorbic acid in powder or crystal form for each 4 cups of water used in making the sirup. For dry sugar pack, dissolve ascorbic acid in a little water and sprinkle over fruit before adding sugar. When using commercial anti-darkening preparations, follow manufacturer's directions.

Packing Fruit in Containers

- Select a durable container that is easy to fill, moisture-vapor proof, and economical for storage space.
- Fill container to within $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of top. To keep fruit from darkening and drying out, crumple a piece of wax paper and place between fruit and lid.
- Label containers with name of fruit, type of pack, and date.
- For types of containers and additional packing instructions, see Containers for Freezing.

Storing Frozen Fruit

- Place prepared fruit immediately in freezer. If necessary to hold before freezing, keep food in refrigerator.
- Store in freezer at 0° F. or lower.

Serving Frozen Fruit

Thaw fruit at room temperature or in the refrigerator in its original packing to preserve quality and nutritive value. Serve as soon as defrosted, preferably while a few ice crystals remain.

Freezing Vegetables

Selecting Vegetables

- Select vegetables at their peak in flavor and texture: the kind you would choose for immediate table use.
- When possible, harvest vegetables in the cool of the morning or early evening.
- Process as quickly as possible to retain top quality. If processing is delayed, cool vegetables in ice water and store in refrigerator to preserve flavor and quality and to prevent vitamin loss.

General Preparation Methods (see inside pages for specific directions)

- Wash and sort carefully in cold running water. Prepare as for table use.
- Blanch vegetables before freezing to inactivate enzymes which would otherwise cause undesirable flavor, texture, and vitamin losses during storage.

Blanching Vegetables in Boiling Water

- Allow 1 gallon water for each pound of vegetables except for leafy greens which need 2 gallons per pound.
- Bring water to rolling boil.
- Immerse wire basket or loose cheesecloth bag containing vegetables.
- Cover kettle and boil at top heat the required length of time (see inside table). Begin counting time as soon as you place the vegetables in water.

Freezing Fruits

Apples	Peel and cut into pie slices. To prevent darkening, submerge slices in sodium bisulfite (USP grade) solution (1 teaspoon in 1 gallon water) for 5 minutes. Mix solution in glass, earthenware, stainless steel, or enamel container. Drain. Pack in sugar using 10-12 cups apples to 1 cup sugar. OR: Soak apple slices in brine solution (½ cup salt to 1 gallon water) for 15 minutes. Drain. Pack in light sirup to which ascorbic acid has been added.
Applesauce	Cook apples and prepare sauce. Put through a food mill if desired. Sweeten to taste, cool, and pack into containers.
Apricots Nectarines	Dip fully-ripened apricots into boiling water until skins loosen, about 15 to 20 seconds. Chill, peel, halve, and remove pits. Pack in medium sirup to which ascorbic acid has been added. OR: Halve soft ripe fruit, steam 4 minutes, crush, and pack with 1 cup sugar to 8-9 cups fruit. OR: Freeze apricots whole without steaming or peeling. Apricots are better canned than frozen.
Avocados	Avocados may be frozen in puree form. Halve avocados, remove peel, sprinkle with 2 tablespoons lime or lemon juice for each avocado. Mash or blend until smooth, pack into containers and freeze. Use pureed avocados in molded salads, sandwich fillings, dips, etc. Whole or sliced avocados do not freeze well.
Blackberries Boysenberries Loganberries	Pack in medium sirup. OR: Crush and pack in sugar using 1 cup sugar to 7-8 cups fruit. For pies, pack berries dry without sugar. (Also dewberries, youngberries, and nectarberries.)
Blueberries Huckleberries	For desserts, pack in medium sirup. OR: Pack in sugar using 1 cup sugar to 8-9 cups fruit. For pies, pack berries dry without sugar or sugar sirup.
Pie cherries	For pies, use 1½ to 2 cups sugar to 4 cups cherries for 9-inch pie. To improve color, add ¼ teaspoon ascorbic acid.
Sweet cherries	Pack fruits in light sirup to which ascorbic acid has been added.
Citrus fruit mixes	Sprinkle sugar over each layer of citrus fruit, sweetening to taste. Let stand in refrigerator until fruit forms its own juice. If you wish to keep the mix 3-4 months, add ¼ teaspoon ascorbic acid to the sugar used for each 2 pints fruit.
Cranberries	Wash and pack without sugar.
Currants, fresh	Pack in sugar using 1 cup sugar to 8-9 cups fruit. For cooking, pack dry without sugar.
Figs	Use tree ripe fruit making certain centers are not soured. Sort, wash and cut off stems. Peel if desired. Slice or leave whole. Pack in light sirup to which ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid per quart has been added. OR: Freeze dry. OR: Freeze in water to which ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid per quart has been added. For crushed figs, mix 1 quart crushed fruit with ⅔ cup sugar and ¼ teaspoon ascorbic acid.
Fruit juices (grape, berry, and cherry)	Use only mature fruit. Sort and wash. Place in preserving kettle with small amount of water. Simmer 10 minutes. Do not boil. Drain in jelly bag. Add sugar—approximately 1 cup to 3-5 cups juice as desired. Pack in liquid-tight containers, ¾ full.
Fruits for mixes	Pack fruits in light to medium sirup to which ascorbic acid has been added. Use Maraschino cherries and pomegranate seeds sparingly.
Gooseberries	Pack without sugar or sirup or mix berries and sugar called for in pie recipe.
Ground cherries	Husk, then scald cherries for 2 minutes. Pack in medium sirup.
Muskmelons Cantaloupes	Cut flesh into ½- to ¾-inch cubes or balls. Cover with light sirup. You can add whole seedless grapes. Serve partially frozen.
Peaches	Dip peaches into boiling water until skins loosen. Chill, peel, halve, and remove pits. Pack in medium sirup to which ascorbic acid has been added. OR: Freeze nonbrowning varieties with dry sugar using ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid and 4 cups sugar with 8 pounds fruit (about 4 quarts). OR: Freeze in orange juice instead of sirup.
Pineapple	Peel and core. Dice, slice, or cut into wedges. Cover with medium sirup. OR: Pack in dry sugar, 1 cup sugar to 8-9 cups fruit. Do not use uncooked pineapple in gelatin molds.
Prunes, fresh	Sort, wash, halve, and pit. Pack and cover with medium sirup. Ascorbic acid is optional.
Raspberries	Pack raspberries in medium sirup. OR: Pack in dry sugar, 1 cup sugar to 7-8 cups fruit. Pack purple raspberries for jam without sweetening.
Rhubarb	Wash, trim, cut into ½-inch pieces. Drain, pack, and cover with heavy sirup. May be packed dry with nothing added for use in pies, preserves, or sauces. Prepared sauce may also be frozen.
Strawberries	Pack whole, sliced (preferred), or crushed berries in 1 cup sugar to 7-8 cups fruit. OR: Pack whole berries in medium sirup.
Tomatoes	Tomatoes do not freeze satisfactorily raw. They turn mushy. If freezing is necessary, cook first or freeze as stewed tomatoes.
Tomato juice	Wash and cut tomatoes. Place in a kettle and simmer until soft. Do not add water. When softened pour them through a food mill. All 1 teaspoon salt for each quart of juice. Cool juice before freezing.

Freeze and Store at 0° F. or lower.

Freezing Vegetables

Asparagus	Wash and sort medium and large stalks. Leave whole or cut in 1- to 2-inch lengths. Blanch medium stalks 3 minutes, large stalks (½- to ¾-inch diameter) 4 minutes. Cool.
Beans, green, waxed, snap	Wash, snip off tips, and sort for size. Cut or break into suitable pieces or freeze small beans whole. Blanch 3½ minutes. Cool.
Beans, lima	Wash, shell, and sort. Blanch small and medium beans, 3 minutes; large beans, 4 minutes. Cool.
Beets	Select small- or medium-sized beets. Remove tops and wash. Cook until tender. Chill. Remove skins. Slice or dice large beets.
Broccoli	Discard off-color heads or any that have begun to blossom. Remove tough leaves and woody butt ends. Cut stalks to fit container. Cut through stalks lengthwise, leaving heads 1 inch in diameter. Soak ½ hour in salt brine (½ cup salt to 1 quart water) to drive out small insects. Rinse and drain. Blanch 4 minutes in water or steam-blanch 5 minutes. Cool. Pack heads and stalk ends alternately in container.
Brussels sprouts	Wash and trim. Soak ½ hour in salt brine (see broccoli). Rinse and drain. Blanch medium heads 4 minutes; large heads, 5 minutes. Cool.
Carrots	Use tender carrots harvested in cool weather. Top, wash, and scrape. Dice or slice ¼-inch thick. Blanch 3½ minutes. Cool.
Cauliflower	Trim and wash. Split heads into individual pieces 1 inch in diameter. Soak ½ hour in salt brine (see broccoli). Rinse and drain. Blanch 4 minutes. Cool.
Corn, cut or on-the-cob	Use ears with milky, sweet juice. Husk, silk, and wash. Whole-kernel or cream-style: Blanch 4 to 5 minutes. Cool thoroughly—at least 1 to 2 times as long as blanch. Drain, cut off cob, pack, and freeze immediately. Corn-on-the-cob: Blanch 8 to 10 minutes. Cool thoroughly, drain, and package. Wrap each ear separately or tightly pack desired number in large freezer bags or containers.
Eggplant	Precooked eggplant is usually more satisfactory for freezing than blanched eggplant. Peel, cut into ¼- to ½-inch slices or dice. To retain light color, drop pieces immediately into cold water containing 4 tablespoons salt per gallon. Blanch 4½ minutes in the same proportion salted water. Cool and package in layers separated by sheets of locker paper.
Garden herbs	Wrap sprigs or leaves in foil or seal in film bags and store in a carton or glass jar. Wash, but do not scald leaves.
Mushrooms	Wash and remove stem base. Freeze small mushrooms whole; cut large ones into four or more pieces. When blanching mushrooms, add 1 teaspoon citric acid (or 3 teaspoons lemon juice or ½ teaspoon ascorbic acid) per quart of water to prevent darkening. Blanch medium or small whole mushrooms 4 minutes; cut pieces, 3 minutes. Cool. OR: Slice mushrooms ¼-inch thick. Saute in butter, 2 minutes. Cool.
Onions, chopped for soups and casseroles	Peel onions, wash, and cut into quarter sections. Chop. Blanch 1½ minutes. Cool. (They will keep 3-6 months.)
Peas	Shell small amount at a time. Blanch 1½ to 2 minutes. Blanch black-eyed peas 2 minutes. Cool.
Peas (edible-pod, sugar, or Chinese)	Wash. Remove stems, blossom ends, and any string. Leave whole. Blanch 1½ minutes. Cool.
Peppers, green	Wash, cut out stem, and remove seeds. Halve, slice, or dice. Blanch halved peppers, 3 minutes; sliced or diced ones, 2 minutes. Cool. You can freeze chopped peppers without blanching them.
Peppers, pimiento	Oven roast at 400° F. for 3 to 4 minutes. Cool, skin, and pack dry without additional heating.
Pumpkin Winter squash	Cut or break into fairly uniform pieces. Remove seeds. Bake at 350° F. or steam until tender. Cool, scoop pulp from rind, and mash or put through ricer. You can prepare pie mix for freezing but omit cloves. You can blend two or more varieties of squash or blend squash with pumpkin.
Potatoes	Wash, peel, remove deep eyes, bruises, and green surface coloring. Cut in ¼- to ½-inch cubes. Blanch 5 minutes. Cool. For hash browns: Cook in jackets until almost done. Peel and grate. Form in desirable shapes. Freeze. For french fries: Peel and cut in thin strips. Fry in deep fat until very light golden brown. Drain and cool. Preparation for serving: Place frozen fries on cookie sheet. Heat to serving temperature in oven at 400° F. 10-20 minutes, stirring frequently.
Potatoes, sweet	Use medium to large mature potatoes that have been cured. Wash and cook until almost tender in water, pressure cooker or oven. Peel, cut in halves, slice or mash. To prevent whole sweet potatoes or slices from darkening, dip for 5 seconds in a solution containing ½ cup lemon juice to 1 quart of water. To keep mashed sweet potatoes from darkening, mix 2 tablespoons orange or lemon juice with each quart of mashed potatoes. Package and freeze immediately.
Spinach and other greens	Sort and remove tough stems. Wash. Blanch most leafy greens 2 minutes. Blanch collards and stem portions of Swiss chard 3 to 4 minutes. Blanch very tender spinach 1½ minutes. Cool.
Squash, summer	Wash, peel, and cut in pieces. Blanch ¼-inch slices, 3 minutes; 1½-inch slices, 6 minutes. Cool.
Squash, zucchini	Follow instructions for summer squash. Grated zucchini for breads can be grated and frozen without blanching. Spices will cover up color and flavor changes.

Freeze and Store at 0° F. or lower.

- Cool immediately in cold running water or ice water for same amount of time used for blanching.
- Drain and pack in durable, moisture-vapor proof containers.
- For more information on suitable containers and additional packing instructions, see Containers for Freezing.

Steam Blanching Vegetables

- Put 1 inch of water in kettle, bring to a rolling boil.
- Suspend a thin layer of vegetables in a wire basket or loose cheesecloth over rapidly boiling water.
- Cover and process vegetables required amount of time (see inside table).
- Cool immediately in cold running water or ice water the same length of time used for blanching.
- Drain and pack in durable, moisture-vapor proof containers.
- For more information on suitable containers and additional packing instructions, see Containers for Freezing.

Storing Frozen Vegetables

- Store in freezer at 0° F. or lower.
- If vegetables are to be taken to a locker plant, store in refrigerator. Not more than 2 hours should elapse between preparation-packaging and freezing.

Cooking Frozen Vegetables

All vegetables may be cooked from the frozen state except corn-on-the-cob, which should be partially defrosted. Cook frozen vegetables in a small amount of salted water (about ½ cup or less). Cook only until tender—about half as long as if the same vegetable were fresh. You can use a pressure saucepan for cooking frozen vegetables. Follow manufacturer's directions for cooking time. A vegetable should be thawed enough to break up before pressure cooking.

Containers for Freezing

A good container for frozen foods should be: (1) moisture-vapor proof, (2) strong and durable, (3) sturdy enough to maintain a liquid-tight seal, (4) easy to handle and fill, (5) easy to seal, (6) easy to label, and (7) occupy little storage space. Some common types are:

- Film bags—with twist and tie tops.
- Rigid cartons—waxed or plastic-lined.
- Glass jars—wide-mouthed types most convenient.
- Metal cans—enamel-lined.
- Polyester film boil-in-the-bag containers—good protective qualities.

Before closing freezer bags, push or squeeze out as much air as possible. Containers with snap-on lids should be checked after product is frozen to be sure lid has not come loose. Remember, no container will protect frozen foods properly unless it is tightly sealed to prevent air from entering or moisture from escaping. Allow space for air to circulate around containers in the freezer while the product is freezing.