



How to Freeze Vegetables

Freezing is an excellent way to preserve vegetables from your garden or the Farmers Market to enjoy during those cold winter months. Freezing vegetables is easy and only requires a freezer that maintains a temperature of 0 degrees F or lower.



Containers for Freezing

Foods for your freezer must have proper packaging materials to protect their flavor, color, moisture content and nutritive value from the dry climate of the freezer.

- Use half-gallon containers for best results

There are two types of packaging materials for home use: Rigid containers made of plastic or glass are suitable for all packs and are especially good for liquid packs.

- Straight sides on rigid containers make the frozen food much easier to get out.

Jars have been tempered to withstand extremes in temperatures.

- Leave headspace to allow for expansion of foods during freezing.
- Covers for rigid containers should fit tightly. If they do not, reinforce the seal with freezer tape.

Freezer tape is especially designed to stick at freezing temperatures.

- Flexible freezer bags and moisture-vapor resistant wrapping materials such as plastic freezer wrap, freezer paper, and heavy-weight aluminum foil are suitable for dry packed products with little or no liquid.
- Bags and wraps work well for foods with irregular shapes. Bags can also be used for liquid packs. Press to remove as much air as possible before closing.



Green, Snap or Wax Beans

Preparation – Select young tender pods when the seed is first formed. Wash in cold water, snip and cut into 2 to 4-inch lengths. Water blanch 3 minutes. Cool promptly, drain and package, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

Corn

Preparation: Select only tender, freshly gathered corn in the milk stage. Husk and trim the ears, remove silks and wash.

Corn-on-the-cob – Water blanch small ears (1¼ inches or less in diameter) 7 minutes, medium ears (1¼ to 1½ inches in diameter) 9 minutes and large ears (over 1½ inches in diameter) 11 minutes. Cool promptly and completely to prevent a "cobby" taste. Drain and package. Seal and freeze.

Whole Kernel Corn – Water blanch 4 minutes. Cool promptly, drain and cut from cob. Cut kernels from cob about 2/3 the depth of the kernels. Package, leaving ½-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

Cream Style Corn – Water blanch 4 minutes. Cool promptly and drain. Cut kernel tips and scrape the cobs with the back of a knife to remove the juice and the heart of the kernel. Package, leaving ½-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

Another way to prepare cream style corn for freezing is to cut and scrape the corn from the cob without blanching. Place the cut corn in a double boiler, and heat with constant stirring for about 10 minutes or until it thickens; allow to cool by placing the pan in ice water. Package in moisture-vapor resistant containers, leaving ½-inch headspace. Seal and freeze.

Freezing Pointers

- Freeze foods at 0°F or lower. Set the temperature control at -100F or lower about 24 hours in advance.
- Freeze foods as soon as they are packed and sealed.
- Do not overload your freezer with unfrozen food. Add only the amount that will freeze within 24 hours, which is usually 2 to 3 pounds of food per cubic foot of storage space. Overloading slows down the freezing rate, and foods that freeze too slowly may lose quality.
- Place packages in a single layer in the coldest part of the freezer.
- Leave a little space between packages so air can circulate freely. When the food is frozen, store the packages close together.