



Home Food Preservation



Avoiding Food Waste

Do you have more food than you can immediately use and are trying to avoid it going to waste? Are you looking for a longer way to store food other than refrigeration? Home Food Preservation may be the answer you are looking for. Freezing, canning and drying are home food preservation methods that result in safe, high-quality food when recommended practices are followed. Food safety and quality are both important when trying to avoid food waste.

Freeze



Freezing preserves food by preventing the growth of microbes that cause spoilage and food-borne illness. Freezing makes water unavailable, microbes cannot use water that has formed into ice crystals. Freezing does not kill most microbes, so food must be handled safely before it is frozen and after it is defrosted. Food may be safely frozen indefinitely, but for best quality use within 6 months to a year keeping food frozen solid.

Appropriate foods for freezing include: fruit, vegetables, dairy, shelled eggs, raw and cooked meat/poultry/fish, baked items, soup, rice and herbs.

Freezing Tips

- Choose the best quality food available; freshly picked or cooked
- Freeze food promptly
- Always work with clean hands
- Make sure preparation areas, equipment and utensils are clean
- Follow procedures recommended for selected food: peeling, pitting, blanching, cutting, etc
- Choose containers appropriate for freezing: Freezer foil, wrap or bags, freezer jars or plastic freezing containers
- Choose foods that freeze well. Foods that do not freeze well include: produce such as cucumbers, radishes, watermelon; cooked pasta such as macaroni; some dairy such as sour cream and yogurt

Dry



Drying or dehydration preserves food by removing enough moisture from the food so bacteria, yeast and mold (which can cause food-borne illness as well as spoilage) cannot grow.

Food can be dried using the following methods: a dehydrator, oven or microwave.

The quality of dried foods may last 6 months to a year depending on the food being dried and the storage conditions.

Appropriate foods for drying include: fruits, vegetables, meat and herbs.

Drying Tips

- Use tested recipes
- Know how to you use your equipment
- Package and store properly

Can



Canning preserves by placing food into sealed jars and heating to a temperature that destroys microbes. A vacuum seal is formed during cooling that prevents microbes from getting back into the food. For best quality use home-canned food within 1 year. For safety use a tested recipe including the appropriate processing method.

Appropriate foods for canning include: fruits, vegetables, meat and poultry. It is not recommended to can leftovers, as when canning prepared foods a tested recipe must be followed.

Canning Tips

- Use tested recipes
- Follow the recommended processing method for the food being canned
- Know how to select and use equipment: canners, jars, lids and bands

Tested Recipes

Tested recipes rely on data or prior knowledge that supports food safety. Due to the complexity of testing a recipe this is usually done on university campuses such as the University of Georgia where the National Center for Home Food Preservation is housed.

For more information on all of these topics please visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation <https://nchfp.uga.edu>