

# Freezing Meat, Game and Poultry

## MEAT & GAME

Slaughter and dress under sanitary conditions. Game animals should be handled the same as beef. Large carcasses should be chilled to 34°-36° F. Small carcasses (poultry) may be chilled in ice box, ice water, or cold well water. Beef, lamb, and wild game may be aged 5-15 days to improve tenderness.

### Cutting:

Age and quality of animal should determine the kind of cuts to be taken from animal. Well-trained meat cutters can help by classifying the cuts as steaks, roasts, pot roasts and stew meat.

The carcass should be cut up to meet the needs of family. Surplus fat may be trimmed off; bones may be removed to save locker space and to prevent the wrapping from tearing.

### Wrapping:

All meat should be wrapped **tightly** in special moisture-vapor-proof locker paper to prevent as much drying out as possible. Special locker cellophane may be used but is more expensive. Stockingette may be purchased to pull over paper to make a tighter wrap and to protect paper from tearing.

**Special care must be taken** to wrap with the paper tight against meat.

Sheets of waxed paper may be put between slices of meat to make it easy to separate the slices on thawing.

Only enough meat for one meal should be wrapped in a package.

All packages should be labeled with: **kind of cut and date when frozen.**

### Cured Pork:

This may be cut, wrapped and stored in lockers to prevent molding. Hams may be put in whole or in halves.

### Time in Storage:

Most people report that meats are most satisfactory when not stored for more than 6 months.

## POULTRY

### Preparation for Locker:

Poultry should be starved 12-24 hours (allow plenty of water) before killing. Water used for scalding chickens should be kept about 140° F. to prevent injury to skin. Thirty seconds to 1 minute in this water, if the bird is moved gently about, should be sufficient to loosen the feathers, and make poultry easy to pluck.

Chickens should be dressed carefully and chilled thoroughly to prevent discoloration and off flavors from developing in storage. Ice water may be used for chilling. To make sure the meat is chilled through, it is best to dress the chicken one day, store in a refrigerator overnight, then wrap and take to locker the next day.

Roasters, fryers, or stewing hens may be frozen. Those for frying and stewing may be packed in special locker paper, tin cans, heavily paraffined cartons, or glass jars. All should be sealed tightly to prevent drying out of frozen product. Roasters are packed whole in special locker paper.

Cut up chickens which are put away in jars, cans, or cartons, may be covered with a 2% brine (2T salt - 1 Qt. water). This also helps to prevent the drying out of product. One inch headspace should be left at top of container when brine solution is used.

Chicken put away in paper must be wrapped tightly and with no tears in paper.

Giblets may be stored with rest of bird.

### **FREEZING CONDITIONS FOR MEAT AND POULTRY**

All meat, game, and poultry should be frozen quickly. A quick freeze room is desirable; all packages should be small and be spread out during the freezing process. Once frozen, they may be stacked.

Lockers kept with a **steady** temperature of zero degrees F. or lower will permit less rancidity to develop and less loss of juice in product.

### **THAWING AND COOKING FROZEN MEAT AND POULTRY**

Meats and poultry may be cooked either while frozen or thawed. Large roasts cook more uniformly done if two-thirds thawed. Chickens for roasting are better if completely thawed. Smaller cuts of meat and poultry may be thawed just enough to separate pieces. Additional time must be allowed for cooking when meat is not thawed.

Meat and poultry to be thawed should remain in the package, and if time is available, it should be thawed in a mechanical refrigerator. This will take about 5 hours per pound. At room temperature it will take only about 2 hours per pound to thaw the frozen meat, but this rapid thawing will cause a greater loss of juice from the meat.

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