



How Do I Freeze That?

A guide to help you:

Get Better Results
Reduce Food Waste
Save on Bulk Items

How Do I Freeze That? Guide


TIPS

- Use bags or wrap designed for protecting food in the freezer. Containers take up more room than bags pressed flat and stacked.
- Remove as much air as possible before freezing in bags.
- Vacuum sealers are more effective for longer periods of storage ~ 3 months or more.
- Zipper type bags are effective for short-term freezing ~ less than 3 months.

MEAT & EGGS

Beef, Buffalo, Pork, Chicken, Turkey, Lamb, Fish and *most* Seafood can be frozen raw.

Beef, Lamb, Buffalo cooked <i>rare to medium</i> : steaks, chops, lean roasts	Cuts intended to be cooked rare or medium can overcook in the process of reheating. These are less appealing if cooked before freezing. However, prepping the meat in advance per the recipe saves a step. The exception is lean roasts cooked and sliced for lunch meat since the meat will not be reheated.
Beef, Lamb, Buffalo cooked <i>medium to well done</i> : ground, chuck roasts	Cuts cooked medium to well-done (chuck, shoulder, short ribs, brisket, ground) freeze well once cooked. Adding pan juices or gravy along with the cooked meat before freezing helps protect it from freezer burn and retain moisture.
Chicken, Turkey, Game Hen	Grilled, baked, or stewed poultry freezes well and is best when frozen in whole pieces and chopped, sliced, or diced once it has defrosted. Raw poultry can be prepped (sliced, cubed) per recipe directions and frozen.
Fish & Seafood	In general, fresh fish and seafood should not be cooked before freezing. However, if there is a protective coating like used when frying or the fish is in a soup, the texture will not be compromised by freezing.
Pork	Chops and lean loin roasts can overcook and become dry in the process of reheating and should not be cooked before freezing. Long-roasted or smoked cuts (shoulder/butt, ribs, blades, ham) can be frozen once cooked and benefit from being frozen with the pan juices.
Eggs, Raw	Once removed from the shell, raw eggs can be frozen whole or separated. Whole eggs: Stir enough to break yolks and mix with whites without whipping air into it. Depending on what the eggs will be used for, add rounded 1/4 teaspoon of sugar or pinch of salt per egg. Egg yolks: Stir-in a rounded 1/4 teaspoon of sugar or pinch of salt per egg yolk, until dissolved. Egg whites: Strain through a fine mesh strainer. For any of these preparations, use a container that allows for room at the top, seal and freeze. Label with egg quantity and amount of sugar or salt added. Thaw in the refrigerator overnight before using.
Eggs, Cooked	Scrambled eggs freeze well in breakfast burritos or sandwiches. Hard boiled eggs become rubbery and do not freeze well.

DAIRY & Non-DAIRY MILKS

The higher the fat content in dairy products, the better they freeze.

Almond Milk	Texture and consistency change when frozen, however, if you use it for baking or cooking, you should not notice a difference.
Coconut Milk	Blend the defrosted coconut milk in a blender or with an immersion blender to re-emulsify; then use it as directed in recipes. Coconut milk will keep in the freezer for up to one month. Curries with coconut milk do change slightly when frozen, so if making a curry recipe to freeze, hold the coconut milk until defrosted and ready to reheat for best results.
Buttermilk	Measure into tablespoon-size portions in an ice cube tray, or desired amounts, and freeze. Defrost in the refrigerator overnight and whisk to combine the solids and whey.
Cream Cheese	For most baking applications, but not for baked custards or cheesecakes in which a creamy texture is desired.
Hard Cheese	Hard cheese becomes crumbly and hard to slice, but retains flavor and can be used for cooking.
Soft Cheese	Brie, Camembert, mozzarella, and some Blue (Blue may become grainy) freeze well and retain flavor. Ricotta, cottage cheese, and fresh mozzarella do not, but are fine when frozen in cooked applications like lasagna.
Sour Cream, Yogurt	For baking applications, not for cooked sauces or fresh applications as the texture is compromised when frozen.

GRAINS & LEGUMES

Beans, Lentils	Cooked beans can be frozen and dried beans can be frozen once brined / soaked; drain and freeze until ready to cook.
Breads, Cakes, Cookies, Muffins, Waffles, Bagels, Pancakes, Unbaked Pie Shells	Generally, baked goods freeze well and have best results within 3 months. All baked goods should be completely cooled before freezing to lessen the formation of ice crystals.
Bread Dough	After the first rise to proof, but before the second. Defrost in the refrigerator, let rise and bake.
Pasta	Pasta should be cooked to just under-done when freezing a make-ahead meal to avoid mushy results when reheating or completing the cooking process. Pasta will absorb much of the sauce or liquid it is frozen in. Adding pasta to soups: When preparing soups like Minestrone or Chicken Noodle, keep the pasta separate until just before serving to maintain the integrity of the soup's texture and consistency.
Quinoa, Rice, Whole Grains	Cook first and freeze once completely cooled. Use in any application.

FRUITS, VEGETABLES & HERBS

Fruit that tends to brown needs a dip an acidulated water bath of
1 quart water plus 1 tablespoon lemon juice

OR treated with ascorbic acid before drying and freezing.

Anything for smoothies can be frozen. **Do not freeze:** *cucumber, lettuce greens, sprouts.*

Apples	Slice and freeze raw to use in cooked applications like sauces, apple butter, pies, crisps, and cakes. Texture will be soft.
Avocados	The creamy texture of avocados suffers when frozen, but can be layered in dips or applications where the avocado is not the focus, as in seven layer salad, salad dressings, or smoothies, rather than as a dip.
Artichokes	Blanch first, texture will be soft.
Asparagus	Blanch first, texture will be soft. Use in cooked applications like soups, stews, casseroles, curries.
Bananas	Freeze fresh, whole, in the peel. Use in baking, soft-serve ice cream, and smoothies.
Beets	Cook whole or in pieces, texture will be softer.
Bell Pepper	Blanch or freeze raw. The texture is compromised after freezing, so the smaller the dice, the better. Use in cooked applications like soups, stews, casseroles, curries, stir-fries. *Flavor will be stronger once frozen.
Berries: blackberry, blueberry, boysenberry, raspberry, strawberry	Freeze raw, whole. Use in baked goods like cobblers, pies, quick breads, muffins; top yogurt or oatmeal; or blend in smoothies.
Bok Choy	Freeze raw, use in cooked applications like soups, stews, casseroles, curries, stir-fries. Texture will be soft.
Broccoli	Blanch first, texture will be soft. The texture suffers when frozen and is best when blanched and mixed into a make-ahead meal rather than frozen by itself.
Brussels Sprouts	Blanch first, texture will be soft. *Frozen sprouts have a stronger cabbage flavor than fresh.
Cabbage	Blanch first, texture will be soft. Use in cooked applications like soups, stews, casseroles, curries, stir-fries.
Carrots	Blanch and freeze. Use in cooked applications like soups, stews, casseroles, curries, stir-fries.
Cauliflower	Blanch first, texture will be soft. The texture suffers when frozen and is best when blanched and mixed into a make-ahead meal rather than frozen by itself.
Celery; Celeriac Root	Use in cooked applications like soups, stews, casseroles, curries, stir-fries. Do not freeze raw unless intended for use in homemade stock. Texture will be soft.

Citrus Zest, Juice: grapefruit, limes, lemons, tangerines	Freeze zest and juice separately. Ice cube trays work for juice, each compartment is approximately 1 tablespoon. Freeze zest in teaspoon measurements on wax paper. Once frozen, transfer to a freezer bag for storage. Use in baking, sauces, or marinades.
Chiles	Cooked, not raw. Use in any cooked application or mixed with other items in fresh applications like salsa.
Coconut	Freeze raw, use in any application.
Corn, Hominy	Blanch or cook first. Use in fresh or cooked applications.
Eggplant	Roast cubes or slices in the oven before freezing. Use in cooked applications. Texture will be soft.
Fennel	Blanch first, use in cooked applications. Texture will be soft.
Figs	Peeled or unpeeled, can be chopped or smashed and frozen raw. Texture will be soft.
Garlic	Mince, stir into oil or butter enough to cover and freeze on wax paper-lined baking sheet in teaspoon-size portions--once frozen, transfer to a freezer bag. Use in cooked applications like stir fry, sauces, soups and stews, or topping grilled meats and vegetables.
Ginger Root	Whole or grated. It is easy to peel and grate once frozen whole. Use in any application.
Grapes	Only if eating them frozen or used in smoothies.
Green Beans	Fresh beans can be frozen unblanched for less than 3 months. To freeze longer, blanch first. Texture will be soft.
Herbs	The texture will always be compromised, but the flavor can be preserved in the freezer best if herbs are chopped and mixed with butter or oil (or some combination). Press flat in freezer bags; break off pieces as needed.
Kohlrabi	Blanch cubed or sliced first. Use in cooked applications.
Kiwi	Peeled and sliced, kiwi can be eaten frozen or used in smoothies.
Leeks	Like onions, leeks should be cooked or blanched before freezing to preserve the mild flavor. Use in cooked applications.
Mango	Peel and slice or cube; freeze raw. Use in smoothies, salsa, desserts, sauces.
Melon	The best method to retain color and flavor is to freeze melon cut into slices, cubes, or balls coated in a simple syrup (1 ¾ cup sugar to 4 cups water). Thaw or serve partially frozen. Unsweetened melon can be frozen dry and best used in smoothies or blended applications.
Mushrooms	The texture is compromised, especially in raw mushrooms. To preserve mushrooms in the freezer, sauté or steam them first. Mushrooms can be added to frozen make-ahead meals like soups, stews or casseroles as the change in texture is less noticeable in these applications.
Okra	Blanch first, texture will be soft. Use in cooked applications like soups, stews, casseroles, curries.

Onions, Shallots	It is better to not freeze onion raw as it will intensify in bitterness and odor, but cooked (or caramelized) onions freeze well.
Parsnips	Blanch before freezing. Use in cooked applications like soups, stews, casseroles, curries. Texture will be softer.
Pear	The best method to retain color and flavor is to freeze sliced pear in a simple syrup (1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar to 4 cups water ratio) or tossed with ascorbic acid (pears will brown if untreated). The texture will be very soft but suitable for cooked applications like sauces, pear butter, pies, crisps, and cakes.
Peas	Freeze fresh or cooked. Use in any application.
Persimmons	Best method is to mash or puree the pulp with a little ascorbic acid ($\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. per quart) to retain color. Press out flat in a freezer bag.
Pineapple	Freeze raw in small chunks or cubes. Use in cooked applications, salads, salsas, or smoothies. Texture will be softer.
Pomegranate arils	Freeze raw, use in any application.
Potatoes: russet, red, white, sweet, yams	Raw potatoes should not be frozen. Cooked potatoes in soups, mashed or twice-baked, and scalloped potatoes will have a slight change in texture when defrosted and reheated. Freeze potato recipes with full-fat cream rather than milk for best results. Waxier potatoes freeze better than russets.
Radishes	Chop fine in a food processor and mix with butter before freezing. Use on roasted meats or as a spread for toasted bread or crackers.
Rutabaga	Blanch before freezing. Use in cooked applications like soups, stews, casseroles, curries. Texture will be softer.
Spinach, Chard, Kale, Mustard Greens	Blanch or sauté with butter, cool and freeze for soups, stews, casseroles, quiche (squeeze out excess liquid).
Stone Fruit: peaches, nectarines, plums, apricots, cherries	Pit, slice or halve, and freeze (peeling is optional). Use in baked goods like cobblers, pies, quick breads, muffins; oatmeal; or fruit smoothies. Texture will be soft.
Summer Squash: zucchini, yellow, crookneck	Cooked, not raw. Cut or slice and blanch before freezing (grated zucchini does not require blanching). The texture of summer squash will be soft; use in casseroles, soups, or puree for baking; not for stir-fry or salads.
Tomatoes	Cook first; blanched, stewed, sauces, purees, and paste all freeze well.
Turnip	Blanch before freezing. Use in cooked applications like soups, stews, casseroles, curries. Texture will be softer.
Winter Squash: acorn, spaghetti, pumpkin, kabocha, butternut	Cooked, not raw. The texture will be softer once frozen; use in casseroles, soups, dips, or puree for baking.

MISCELLANEOUS

Arrowroot Powder	Arrowroot powder does not lose its thickening properties like cornstarch when frozen.
Bouillon, homemade	Roasted meats produce savory pan juices which can be used in place of store-bought bouillon. After roasting meat, add enough hot water to the pan to loosen any browned bits and create a sauce or concentrated paste. Allow to cool, and pour into designated ice cube trays or press flat in freezer bags. Once frozen, cubes can be transferred to freezer bags. Mix 2-3 (ice)cubes or tablespoons of homemade bouillon with 3/4 cup hot water to make 1 cup of broth. The consistency and flavor will differ based on the seasoning and liquids used while roasting, so label accordingly. Use this technique for chicken, beef, lamb, or pork.
Compound Butter, Pesto	Freeze compound butter or leftover pesto in a spare ice cube tray or press flat in a quart freezer bag to freeze (it should be thin enough to easily break off a piece).
Cornstarch	Cornstarch loses its thickening properties in the freezer. Reserve the cornstarch in make-ahead meals until the meal defrosted and prepared; heat to a strong simmer to activate cornstarch.
Crumb Topping	Crumb toppings turn soggy in the freezer; add fresh crumb topping to casseroles or pies just before baking.
Nuts, shelled	Freeze and use in any application.
Salsa	When fresh or jarred salsa nears its expiration date, freeze it. Use in soups or stews.
Soup	Broth based soups and chili freeze well. Cream based soups depend on the fat content of the dairy used. Soups made with milk or half & half will separate once frozen; soups made with cream freeze better.
Stock	Save bones from roasted chicken or beef, as well as wilted vegetables, and freeze them. The vegetables will come out limp, but that's okay. When you've accumulated enough to fill the largest pot you own, make stock. The vegetables and herbs that work best in stock are: onions, celery, garlic, carrots, parsley, thyme, bay leaves, or cilantro. Anything that imparts the flavors you like, use it.
Wine	Once frozen, use for pan sauces or cooking applications, not drinking.



- Quicker freezing produces the best results, so resist freezing even slightly warm foods to avoid a buildup of ice crystals.
- Bags *always* leak. Use a rimmed baking sheet to lay bagged food on to defrost.
- Visit the Missouri University Extension for more detailed freezing instructions: <http://extension.missouri.edu/p/gh1503>