

A Guide to Freezing Fruits and Vegetables

Save money, save time, and stay flavorful and colorful!

Frozen fruits and vegetables

- preserve important nutrients
- save money (frozen produce is cheaper than fresh produce)
- save time on grocery shopping
- save time on cooking
- save space in the fridge

Why freeze fruits and vegetables?

Once harvested, fruits and vegetables (F&V) continue to lose nutrients. Freezing is the best way to preserve their delicious flavors and nutrients. Store-bought frozen produce is cheaper than fresh ones and takes less time to cook. If you cannot finish the fresh produce within 3 to 5 days, try the following steps to freeze them before they go bad!

Bonus tip: buy produce at their peak season (usually during summer and into fall) and freeze them to enjoy throughout the winter!



To freeze vegetables:

1. Wash with running cold water and chop them into your preferred shape
2. Blanch*: soak in boiled water for 1 to 1 ½ minutes (some need longer time; see below)
3. Drain the water and dry them with a clean towel as much as possible
4. Lay them on a baking sheet until cool
5. Chill in the freezer until they are firm (at least 1 hour)
6. Transfer the frozen pieces to storage bags and seal very well to prevent freezer burn**
7. Label the bag with date
8. Finish within 3 to 6 months for best flavor and nutrients!

To freeze fruits:

1. Wash with running cold water
2. Peel if you don't plan to eat the skin
3. As needed, pit the seeds (e.g. cherries)
4. As needed, chop them into your preferred shape (wedges, cubes, balls)
5. Follow Steps 3-8 from the section above "To freeze vegetables"

To use frozen vegetables for soups and stews:

- It requires a shorter cooking time than fresh vegetables
- Soups and stews: add them directly into the pot
- Roasting: mix the frozen vegetables with olive oil and pop in the oven.

****What is blanch?***

- A process in which food is briefly immersed in hot water to soften it, loosen the skin to make peeling easier, or to brighten the color of it.
- Blanch helps soften vegetables, brighten their colors, and retain good texture after defrosting them.
- Blanching time depends on the texture of the produce:



| Vegetables | Blanching time |
|---------------------|----------------|
| Asparagus | 2-4 minutes |
| Beans | 3 minutes |
| Broccoli florets | 2 minutes |
| Cauliflower florets | 3 minutes |
| Leafy greens | 1 to 2 minutes |
| Okra | 2 to 3 minutes |
| Squash | 2 to 3 minutes |

****What is freezer burn?**

- Freezer burn occurs when your food is not fully sealed and exposed to cold air in the freezer
- The longer they are kept in the freezer, the more likely they will get freezer burn
- You can prevent freezer burn by wrapping the food really well prior to storage

Common Chinese fruits and vegetables that are good frozen:

Vegetables: spinach, broccoli, cauliflower, corn, carrots, celery, green beans, mushroom, butternut squash, pumpkin, bell peppers#, onion#

Fruits: bananas, grapes, blueberries, raspberries, mangos, clementines

bell peppers and onion: blanching is not needed prior to storage.