Home Freezing of Fruits and Vegetables

Authors:

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Home Freezing of Fruits and Vegetables
Nellie J. Oehler, Extension nutritionist
Oregon State University

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.

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{Strength} & \text{Water} & \text{Sugar} & \text{Yield} & \text{Approximate coverage} \\
\hline
\text{Light} & 4 & 2 & 5 cups & 7 pints \\
\text{Medium} & 4 & 3 & 5\frac{1}{4} cups & 8 pints \\
\text{Heavy} & 4 & 4 & 6\frac{1}{4} cups & 9 pints \\
\hline
\end{array}
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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 served fruit. Serve 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 packaging 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 cold running 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 syrup 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
Dip fully-ripened apricots into boiling water until skins loosen, about 15 to 20 seconds. Chill, peel, halve, and remove pits. Pack in medium syrup 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
Pack in medium syrup. 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
For desserts, pack in medium syrup. OR: Pack in sugar using 1 cup sugar to 8-9 cups fruit. For pies, pack berries dry without sugar or sugar syrup.

Boysenberries
Pack fruits in light syrup to which ascorbic acid has been added.

Cranberries
Pack in medium syrup. OR: Crush and pack in sugar using 1 cup sugar to 7-8 cups fruit. For pies, pack berries dry without sugar or sugar syrup.

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 syrup 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 ¼ cup sugar and ¼ teaspoon ascorbic acid.

Cantaloupes
Cut flesh into ½- to ¾-inch cubes or balls. Cover with light syrup. You can also add whole seedless grapes. Serve partially frozen.

Gooseberries
Pack without sugar or sirup or mix berries and sugar called for in pie recipe.

Green cherries
Husk, then scald cherries for 2 minutes. Pack in medium syrup.

Peaches
Dip peaches into boiling water until skins loosen. Chill, peel, halve, and remove pits. Pack in medium syrup 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 syrup.

Pineapple
Peel and core. Dice, slice, or cut into wedges. Cover with medium syrup. 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 syrup. Ascorbic acid is optional.

Pomegranate seeds
Sparely.

Pomegranates
Pack fruits in light syrup to which ascorbic acid has been added. Use Maraschino cherries and pomegranate seeds sparingly.

Pomelo
Cut flesh into ½ to 1-inch cubes or balls. Cover with light syrup. You can also add whole seedless oranges. Serve partially frozen.

Rhubarb
Wash, trim, cut into ½-inch pieces. Drain, pack, and cover with heavy syrup. May be packed dry with nothing added for use in pies, preserves, or sauces. Prepared sauce may also be frozen.

Raspberries
Pack raspberries in medium syrup. OR: Pack in dry sugar, 1 cup sugar to 7-8 cups fruit. Pack purple raspberries for jam without sweetening.

Strawberries
Pack whole, sliced (preferred), or crushed berries in 1 cup sugar to 7-8 cups fruit. OR: Pack whole berries in medium syrup.

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. Add 1 teaspoon salt for each quart of juice. Cool juice before freezing.

Freeze and Store at 0° F. or lower.
## Freezing Vegetables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetable</th>
<th>Preparation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asparagus</td>
<td>Wash and sort medium and large stalks. Leave whole or cut in 1- to 2-inch lengths. Blanch medium stalks 3 minutes, large stalks (1½- to 1¼-inch diameter) 4 minutes. Cool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beans, green, waxed, snap</td>
<td>Wash, snap off tips, and sort for size. Cut or break into suitable pieces or freeze small beans whole. Blanch 3½ minutes. Cool.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beans, lima</td>
<td>Wash, shell, and sort. Blanch small and medium beans, 3 minutes; large beans, 4 minutes. Cool.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beets</td>
<td>Select small- or medium-sized beets. Remove tops and wash. Cook until tender. Chill. Remove skins. Slice or dice large beets.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brussels sprouts</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>Wash and trim. Soak ½ hour in salt brine (see broccoli). Rinse and drain. Blanch medium heads 4 minutes; large heads, 5 minutes. Cool.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cauliflower</td>
<td>Use tender carrots harvested in cool weather. Top, wash, and scrape. Dice or slice ¼-inch thick. Blanch 3½ minutes. Cool.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corn, cut or on-the-cob</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eggplant</td>
<td>Precooked eggplant is usually more satisfactory for freezing than blanched eggplant. Peel, cut into ½- to 1-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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Garden herbs</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mushrooms</td>
<td>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. Sauce in butter, 2 minutes. Cool.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onions, chopped for soups and casseroles</td>
<td>Peel onions, wash, and cut into quarter sections. Chop. Blanch 1½ minutes. Cool. (They will keep 3-6 months.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peas</td>
<td>Shell small amount at a time. Blanch 1½ to 2 minutes. Blanch black-eyed peas 2 minutes. Cool.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peppers, green</td>
<td>Wash, cut 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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peppers, pimiento</td>
<td>Own roast at 400° F. for 3 to 4 minutes. Cool, skin, and pack dry without additional heating.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pumpkin</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potatoes</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spinach and other greens</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Squash, summer</td>
<td>Wash, peel, and cut in pieces. Blanch ¼-inch slices, 3 minutes; ½-inch slices, 6 minutes. Cool.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Squash, zucchini</td>
<td>Follow instructions for summer squash. Grated zucchini for breads can be grated and frozen without blanching. Spices will cover up color and flavor changes.</td>
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</table>

**Freeze and Store at 0° F. or lower.**
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.