

How to Freeze Correctly

Freezing food is a good way to save time and money and using Freezer Mates® reduces waste by eliminating the need for disposable freezer bags. Freezing preserves food for an extended period of time because it prevents the growth of bacteria, yeast and mold—all of which cause food to spoil. However, improper freezing can change the texture, flavor, or even cause spoilage.

To properly freeze food, follow these eight easy tips!



Choose the Right Size

Choose the right container for the amount of food to be frozen. A small amount of food stored in a large container traps a lot of air, which increases the likelihood of freezer burn and deterioration. Poor quality containers cause changes to food texture and flavor when defrosting and can cause food to spoil faster while still frozen. For optimum results, fill the container to the snowflake fill line so as little air as possible is trapped in your container.



Freeze Small Portions

Pack food in small or individual portions so they freeze quickly. This ensures a higher quality product when defrosting. Freezer Mates® containers are available in a variety of sizes to ensure food can be frozen in individual or family-sized portions. Smaller items will also defrost quicker, which helps save time.



Proper Preparation

Most vegetables are best blanched before freezing (see instructions below) because this preserves texture, color, and flavor. Raw vegetables with high water content like lettuce and cabbage don't freeze well because they are vulnerable to damage from ice crystals.

Meat should be trimmed and flash frozen (see instructions below) before bulk freezing to avoid items sticking together. Pancakes, waffles, French toast, or English muffins should also be flash frozen before bulk freezing. Meals like casseroles may need stock/broth or other vegetables and herbs added after they are defrosted to add moisture and flavor.

How to Blanch

1. Fill a Chef Series™ 6 Qt./5.8L Dutch Oven with water and bring to a rapid boil over high heat.
2. While the water heats, fill a 12-cup Wonderlier® Bowl about three-quarters full with ice, then add enough cold water to come just to the top of the ice.
3. When the water is boiling and the ice bath is ready, trim the vegetables to the size you need. It's best to trim them just prior to cooking so they won't discolor or dehydrate.
4. Add the vegetables to the boiling water in small batches to ensure that the water continues to boil.
5. Boil the vegetables until they're barely cooked through but still tender (see chart below). To test, remove one piece with a slotted spoon, dip it into the ice bath to cool for several seconds and then eat it.

| <u>Vegetable</u> | <u>Blanching Time</u> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Asparagus | 2 minutes |
| Beans, Lima Beans, Summer Squash | 2 minutes |
| Broccoli, cut | 2 minutes |
| Carrots, whole | 5 minutes |
| Cauliflower, cut | 2 minutes |
| Celery | 2 minutes |
| Corn on the Cob | 4 minutes |
| Green Beans, whole | 2 minutes |
| Green Peas, shelled | 1 ½ minutes |

6. As soon as the vegetables are ready, remove them from the boiling water and submerge them in the ice bath for the same amount of time they spent in the boiling water.
7. Remove the vegetables from the ice bath as soon as they are no longer warm and place them in Freezer Mates[®] containers.

How to Flash Freeze

1. Lay individual pieces (1 layer, spaced apart) onto a cookie sheet, lined with freezer or wax paper.
2. Place in freezer.
3. Once frozen, place into larger bulk container.



Freezing Liquid

Liquids expand when frozen, so leave some space in the container. We recommend you leave up to 2 inches for every 4-cups/1 liter of liquid. When using a Freezer Mates[®] container, just fill to the snowflake fill line etched on the side of the container. This will allow sufficient room for expansion.



Plan Ahead

Consider how food will be cooked or reheated once defrosted. When reheating or defrosting, simply place the defrosted food in a Vent 'N Serve[™] Container nearly the size of the Freezer Mates[®] container so as to fill the container for even reheating. Never defrost meats and seafood at room temperature. Food left at room temperature has a higher risk for developing bacteria and causing food-borne illness.

Place frozen items in the refrigerator for several hours or overnight, or under cold running water until completely thawed. For faster results, use the defrost setting on your microwave.



Cool Food Completely before Freezing

All food must be completely cool before being placed in the freezer because warm or hot food can cause the freezer's temperature to fluctuate and possibly rise. This may affect the food already in your freezer and the food you are about to freeze. If the temperature rises above 0°F/-18°C, foods that are already frozen could defrost slightly and then refreeze, which can lead to deterioration and bacteria growth.



Keep It Frozen

Once food is frozen, it should stay frozen until you are ready to use it. This is because fluctuations in temperature can lead to freezer burn, which can affect the quality and flavor of the food.

Colder food freezes faster, and foods that freeze rapidly are not affected by the freezing process. The quicker the food freezes, the more moisture, vitamins, texture, and flavor it retains. Freezer Mates[®] containers are specially designed with thinner walls to allow for faster freezing. Rounded corners and a recessed base allows for even air circulation around the container, for faster and more efficient freezing and thawing.



Cool it Quickly

Food intended for freezing should be cooled quickly and safely in the refrigerator. Do not wait for food such as poultry, seafood, eggs, or meat to come to room temperature as this can cause bacteria to multiply and food to be contaminated, making it not safe for consumption.