



Home Food Preservation



Storing and Freezing Produce at Home

Fresh produce is stored best at 32°F - 55°F and higher relative humidity. Refrigeration works well for some produce because it slows water loss and helps maintain nutrients and quality. Other produce requires cool but not refrigeration temperatures. **Cut tomatoes, melon and leafy greens must be refrigerated for safety.** Freezer temperatures further prevent microbes from growing and slow chemical changes that can affect food quality. Frozen food can be safely stored indefinitely but quality will decline over time. Quality can be extended by packaging properly for frozen storage and storing in a freezer that maintains 0°F or lower.

Room Temperature and Refrigerator Storage

Storage Area	Fruits		Vegetables	
Best Quality Stored in Refrigerator (better quality if kept in the crisper box which maintains a higher humidity)	Apples	1 - 2 months	Asparagus	2 - 3 weeks
	Berries	up to 7 days	Green beans	7 - 10 days
	Cherries	2 - 3 weeks	Butterbeans	5 - 7 days
	Grapes	2 - 3 weeks	Beets	2 weeks
	Peaches	2 - 3 weeks	Broccoli	10 days
	Pears	2 months	Cabbage	3 - 6 weeks
	Plums	2 - 4 weeks	Carrots	2 weeks
	Melons	2 weeks	Cauliflower	3 - 4 weeks
			Leafy greens	10 - 14 days
			Okra	7 -10 days
			Mushrooms	3 - 4 days
			Summer squash	1 - 2 weeks
Best Quality Stored at Cool Room Temperature (warm room temperatures will shorten shelf life)	Melons	2 - 3 weeks	Jicama	1 - 2 months
	Tomatoes	4 - 7 days	Potatoes	2 - 3 months
			Winter squash	1 - 6 months

Freezer Storage

- Choose the best quality food available
- Freeze food promptly
- Always work with clean hands, preparation areas, equipment and utensils
- 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

Blanching

Produce has naturally occurring enzymes that cause color, flavor and nutrient changes. Proper blanching by boiling water or steam destroys microbes on the surface and inactivates enzymes, and then rapidly cooling in ice prevents cooking. Blanching is critical for top quality frozen vegetables, and it is important to follow recommended procedures.