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# Freezing

## FRUITS and VEGETABLES



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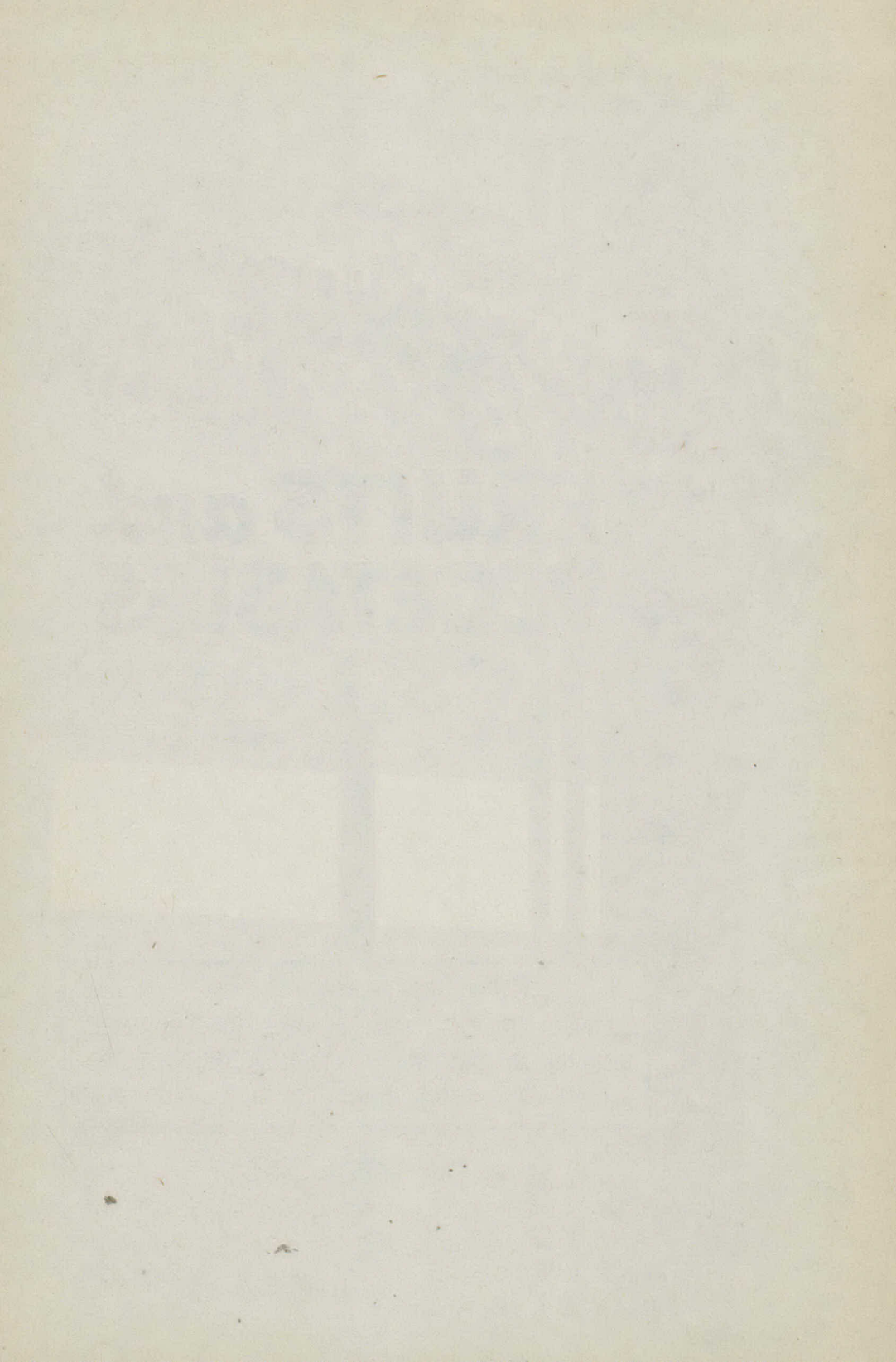
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# Freezing Fruits and Vegetables

## WHY FREEZE

*Freezing* is a time and labour-saving method of preserving fruits and vegetables for out-of-season use.

*Freezing* retains good colour, flavour and texture in foods:

*Freezing* retains much of the original food value.

*Freezing* results in highly attractive products, resembling the fresh foods:

*Freezing* reduces the cooking time by about one-half.

## WHAT TO FREEZE

### Vegetables

Make best use of your locker or freezer space by freezing only the vegetables recommended. Those usually eaten raw, such as celery, tomatoes, lettuce and cucumbers, should not be frozen. Root vegetables are easily stored and should not take up valuable locker space.

### Fruits

Most fruits except pears freeze satisfactorily. Peaches and apricots, however, require special treatment to prevent discoloration:

## How to Freeze Successfully

### Selection

*Varieties*—All varieties of fruits and vegetables do not freeze well. Choose varieties that are recommended for freezing. Check with your Provincial Department of Agriculture for suitable varieties that grow well in your district.

*Quality*—Freeze only high quality fruits and vegetables. The quality of the frozen food depends on the quality of the food frozen. Use only garden-fresh vegetables and freeze within a few hours after gathering.

*Maturity*—Select fruits and vegetables which are at the ideal stage of maturity for immediate table use. Fruits should be ripe but firm. Do not freeze any fruit that is green, over-ripe, bruised or beginning to spoil. Vegetables should be young and tender. Do not freeze any vegetable that is tough, starchy or woody.

# *How to Freeze Successfully*

## **Preparation**

*Prepare* fruits and vegetables as for canning or for table use. (See pages 6 and 7.) Do not prepare too much at one time. If done in too large quantities, fruits and vegetables are apt to lose their original flavour, appearance and texture.

*Handle* and pack fruits and vegetables quickly and carefully.

## **Blanching (pre-cooking)**

*Fruits* with the exception of rhubarb and peaches do not require blanching. Rhubarb is blanched to intensify colour and reduce acidity and peaches to remove skins.

*Vegetables*—*All vegetables require blanching before freezing* in order to preserve their natural colour and flavour. If vegetables are not blanched, enzymes present will cause deterioration making the frozen vegetable quite unpalatable. Although some loss in food value occurs in blanching, the frozen vegetable when cooked, should compare favourably with the cooked fresh vegetable.

### *To Blanch Vegetables:*

Use kettles of vigorously boiling water—at least two gallons in each. Place the vegetable in a wire basker, colander or cheesecloth bag and immerse in first kettle of boiling water for 30 seconds. Immediately transfer to second kettle. **Start counting time of blanching when water in second kettle returns to boil after vegetable is added.** (See pages 6 and 7 for individual blanching times.) **Time blanching of all vegetables accurately.** Under or over blanching by a minute or two may make quite a difference in the frozen product.

Do not blanch too much at a time—about one pound is best.

Chill vegetable immediately after blanching by placing under cold running water or by plunging into cold water, preferably ice water. As soon as vegetable is cooled, drain thoroughly.

**NOTE:** Steam blanching is used commercially, but this method is not practical for household use.



# How to Freeze Successfully

## Packing

*Fruits* may be packed in cold syrup, in dry sugar or, in the case of a few fruits, without syrup or sugar.

*Syrup Pack:* Most fruits can be cut or sliced directly into the container. Berries may be frozen whole, if desired. The strength of the syrup used depends on the tartness of the fruit on individual taste. When packing in syrup, be sure liquid covers fruit. To keep peaches under syrup and to help prevent surface discoloration, place a crumpled piece of wax paper on top of fruit.

*To prevent discoloration in peaches and apricots:* These fruits discolour readily and require quick, careful handling and special treatment to prevent darkening. The following method has been found effective: Use 200 mg. ascorbic acid per cup of syrup. Crush tablets and dissolve in syrup. While the use of ascorbic acid will prevent discoloration in peaches and apricots, it adds considerably to the cost.

*Dry Sugar Pack:* When dry sugar is used, it should be thoroughly mixed with the fruit. This may be done by placing a layer of prepared fruit in a bowl, then a layer of sugar, continuing in this manner until all sugar and fruit is used. Stir or very slightly crush to mix fruit and sugar evenly.

*No Syrup or Sugar:* Some fruits, such as blueberries, gooseberries, saskatoons and cranberries, may be packed without syrup or sugar.

*Vegetables* are best packed dry but may be packed in cold 2% brine. (See page 6.)

*Dry Pack:* The chilled, blanched vegetable is packed into the container immediately after draining.

*Brine Pack:* After packing, the chilled, blanched vegetable is covered with cold 2% brine.

## Headspace

Leave at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch headspace at top of all containers to allow for expansion during freezing.

## Containers

For types of containers to use, see page 10.

## Labelling

Mark containers giving description of contents and date when frozen. It is a good idea to keep an inventory of contents of locker or freezer.

## Freezing and Storing

Freeze foods immediately after packing. If food is to be frozen and stored in a locker plant, place each container, as it is packed, in refrigerator or very cold place until all are prepared, then take to locker plant without delay.



## *Preparing Vegetables for Freezing*

- Asparagus**—Select young tender stalks with tightly closed tips. Remove tough purplish or white butts and scales. Wash thoroughly to remove sand. Cut stalks in uniform lengths, to fit containers. Blanch 3 minutes. Cool quickly and drain. Pack dry OR in \*2% brine to cover.
- Beans (Green or Wax)**—Select young tender beans. Wash, trim ends and string, if necessary. Leave whole or slice crosswise. Blanch 3 minutes. Cool quickly and drain. Pack dry OR in \*2% brine to cover.
- Broccoli**—Select dark green, compact heads. Use only heads and tender portion of stalks. Trim and remove woody stems. Cut through stalks so that pieces of heads are not more than 1 inch across. Examine and wash carefully. Blanch 2 minutes. Cool quickly and drain. Pack dry OR in \*2% brine to cover.
- Brussels Sprouts**—Select compact heads of deep green colour, not wilted. Wash thoroughly, watching for worms. Blanch 3 minutes. Cool quickly and drain. Pack dry OR in \*2% brine to cover.
- Cauliflower**—Select compact white, tender heads. Break head into small flowerettes, about 1 inch in diameter. Wash thoroughly, watching for worms. Blanch 3 minutes. Cool quickly and drain. Pack dry OR in \*2% brine to cover.
- Corn (off cob)**—Harvest early in morning. Select ears with rounded kernels, milky juice and sweet flavour. Avoid cobs with hard or immature kernels. Prepare immediately. Remove husks and silk. Wash in cold water. Blanch cobs 3 to 4 minutes. Cool and cut kernels from cob. Pack in \*2% brine to cover OR pack dry.
- Corn (on cob)**—Select corn as for Corn (off cob). After husking, trim cobs to even length to fit containers. Blanch 6 to 8 minutes. Cool quickly and drain. Pack dry OR in \*2% brine to cover OR wrap each cob in moisture-vapour-proof paper, sealing or tying ends securely.
- Peas**—Harvest in early morning. Handle quickly. Select only young and tender peas, avoiding over-ripe ones. Shell directly into cold water, discarding over-large, hard peas. Wash, drain and blanch 2 minutes. Cool quickly and drain. Pack dry OR in \*2% brine to cover.
- Spinach, Chard**—Select only tender, green leaves. Remove all discoloured or bruised leaves and tough stems. Wash thoroughly in cold water to remove sand and grit. Blanch 2 minutes. Cool quickly, avoiding matting of the leaves during cooling. Drain. Pack dry OR in \*2% brine to cover.
- Squash, Pumpkin**—Use only well-matured squash or pumpkin with dry pulp. Cut or break apart, remove seeds and pithy portion. Cut in small pieces and steam, boil or bake until tender. Cool quickly and remove rind. Mash or sieve and pack dry.

**FOR VARIETIES SUITABLE FOR FREEZING CHECK WITH  
YOUR PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.**

\*To make 2% brine: Dissolve 1 tablespoon salt in 1 quart (5 cups) cold water. Chill before using. This is sufficient for 5 to 6 pint containers.



# Preparing Fruits for Freezing

- Apricots**—Choose firm, ripe apricots. Wash, halve and pit. Pack in cold, thin (1:2) syrup to cover. See page 5 for special treatment.
- Blueberries**—Choose well-ripened berries and wash. Pack without sugar or syrup OR pack in dry sugar, using 5 pounds prepared fruit (about 13 cups) to 1 pound sugar (2 cups).
- Cantaloupe**—Choose firm, mature melons. Cut in half, peel, remove seeds. Cut in cubes or balls. Pack in cold, very thin (1:3) syrup to cover OR in dry sugar using 8 pounds prepared fruit (about 18 cups) to 1 pound sugar (2 cups).
- Cherries (Sour)**—Choose firm, ripe cherries. Wash, stem and pit. Pack in cold, medium (1:1) syrup to cover OR in dry sugar using 4 pounds prepared fruit (about 9 cups) to 1 pound sugar (2 cups).
- Gooseberries**—Stem and wash gooseberries. Pack without sugar or syrup OR pack in dry sugar using 4 pounds prepared fruit (about 12 cups) to 1 pound sugar (2 cups) OR in cold, medium (1:1) syrup to cover.
- Peaches**—Choose firm, ripe peaches. Blanch  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 minute in boiling water, dip in cold water, remove skins and pits. Slice fruit directly into syrup in containers. Use cold, moderately thin (1:1½) syrup to cover. See page 5 for special treatment.
- Plums**—Choose firm, mature fruit. Wash, halve and pit, if desired. Pack in cold, thin (1:2) syrup to cover OR in dry sugar using 5 pounds prepared fruit (about 13 cups) to 1 pound sugar (2 cups).
- Raspberries**—Choose firm, fully ripe berries. Pick over and wash only if necessary. Pack whole in cold moderately thin (1:1½) syrup to cover OR in dry sugar using 5 pounds fruit (about 16 cups) to 1 pound sugar (2 cups).
- Rhubarb**—Choose early spring rhubarb of good colour. Wash and cut stalks in 1-inch lengths. Blanch 1 minute. Cool quickly and drain. Pack in cold, medium (1:1) syrup to cover OR pack in dry sugar using 4 pounds prepared fruit (about 11 cups) to 1 pound sugar (2 cups).
- Strawberries**—Choose firm, fully ripe berries. Wash, sort and hull. Pack in cold, medium (1:1) syrup to cover OR in dry sugar using 4 pounds prepared fruit (about 12 cups) to 1 pound sugar (2 cups).

## TYPE OF SYRUP TO USE

- Very thin (1:3), 1 cup sugar to 3 cups water, yields about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  cups syrup.
- Thin (1:2), 1 cup sugar to 2 cups water, yields about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cups syrup.
- Moderately thin (1:1½), 1 cup sugar to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups water, yields about 2 cups syrup.
- Medium (1:1), 1 cup sugar to 1 cup water, yields about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups syrup.
- To make Syrup:* Add sugar to warm water, stir to dissolve and chill.

## AMOUNT OF SYRUP TO USE

- Pint containers .....  $\frac{2}{3}$  to 1 cup. Quart containers ..... 1 to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cup.



# *How to Cook Frozen Vegetables*

All frozen vegetables require some cooking whether they are to be served hot as a vegetable or cold as in salad. Cooking methods are the same for frozen vegetables as for fresh vegetables except that the frozen require a much shorter cooking period— $\frac{1}{3}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  the time. Since frozen vegetables have been partially pre-cooked in the blanching process and freezing softens the tissues still further, care must be taken not to over-cook them.

If more than one package of frozen vegetables are to be cooked at one time, the saucepan used should be large enough in diameter to allow them to rest on the bottom of the pan, that is, one frozen block should not be placed on another.

Dry Pack frozen vegetables, except spinach and corn on the cob, do not require thawing before cooking. Brine Pack vegetables and Dry Pack spinach should be thawed sufficiently to break the frozen block apart before cooking. Corn on the cob, both Dry and Brine Pack, should be completely thawed, otherwise the kernels will be over-cooked before the cob is hot.

## **Method of Cooking**

- 1: Use a tightly covered saucepan.
- 2: With **Dry Pack** vegetables, use  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of boiling water and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt to one pint container of vegetable (4 servings). Corn on the cob should be covered with water.

With **Brine Pack** vegetables, no additional salt or water is required.

- 3: To ensure uniform cooking, break the melting mass apart with a fork.
- 4: Bring vegetable to the boil as quickly as possible: Then reduce heat and boil gently, covered, until vegetable is tender.



# How to Cook Frozen Vegetables

## TIME TABLE FOR COOKING FROZEN VEGETABLES

The cooking times given below are approximate and are counted from the moment the water returns to the boil after the vegetable is added. The exact cooking time varies to some extent with the variety, maturity and method of preparation, size of pieces, etc.

ASPARAGUS.....	3 to 5 min:	CAULIFLOWER.....	3 to 5 min:
BEANS, GREEN.....	5 to 7 min.	CORN ON COB.....	5 to 6 min:
BEANS, WAX.....	4 to 6 min:	CORN OFF COB.....	4 to 5 min:
BROCCOLI.....	3 to 5 min.	PEAS.....	3 to 5 min:
BRUSSELS SPROUTS..	4 to 6 min:	SPINACH & CHARD..	3 to 4 min:

Note: Squash or pumpkin do not require further cooking. If to be used as a vegetable, reheat; if as pie filling, thaw before using.

## Using Frozen Fruit

Fruit, to be served raw, should not be thawed until needed for serving. Fruits should be served immediately after thawing since if allowed to stand for any length of time at room temperature, the flavour, appearance and texture of the fruit deteriorate.

Fruit should be thawed slowly in the unopened container, either in the refrigerator or at room temperature, inverting the container occasionally to distribute the syrup evenly. A pint container usually requires about 3 hours to thaw at room temperature and from 6 to 8 hours in a refrigerator.

Fruit, to be cooked, does not need to be completely thawed. If it is to be used for pies or batter puddings, the fruit should be thawed sufficiently to spread.

*Fruit Packed in Syrup:* Fruits such as peaches, raspberries and strawberries are excellent served like canned fruit. Apricots, cherries, plums and rhubarb should be cooked for a few minutes in the syrup before serving. Cantaloupe is most suitable in fruit cup.

*Fruit Packed in Dry Sugar:* Fruits packed in dry sugar are ideal for use in pies, puddings and other desserts. Fruits such as strawberries, raspberries and peaches are excellent for shortcake or as a topping for ice cream. Whole strawberries, raspberries and blueberries may be served like fresh fruit.

*Fruit Packed Without Syrup or Sugar:* Gooseberries, blueberries, saskatoons and cranberries are excellent in pies and puddings or made into sauce or jam. Blueberries may be served as fresh fruit.



# *Containers—Wrapping Materials*

For frozen foods, containers should not only be water-proof but also moisture-vapour-proof which allows little or no loss of moisture from the product during storage. Since the freezer room is usually very dry, food not protected by a moisture-vapour-proof container will deteriorate because of evaporation. Wrapping material and containers should not only prevent the drying out of food but should also protect it from absorbing flavours. In addition, they should not crack or become brittle at low temperature.

## **Cardboard Containers**

Heavily waxed cylindrical-shaped cartons with slip-over or slip-in lids are excellent for products packed dry or in syrup or brine. They are usually available in pint and quart sizes.

Rectangular-shaped cartons with transparent bag linings such as cellophane, pliofilm, etc., or with linings of parchment or other moisture-vapour-proof paper are more suitable for vegetables or fruits packed dry since the bag linings are difficult to pack and seal when brine or syrup is used. The filled bags should be heat-sealed with a warm iron or curling tongs. Since these rectangular-shaped cartons pack well, they allow the storing of more food in a given space than other types of containers. These are usually available in pint and quart sizes.

## **Wrappings**

Transparent wrappers, parchment papers, heavily waxed papers and other moisture-vapour-proof wrappings may be used for corn on the cob. All wrappings should be sealed securely to exclude as much air as possible. This may be done either by heat sealing, taping or tying tightly with string. Lightly waxed paper is not sufficient protection for the food since it is not moisture-vapour-proof.

## **Glass Jars and Tin Cans**

Glass jars may be used for dry pack vegetables or fruits, but they are wasteful of locker space and there is danger of jars breaking if used for fruits packed in syrup or vegetables packed in brine.

Tin cans may be used for vegetables and for all fruits except rhubarb. Plain cans are suitable for all vegetables and most fruits; R-enamel cans for raspberries, cherries, and plums. Since food frozen in tin cans is not sterilized as when canned, it should be removed from the can either while still frozen or immediately after thawing.

Honey and jam tins also make satisfactory containers.





