



By C. Raab and N. Oehler

Your freezer can help you prepare for busy days ahead, parties, or unexpected company. By planning a steady flow of main dishes, baked goods, desserts, and other foods, you can make good use of your freezer and your time.

Benefits of freezing convenience foods include:

- You prepare food when you have time.
- You use your oven more efficiently by baking more than one dish at a time.
- You avoid waste by freezing leftovers to use as “planned overs.”
- You can prepare special diet foods and baby foods in quantity and freeze them in single portions.
- You save time by doubling or tripling recipes and freezing the extra food.
- If you normally cook for just one or two, you can freeze individual portions of an ordinary recipe for later use.
- You can save money by making convenience foods yourself.

On the other hand:

- Freezing is expensive when you total the cost of packaging, energy use, and the freezer itself.
- You use more energy to cook, freeze, and reheat a dish than you would use to cook it for immediate consumption.
- Prepared foods have a relatively short storage life compared to the storage life of their ingredients (such as frozen fruits, vegetables, and meat).
- Unless you have a microwave, you must allow plenty of time for thawing.
- Some products don't freeze well. Others don't justify the labor and expense of freezing.

Contents

Preparing foods for freezing	2
Freezer storage	2
From the freezer to the table	3
Refreezing frozen foods that have thawed	3
Convenience foods that do not freeze well	4
Baked products and doughs	
Baked quick breads	4
Yeast breads and coffee cakes	5
Cakes	5
Cookies	6
Pastry	6
Pies and crisps	7
Main dishes and meals	8–9
Meal in a bag	9
Eggs	10
Sandwiches	10
Soups	11
Fruit dishes	11
Vegetable dishes	12
Desserts and sweets	13
For more information	14

Preparing foods for freezing

If you aren't sure how well a prepared food freezes, try freezing just a small portion the first time and check to see whether the quality is acceptable. Some foods do not freeze well (see page 4).

Foods to be frozen should be slightly undercooked if you'll reheat them after freezing. Cool them quickly to ensure safety and freshness. To speed cooling, put the pan containing the prepared hot dish (such as a main dish or sauce) in a pan or sink of ice water. Stir every 5–10 minutes. This is especially important when preparing large amounts of food. Keep the water cold by changing the ice as needed. You also could put the food into serving-size freezer containers and refrigerate them until cool. Package and freeze as soon as the food is cool.

Packaging

- Pack foods in amounts you will use at one time.
- Select packaging suited to the thawing and reheating method you'll use. Foods in most packaging can be thawed in the refrigerator (or at room temperature if not perishable). Use freezer- and microwave-oven-safe containers to package foods that will be thawed and/or reheated in a microwave oven.

- Use moisture-vapor-resistant packaging such as plastic containers, freezer bags, heavy-duty aluminum foil, and coated freezer paper to preserve the quality of frozen food. Wide-mouth glass jars designed for canning and freezing also can be used.
- In glass jars, leave 1–2 inches space (headspace) between the food and the lid for expansion. Otherwise, jars will break.
- Convenience foods can be frozen in glass or metal baking pans lined with plastic wrap or foil. When the food has frozen, remove it from the container and wrap it in freezer paper or put it in freezer bags.
- Foods also can be vacuum-packaged in vacuum-seal bags or glass jars. The more oxygen removed from the container, the better the food quality. However, removing oxygen does not prevent bacteria from growing, so it's important to keep perishable vacuum-sealed foods cold when thawing. Note: Vacuum-sealed bags are not designed for cooking thawed foods.
Many vacuum sealers are on the market. Some are more effective at removing oxygen than others. Check consumer guides for best choices. Remember to figure in the cost of the replacement bags when deciding whether to purchase a vacuum sealer for your frozen convenience foods.
- Label each package with the name of the food, the date, and reheating information.

Freezer storage

Freeze prepared foods at 0°F or below. For quickest freezing, place the packages against the cooling surfaces of the freezer. Freeze only the amount of food that will freeze within 24 hours. This is usually 2–3 pounds of food per cubic foot of freezer space.

After the food freezes, rearrange the packages and store frozen foods close together.

It's a good idea to post a list of the frozen foods with freezing dates near the freezer. Check packages off the list as you remove them.

Suggested storage times are in the tables (see pages 4–13). Foods stored longer will be safe to eat if the freezer has worked properly, but they may have poorer quality (texture, color, nutritive value). Using appropriate packaging and storing in a chest freezer will maximize the quality of frozen foods.

From the freezer to the table

There are different ways to prepare frozen foods for the table. (See thawing and reheating recommendations for specific foods.) You can reheat thawed foods in a conventional oven. A microwave can both thaw and reheat. A microwave is convenient and fast, and the food doesn't stick to the container.

Foods that were cooked and frozen should be reheated to 165°F. It's helpful to use a thermometer to ensure that foods reheat properly without overcooking. Use an ovenproof thermometer, or test the temperature of the food after removing it from the oven.

Thawing at room temperature

Nonperishable foods (such as breads, most cakes, and cookies) can be thawed at room temperature. Leave them in their packaging.

Thawing in the refrigerator

Thaw perishable foods (such as main dishes, cooked meat, side dishes, and eggs) in the refrigerator to prevent bacterial growth.

Thawing in the microwave

Most frozen convenience foods are best if thawed before cooking in the microwave. Use a low-power defrost cycle followed by a cycle at higher power to cook and heat the food. Frozen vegetables can be cooked successfully without thawing.

Porous foods such as breads thaw very quickly and completely in the microwave on the defrost setting. Do not overcook. Foods with uneven moisture content or composition require careful attention so that outer surfaces do not overcook while the center of the food is thawing.

Follow the directions for thawing and heating that come with your microwave. A general guideline is that it will take about 6–8 minutes for each pound of food thawed at a defrost setting (30 percent power). The food may need to be rotated or turned over halfway through the defrosting time.

Refreezing frozen foods that have thawed

If foods still contain ice crystals, or if they have been completely thawed less than 2–3 hours, they can be refrozen safely. However, refrozen foods will be

of lower quality than when originally frozen. Bacteria can grow if perishable foods are not kept cold. If thawed foods have been at room temperature more than 2–3 hours, they may not be safe to eat, as explained below.

Frozen, uncooked foods thawed and kept at room temperature longer than 2–3 hours

Fruits, raw; fruit juice concentrates

Safe but might be inedible due to fermentation.

Meat, raw, including hamburger, poultry, variety meats (for example, liver, kidney, heart), fish, and shellfish

Discard if meat, poultry, or fish do not feel cold. Be careful to avoid contaminating other foods and food preparation areas with drippings from raw meat or fish.

Frozen, prepared and cooked foods thawed and kept at room temperature longer than 2–3 hours

Fruit pies

Safe; might be poor quality due to fermentation.

Meats, cooked (including ham)

Unsafe; discard

Vegetables, blanched or in sauce

Unsafe; discard

Soups

Unsafe; discard

Meat, poultry, and fish pies, "dinners," and similarly prepared dishes

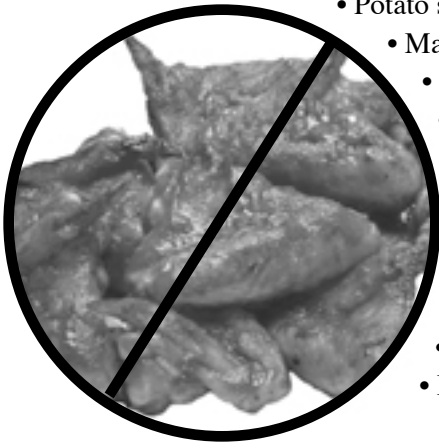
Unsafe; discard

Ice cream and sherbet

Unsafe; discard

Convenience foods that do not freeze well

Charts on this and following pages note “problem foods” which might not freeze well. Here are some others:



- Potato salad
- Macaroni salad
- Fried foods
- Milk sauces and gravies (especially those thickened with corn starch or flour)
- Sour cream
- Mayonnaise or salad dressing
- Crumb toppings
- Gelatin
- Fruit jelly
- Block of cheese

Baked products and

Baked quick breads

Problem foods: Unbaked biscuits will be smaller and less tender. Unbaked muffins are likely to have poor texture.



Food	Preparing and packaging	Thawing and heating	Suggested storage time (at 0°F)*
Biscuits	Bake as usual. Cool. Package.	To serve hot, heat unthawed at 350°F, 15–20 minutes; or microwave 10–15 seconds per biscuit.	2–3 months
Quick breads (gingerbread, nut and fruit bread, coffee cake)	Bake as usual. Bake to light brown. Cool quickly. Package.	Thaw in wrapping at room temperature. Slice fruit and nut breads while partly frozen to prevent crumbling.	2–4 months
Doughnuts (<i>Glazed doughnuts may lose glaze when frozen and thawed</i>)	Make as usual. Cool. Package.	Thaw at 400°F, 5–10 minutes, or in wrapping at room temperature. Dip glazed doughnuts in granular sugar after thawing, if desired.	3–4 weeks
Muffins	Bake as usual. Cool. Package.	Thaw at room temperature, 1 hour. Or, heat unthawed at 300°F, 20 minutes. Or, microwave 10–15 seconds per muffin.	2–3 months
Waffles	Bake to a light brown. Wrap individually or in pairs.	Heat without thawing in a toaster, under broiler, or on baking sheet at 400°F, 2–3 minutes.	1–2 months

*Foods stored longer than the recommended times will be safe but may be of less acceptable quality.

Baked products and doughs—*continued*



Yeast breads and coffee cakes

Food	Preparing and packaging	Thawing and heating	Suggested storage time (at 0°F)*
Bread, rolls, sweet rolls	Bake as usual. Cool quickly. Package.	Thaw at room temperature. To reheat, wrap in aluminum foil, heat at 300°F, 15 minutes (5–10 minutes for rolls) or microwave without foil at low power.	4–6 weeks
Brown and serve rolls	Make as usual, but let rise slightly less after shaping (about 30 minutes). Bake at 325°F, about 40 minutes. Do not brown. Remove from pan. Cool. Package and freeze.	Thaw at room temperature in wrapping 10–15 minutes. Unwrap. Bake at 400°F, 10 minutes or until light brown.	4–6 weeks
Unbaked coffee cakes, bread, and rolls	Use recipes especially developed for freezing the dough. See www.breadworld.com/ for recipes that can be shaped and frozen without baking (including freezer rolls, pecan sticky buns, and a cheese coffee cake).	Follow the recipe directions.	Up to 1 month

*Foods stored longer than the recommended times will be safe but may be of less acceptable quality.

Cakes

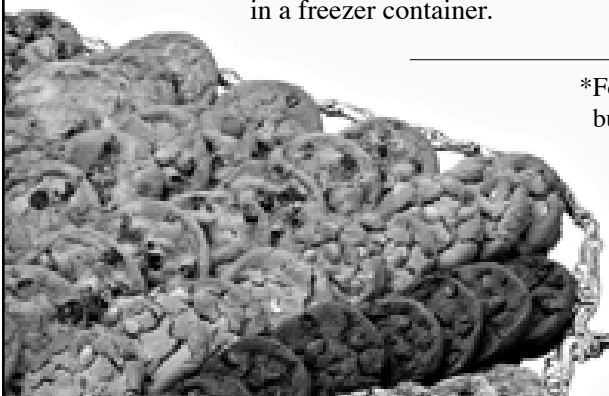
Food	Preparing and packaging	Thawing and heating	Suggested storage time (at 0°F)*
Angel food, chiffon, sponge cakes	Bake as usual. Cool. Frosted: Freeze before wrapping. Do not use egg-white frosting. Unfrosted: Wrap and freeze. If freezing slices, place a double layer of freezer wrap or foil between slices.	Frosted or filled: Unwrap and thaw in refrigerator. Unfrosted: Thaw in wrap on rack 1–2 hours at room temperature. If wrapped in aluminum foil, can thaw at 300°F, 15–20 min.	Egg-white cakes: 4–6 weeks Whole-egg cakes: 4–6 weeks Egg-yolk cakes: 2 weeks
Regular layer or sheet cakes	Bake as usual. Cool. For best results, freeze cake and frosting separately (see Frostings, page 13).	Same as above.	4–6 weeks
Cupcakes	Bake as usual. Cool completely before wrapping. Package.	Thaw at room temperature for 1 hour. If unfrosted, wrap in aluminum foil and thaw at 300°F, 10 minutes.	4–6 weeks

*Foods stored longer than the recommended times listed will be safe but may be of less acceptable quality.

Baked products and doughs—continued

Cookies

Food	Preparing and packaging	Thawing and heating	Suggested storage time (at 0°F)*
Cookies, baked	Bake as usual. Package in rigid containers with freezer paper or waxed paper between layers.	Thaw in wrapping, 15–20 minutes.	4–6 weeks
Cookies, unbaked:			2–3 months
• Refrigerator cookies	Form dough into roll.	Slightly thaw dough and slice. Bake cookies without thawing, according to recipe.	
• Drop cookies	Drop cookie dough on baking sheet and freeze. When frozen, package dough balls in freezer bags. Freeze dough in bulk in a freezer container.	Bake cookies without thawing at 400°F, about 10–15 minutes. Thaw bulk dough at room temperature until soft enough to drop by teaspoonfuls. Bake as usual.	



*Foods stored longer than the recommended times will be safe but may be of less acceptable quality.

Pastry

Food	Preparing and packaging	Thawing and heating	Suggested storage time (at 0°F)*
Pastry crust, unbaked	Make regular pastry or crumb crust. Fit in pie pans. Prick regular pastry. Stack pie pans with two layers of freezer paper. Put all in freezer bag. Or, store flat rounds on lined cardboard with two pieces of freezer paper between each. Dough also can be frozen in a ball in amounts for one crust.	Bake still frozen at 475°F, until light brown. Or, fill and bake as usual.	4–6 weeks
		Thaw dough. Roll out and bake as usual.	6–8 weeks
Pastry crust, baked	Bake as usual. Cool. Package.	Thaw in wrapping at room temperature, 10–20 minutes.	4–6 weeks

*Foods stored longer than the recommended times will be safe but may be of less acceptable quality.

Baked products and doughs—continued

Pies and crisps

Problem foods: Custard and cream pies soak into the crust.

Meringue on pies toughens and sticks to the wrapping.

Food	Preparing and packaging	Thawing and heating	Suggested storage time (at 0°F)*
Fruit crisps	Prepare crisp in a baking pan. Cover with lid or foil.	Bake frozen crisp in a 375°F oven for 40–60 minutes or until heated through.	3–4 months
Pies, unbaked (fruit, mince, nut): • Uncooked filling <i>(Note: unbaked fresh pies have a better fresh fruit flavor than frozen baked pies, but the bottom crust tends to get soggy)</i>	Make as usual except add 1 extra Tbsp. flour or tapioca or ½ Tbsp. cornstarch to juicy fillings to prevent boiling over during baking. Don't cut vents in top crust. Steam and cool light fruits (such as apple, peach) first to prevent darkening. Freeze in pan. Package. Fruit fillings may be cooked and cooled before adding to crust.	Cut vent holes in upper crust. Put pan on cookie sheet. Bake without thawing at 450°F, 15–20 minutes. Then reduce to 375°F, 20–30 minutes or until top crust is brown.	Fruit pies: 3–4 months Mince pies: 6–8 months Nut pies: 3–4 months
Fruit pies, unbaked: • Cooked filling	Make filling using Clear Jel** starch (¼ cup per quart of fruit). Freeze in jars or cartons, leaving 1 inch headspace. Or, put the cooled filling into an unbaked pie crust and freeze. Package.	Thaw the frozen filling and put in a crust. For an unbaked crust, bake at 425°F, 30–40 minutes or until golden brown.	3–4 months
Pies, baked (fruit, mince, nut)	Bake as usual. Cool rapidly. Freeze before packaging. Pies are easier to wrap after freezing.	Let stand at room temperature about 15 minutes. Then heat in 350°F oven until warm, about 30 minutes.	2–3 months
Pumpkin pie, unbaked	Prepare pie shell and filling as usual. Have filling cold before adding to unbaked, chilled pie shell. Freeze in pan. Package.	Bake without thawing at 400°F, 10 minutes. Then reduce to 325°F to finish baking.	4–5 weeks

*Foods stored longer than the recommended times will be safe but may be of less acceptable quality.

**A modified food starch used commercially to thicken foods. Ask the Extension office in your county about sources of Clear Jel.



Main dishes and meals

Meat, fish, poultry, pasta

Problem foods: Plain cooked macaroni, spaghetti, and rice do not freeze well.

Food	Preparing and packaging	Thawing and heating	Suggested storage time (at 0°F)*
Meats or fish, creamed	Make as usual. Cool quickly in refrigerator. Package.	Thaw in refrigerator or microwave. Stir occasionally to make smooth.	1 month
Meats and poultry, fried <i>(May lose some fresh flavor and crispness when frozen)</i>	Fry as usual until almost done. Cool quickly. Freeze on trays. Package.	Thaw in refrigerator or microwave. Place in shallow pan and heat without a cover at 350°F, 30–45 minutes; or thaw and cook in microwave, following manufacturer's instructions.	1–3 months
Meats, ground	Cook as usual. Package in meal-size portions.	Thaw in refrigerator (allowing about 24 hours for each 5 pounds of meat) or heat slowly on top of range or in oven. Cook to 160°F.	1–2 months
Meat loaf, baked or unbaked	Prepare as usual. Do not put bacon strips on top. Bake if you wish. Package.	Unbaked: Unwrap. Bake at 350°F to internal temperature of 160°F (about 1½ hours). Baked: To serve cold, leave wrapped and thaw in refrigerator. To reheat, unwrap and bake unthawed at 350°F, about 1 hour or until all meat is hot.	3–4 months 1–2 months
Meat, roasted (beef, pork, or poultry) <i>(Note: ham and other cured meats lose color and become rancid more quickly than other meats)</i>	Roast as usual. Remove as much fat as possible. Keep pieces large. Cut turkey and other large fowl from the bone to save space. For short storage, package without sauce or gravy. To keep sliced meat from drying out, cover with gravy, sauce, or broth. Package in rigid containers.	Thaw meat in wrapping in refrigerator. If in aluminum foil, heat at 325°F, 15–20 minutes. Thaw meat with sauce in refrigerator 5–6 hours, or heat slowly on top of range or in oven. Also can be thawed in microwave.	1–2 months
Stuffing	Make as usual. Cool quickly. Pack in rigid containers.	Put into greased casserole before completely thawed. Add a little water. Heat at 350°F or in microwave.	1 month

(continued)



*Foods stored longer than the recommended times will be safe but may be of less acceptable quality.

Main dishes and meals

Meat, fish, poultry, pasta—*continued*

Food	Preparing and packaging	Thawing and heating	Suggested storage time (at 0°F)*
Meat pies	Make filling as usual, omitting potatoes. Cook until nearly done. Cool quickly. Pour into casserole or individual containers. Top with pastry. Do not bake. Freeze before wrapping. Package.	Cut vents in crust. Bake without thawing, 400°F, 45 minutes for individual pies, 1 hour for larger pies, or until meat mixture is piping hot and crust golden brown. Or, microwave according to instructions.	2–3 months
Combination dishes, casseroles, stews	Make as usual. Omit potatoes and slightly undercook other vegetables. Cool rapidly. Freeze in foil-lined casserole dishes. After freezing, remove from dish. Package. Or freeze in microwave containers.	Thaw partially in package to prevent overcooking. Heat partially thawed or frozen food in microwave or bake at 400°F, 30 minutes.	4–6 months
Enchiladas, tamales	Make and bake as usual. Put in freezer packaging.	Thaw and reheat in 350°F oven or in microwave.	1–2 months
Pasta dishes (macaroni and cheese, lasagna, spaghetti with sauce, ravioli)	Make as usual. Cool quickly. Package in freezer/microwave containers or foil-lined casserole dishes. If desired, remove food from casserole dish after freezing and repackage.	If in ovenproof container, uncover and bake at 400°F, 1 hour for individual sizes or 1¾ hours for large dishes. Or, heat in microwave.	2–3 months
Meals, whole	Use foods recommended in this publication for freezing. Prepare as usual. Leftovers can be used. Package in individual servings.	Cover with aluminum foil and heat at 400°F, 20–30 minutes (or until food reaches 165°F). For crisp foods, uncover the last 10–15 minutes. Or, heat, covered, in microwave.	1 month
Pizza	Make as usual, but do not bake. Freeze before packaging.	Unwrap. Bake unthawed at 450°F, 15–20 minutes.	1 month

*Foods stored longer than the recommended times will be safe but may be of less acceptable quality.

Meal in a bag

(serves 2)

- 1 small chicken breast, boned and diced
- 1 c. uncooked spiral pasta
- 2 c. frozen mixed vegetables

Seasoning:
 2 tsp. chicken bouillon
 ¼ tsp. garlic powder
 ¼ tsp. onion powder
 ¼ tsp. paprika
 1 tsp. parsley flakes
 2 Tbsp. Parmesan cheese

Put seasoning in a small plastic sandwich or snack bag or in foil.

Stir-fry chicken pieces until almost done.

Cook pasta in boiling water until almost done. Drain. Combine pasta, chicken, and vegetables in a freezer bag. Insert seasoning bag. Freeze.

To use, cook in a hot skillet or wok on top of the stove. Add water if needed. When hot, stir in seasoning.

Eggs

Problem foods: *Cooked egg whites do not freeze well.*

Food	Preparing and packaging	Thawing and heating	Suggested storage time (at 0°F)*
Eggs, whole	Break and stir with a fork until well mixed, but do not whip in air. To prevent graininess in the yolks, add 1½ Tbsp. sugar, or 1½ Tbsp. corn syrup, or ½ tsp. salt per cup of whole eggs, depending on intended use. Strain through a sieve or colander to improve uniformity. Package in freezer container leaving ½ inch headspace.	Thaw in refrigerator. 3 Tbsp. frozen egg equals one egg.	6 months
Egg yolks	For each cup of yolks, stir and add either 1½ Tbsp. sugar, or 1½ Tbsp. corn syrup, or ½ tsp. salt per cup of egg yolk, depending on intended use, to prevent gumminess. Strain through a sieve. Pack into freezer carton, leaving ½ inch headspace.	Thaw in refrigerator. 1 Tbsp. of yolk equals one egg yolk.	6 months
Egg whites	Separate from yolk carefully and gently mix. Strain through a sieve. Pack into freezer carton, leaving ½ inch headspace.	Thaw in refrigerator. Bring to room temperature before whipping. 2 Tbsp. of egg white equals one egg white.	6 months



*Foods stored longer than the recommended times will be safe but may be of less acceptable quality.

Sandwiches

Food	Preparing and packaging	Thawing and heating	Suggested storage time (at 0°F)*
Sandwiches, whole	Spread soft butter or margarine to edges of bread. Omit crisp vegetables, hard-cooked eggs, tomato, jellies, and jams. Mayonnaise tends to separate.	Frozen sandwiches in lunchbox will thaw in 3–4 hours and help keep other foods cool.	Cheese, ham, bologna: 1–2 weeks Others: 3–4 weeks
Sandwiches, open-face	Spread thin layer of butter on bread to prevent soaking or drying. Make as usual. Before packaging, spread in single layer on metal pans and freeze. Package toast- or crisp-base appetizers separately. Use shallow, airtight containers that hold not more than 2–3 layers. Separate layers with moisture-resistant paper.	Toasted and crisp-base appetizers: thaw at room temperature, 2–3 hours. Don't unwrap. Others: arrange on serving trays and thaw at room temperature about 1 hour. Open-face sandwiches containing meat and fish should be thawed in the refrigerator.	3–4 weeks



Soups

Food	Preparing and packaging	Thawing and heating	Suggested storage time (at 0°F)*
Soups, meat or vegetable	Make as usual. Omit potatoes. Slightly undercook vegetables and pasta. Cool. Freeze in jars or serving-size reheatable plastic containers. Leave 1 inch headspace.	Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.	2–4 months
Soups, cream and purées	Make as usual. Cool quickly. Freeze in jars or serving-size reheatable plastic containers. Leave 1 inch headspace.	Heat without thawing. Heat cream soups in a pan over boiling water or in the microwave. Stir cream soup to keep smooth.	2–3 months
Soup, stock	Make soup stock. Freeze in jars or freezer containers, leaving 1 inch headspace.	Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.	4–6 months

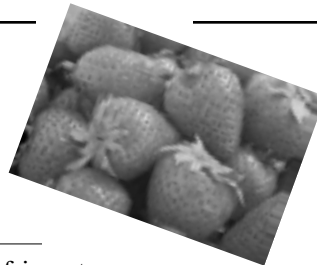
*Foods stored longer than the recommended times will be safe but may be of less acceptable quality.

Fruit dishes

Problem foods: Watermelon does not freeze well.

Food	Preparing and packaging	Thawing and heating	Suggested storage time (at 0°F)*
Applesauce	Make as usual. Cool quickly. Pack into containers. Leave 1 inch headspace.	Thaw in refrigerator or microwave.	8–10 months
Fruit soup	Cook fresh or reconstituted dried fruit. Package in freezer containers.	Thaw and reheat in microwave until heated through.	6–12 months
Fruit purées for jam	Follow pectin package instructions to prepare purée. Freeze in jars or plastic containers in portions needed for jam.	Thaw and proceed with jam making.	6–12 months
Fruit, frozen individually (such as cherries, strawberries)	Wash and prepare fruit; drain well. Freeze in a single layer on a cookie sheet. When frozen, transfer to freezer bags or containers.	Thaw or serve partially frozen as snacks.	6–12 months

*Foods stored longer than the recommended times will be safe but may be of less acceptable quality.



Vegetable dishes

Problem foods: Cooked creamed vegetables tend to lose flavor rapidly. Store for only a few weeks in the freezer for best quality. Salad vegetables (such as lettuce, other greens, raw tomatoes, cucumbers, radishes, celery) lose crispness and become soggy when frozen. Raw potatoes do not freeze well.

Food	Preparing and packaging	Thawing and heating	Suggested storage time (at 0°F)*
Beans, baked	Make as usual. Use a minimum of bacon, ham, or salt pork cut into small pieces. Bake until barely tender to avoid too much softening when reheated. Cool quickly. Package. Be sure all meat is covered.	Heat over boiling water or in a saucepan with a small amount of water added. Stir frequently to prevent sticking. Or, bake at 350°F in oven or heat in microwave.	6 months
Potatoes, hashbrowns	Wash; peel; remove eyes, bruises, and green surface color. Cut into ¼- to ½-inch cubes. Blanch 5 minutes in boiling water. Cool. Package in freezer containers. For grated hashbrowns, wash potatoes and cook with skins on until almost done. Cool, peel, and grate. Cooked potatoes also can be made into patties and frozen on a cookie sheet. When frozen, wrap individually.	Place frozen hashbrowns in a hot skillet with 2–4 Tbsp. butter, margarine, or oil. Cook until brown and crisp.	1–3 months
Potatoes, mashed balls (white or sweet potato)	Make mashed potatoes. Form into balls. Brush with melted butter or margarine. Freeze balls on baking sheet before packaging in rigid containers or freezer bags.	Bake on greased baking sheet at 350°F, 25–30 minutes.	1 month
Potatoes, stuffed	Bake large potatoes until done. Cut in half. Scoop out potato and mash with milk, sour cream, and a bit of cheese. After freezing on cookie sheet, transfer to freezer containers.	Bake at 375°F, 30–40 minutes or until heated through.	1–2 months
Vegetables for stir-frying (such as green beans, broccoli, carrots, onions, peas, peppers, summer squash)	Wash, cut in pieces, and blanch 2–3 minutes in boiling water. Cool in ice water. Drain well and pat dry. Place on a cookie sheet. When frozen, package in freezer bags.	Boil, steam, or microwave until tender. Or, vegetables can be partially thawed and then stir-fried.	8–12 months

*Foods stored longer than the recommended times will be safe but may be of less acceptable quality.



Desserts and sweets



Problem foods:

Chocolate-covered cherries do not freeze well.

Food	Preparing and packaging	Thawing and heating	Suggested storage time (at 0°F)*
Candies	Make as usual. Or, freeze commercially made candy. Package.	Thaw in wrapping at room temperature. Fat “bloom” which develops in frozen chocolate disappears. Cracks in brittle candies, chocolate-covered nuts, and some creams disappear when candies thaw.	2–3 months
Frostings (<i>Fluffy egg-white frostings don't freeze well</i>)	Frozen frostings lose some gloss, and ones with granulated sugar may become grainy. Cooked frostings may separate. Powdered sugar frostings freeze best. Package in freezer containers.	Thaw in container.	1–2 months
Ice cream (plain or in pies, cakes, or rolls)	Make as usual. Freeze before wrapping.	Thaw until soft enough to serve.	1–2 months
Whipped cream toppers	Add 3 Tbsp. sugar to each pint of cream. Whip before freezing. Put dabs of whipped cream on baking sheet or lined cardboard and freeze. Remove dabs and place in cartons or freezer bags.	Thaw in refrigerator or serve frozen.	1–2 months

*Foods stored longer than the recommended times will be safe but may be of less acceptable quality.

For more information

To order publications about food safety and preservation, check these websites or contact the Extension office that serves your county.

Idaho

<http://www.cals.uidaho.edu/edcomm/catalog.asp>

Oregon

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/>

<http://extension.oregonstate.edu/fch/>

Washington

<http://safefood.wsu.edu/>

<http://pubs.wsu.edu/>

Washington

Extension Publications

Marketing, News, and Educational Communications

Washington State University

P.O. Box 645912

Pullman, WA 99164-5912

Oregon

Publication Orders

Extension & Station Communications

Oregon State University

422 Kerr Administration

Corvallis, OR 97331-2119

Idaho

Educational Publications

University of Idaho

P.O. Box 442240

Moscow, ID 83844-2240

Earlier editions of PNW 296 were published under the title *Freezing Prepared Foods*. This edition was revised by Carolyn Raab, Extension foods and nutrition specialist, and Nellie Oehler, Lane County Extension family and community development educator, both of Oregon State University, in consultation with Val Hillers, Extension food specialist, Washington State University, and with Sandy McCurdy, Extension food safety specialist, University of Idaho. Based on a prior revision by Val Hillers.

Notes

© 2002 Oregon State University

Pacific Northwest Extension publications are produced cooperatively by the three Pacific Northwest Land-Grant universities: Oregon State University, Washington State University, and the University of Idaho. Similar crops, climate, and topography create a natural geographic unit that crosses state lines. Since 1949, the PNW program has published more than 600 titles, preventing duplication of effort, broadening the availability of faculty specialists, and substantially reducing costs for the participating states.

Published and distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, by the Oregon State University Extension Service, Washington State University Extension, University of Idaho Extension, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

The three participating Extension Services offer educational programs, activities, and materials--without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age, marital status, disability, and disabled veteran or Vietnam-era veteran status--as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The Oregon State University Extension Service, Washington State University Extension, and University of Idaho Extension are Equal Opportunity Employers.

Published January 1987; revised September 2002; reviewed February 2012; reprinted June 2013
