

FREEZING FRUITS AND VEGGIES

BUY FRUITS AND VEGGIES IN BULK WHEN THEY ARE IN SEASON AND THE PRICE IS GOOD. FREEZE THE EXTRAS TO USE ANOTHER TIME.



To freeze fruits and veggies, follow these simple steps:

1. Rinse produce. Pat dry.
2. Prep as directed in the chart on page 17.
3. If freezing vegetables, blanch (briefly cook in boiling water) for the amount of time shown in the chart. Using a slotted spoon, transfer boiled veggies to a bowl of ice water right away. Drain well and pat dry.
4. Place produce in a single layer on a baking sheet and freeze.
5. Transfer frozen produce to a large freezer-safe bag or other airtight container.



MOST PRODUCE MAINTAINS ITS QUALITY WHEN FROZEN UP TO ABOUT 6 MONTHS (FOR FRUITS) OR 12 MONTHS (FOR VEGGIES).

BLANCHING SLOWS THE LOSS OF FLAVOR, COLOR, TEXTURE, AND NUTRIENTS DURING FREEZING. VEGGIES FROZEN WITHOUT BLANCHING ARE SAFE TO EAT, BUT THEY MAY NOT MAINTAIN THEIR QUALITY FOR AS LONG.

IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME, HEARTY VEGGIES CAN BE FROZEN WITHOUT BLANCHING, BUT YOU MAY WANT TO USE THEM UP MORE QUICKLY THAN BLANCHED FROZEN VEGGIES. TRY BROCCOLI, CARROTS, CORN, OR SUMMER OR WINTER SQUASH.

Fruit or Vegetable	Prep Steps	Blanching Time
Bell peppers	Cut out stem and remove seeds. Cut into ½-inch pieces.	2-3 minutes
Blackberries, blueberries, and raspberries	Remove any stems.	Not needed
Broccoli and cauliflower	Cut into 1- to 1½-inch florets	3 minutes
Carrots	Peel and cut into 1/4-inch slices	2 minutes
Cherries	Remove stems and pit.	Not needed
Cooking greens (e.g., spinach, collards, kale, Swiss chard)	Remove any tough stems and ribs. Chop.	2-3 minutes
Corn	Remove husks and cut corn off the cob.	2 minutes
Green beans	Trim stem ends.	3 minutes
Mangoes	Cut off skin. Cut fruit off of pit. Cut into 1-inch pieces.	Not needed
Nectarines, peaches, and plums	Remove pit and cut into sixths.	Not needed
Peas	For edible pods, remove tough stems. If using shelling peas, remove from pod.	1-2 minutes
Strawberries	Remove stem and hull. Cut large berries in half.	Not needed
Summer squash	Cut into ½-inch slices.	2-3 minutes
Tomatoes	Remove core.	Not needed
Winter squash	Cut in half. Remove seeds and stringy membrane.	Instead of blanching, place cut-side down on a baking sheet coated with non-stick cooking spray. Bake at 400°F until tender, 35-50 minutes. Let cool. Scoop squash into a bowl, removing skin. Mash with a fork. Cool completely before freezing.