

FREEZING

MEAT, FISH, AND POULTRY AT HOME

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GENERAL FREEZING PROCEDURES

- Freeze only fresh, high-quality meat, fish, and poultry.
- Keep all food to be frozen and anything it touches clean. Freezing does not sterilize food; it only slows down changes that cause loss of quality and spoilage.
- Protect foods to be frozen by wrapping or packaging carefully in recommended wraps or containers. Force out as much air as possible. Trapped air increases drying (freezer burn) and fat rancidity.
- Package in quantities to be cooked at one time.
- Label each package with the date, type of food, and weight or number of servings or pieces.
- Freeze quickly at 0°F. or lower.
- Put the unfrozen packages against a refrigerated surface if possible. Leave space between packages to let air circulate.
- Limit the amount frozen at one time to 2 to 3 pounds per cubic foot of freezer space. Rapid freezing protects against loss of quality. The food should freeze within 24 hours.
- Store at 0°F. or lower.
- Keep the storage temperature constant at 0°F.
- Store each food no longer than the recommended storage times in the tables.

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WRAPS AND CONTAINERS

Use packaging that suits the size and shape of the food and its consistency—whether liquid or solid.

Recommended Wraps and Containers

Polyethylene film and bags are moisture-vapor resistant, flexible at low temperatures, and limit the transfer of flavor and odor.

Aluminum foil is moisture-vapor resistant. Select heavy-duty locker or freezer grade foil.

Vinylidene chloride film (Saran) is moisture-vapor resistant, strong, and flexible at low temperatures.

Laminated paper (locker paper) is moisture-vapor resistant, but less flexible than polyethylene or vinylidene chloride wrap.

Plastic containers. Use only plastic containers that are intended as freezer containers. You should be able to seal the cover airtight.

Glass jars. Use only standard canning jars or glass freezer jars.

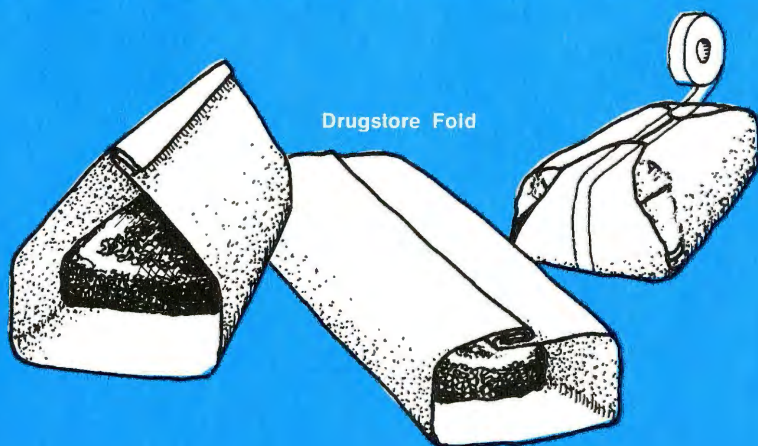
Non-Recommended Containers

Waxed cardboard cartons (cottage cheese, ice cream, milk cartons) are not moisture-vapor resistant. With a polyethylene bag liner, they do protect the liner from puncture. Alone, they are not adequate.

Hard plastic containers (cottage cheese, yogurt, margarine tubs) are not satisfactory because they crack at low temperatures.

Wrapping

When using laminated locker paper, polyethylene film, or aluminum foil, pull the wrap tight to drive out air, and seal with a drugstore fold. Fold or twist the ends of the package. Tape ends and seams.



FREEZING BEEF, VEAL, LAMB, PORK, AND WILD GAME

- Cut into roasts, steaks, chops, stew meat, and other cuts that meet the family's needs.
- To save storage space, bone the cuts or trim to get smooth, compact pieces.
- Pad sharp ends of bones with layers of wrapping material to prevent punctures or tears.
- For ease in cooking, put a sheet of waxed paper or moisture-vapor resistant material between chops, steaks, or preformed meat patties.
- Wrap in moisture-vapor resistant wrap. Force out as much air as possible.

Recommended Storage Times

Beef

Ground meat	2-3 months
Steaks, roasts	8-12 months

Veal

Ground meat	2-3 months
Chops, cutlets	3-4 months
Roasts	4-8 months

Lamb

Ground meat	2-3 months
Chops	3-4 months
Roasts	8-12 months

Pork, fresh

Sausage	1-2 months
Chops	3-4 months
Roasts	4-8 months

Pork, cured

Bacon	less than 1 month
Ham	1-2 months

Wild Game (Deer, Elk, etc.)

Ground meat, sausage	2-3 months
Steaks, chops	8 months
Roasts	12 months

FREEZING FISH AND SHELLFISH

Fish and shellfish are very perishable. Handle as little as possible.

Fish

- Wash the fish.
- Remove the scales.
- Remove the entrails, gills, head, and fins.
- Cut into steaks, fillet, or leave whole.
- Glaze to protect against drying and loss of flavor. Place the unwrapped fish or pieces on a tray in the freezer. Freeze as quickly as possible. When frozen solid, dip into cold water (34-36°F.). The water will freeze, forming an ice glaze. Repeat glazing if desired.
- Wrap in moisture-vapor resistant wrap, forcing out as much air as possible.

Shellfish

Clams. Clean clams. Remove the meat from the shell and open the stomach to clean. Wash the meat thoroughly. Pack in containers, excluding as much air as possible. Clam meat is more satisfactory than clams in the shell. Clams in the shell have a very short freezer life because of the air trapped in the shells. After cleaning, place on trays, freeze, glaze, and store in the freezer in polyethylene bags.

Crab. Crab may be frozen and then glazed (whole or legs in the shell). Or the meat may be picked and frozen as flaked meat, without adding liquid.

Oysters. Shucked oysters are ready to freeze as is. Let the liquor settle. Cover with clear liquor or nectar to protect from air.

Shrimp. Peeled and deveined shrimp is ready to freeze. Glaze or pack in moisture-vapor resistant containers.

Recommended Storage Times

Shellfish

Clam meat, crab, oysters, shrimp	4-6 months
Clams in shell	less than 1 month

Fin Fish

Mackerel, sea herring	4-6 months
Salmon, smelt, spanish mackerel, tuna	5-9 months
Cod, haddock, hake, halibut, lake herring, ling cod, ocean perch, rockfishes, red snapper	7-12 months

FREEZING POULTRY AND WILD FOWL

Whole Birds

- Clean the cavity to remove all internal organs. Remove the liver, heart, and gizzard and package separately.
- Tie the legs and wings to the body for a smoother, more compact package.
- **DO NOT STUFF BEFORE FREEZING.**
- Place the bird in a freezer bag large enough for the bird. Push the bird well against the bottom of the bag. Force as much air from the bag as possible. Twist the top of the bag tightly and tie with a twist tie or rubber band. (An alternate method to force out the air: Dip the bag into a container of cool water, deep enough to cover the bird. Press the air out of the bag. The bag will make close contact with the bird. Twist the top tightly and tie.) If laminated paper, film, or foil is used, press the wrap close to the bird to force out air. Fold or twist the ends and seal with tape.

Cut Pieces of Poultry

- Package pieces together to suit family needs.
- Place in a bag or wrap in paper, film, or foil.
- Press out as much air as possible and seal.

Cooked Poultry

- Remove meat from the bones.
- Cover slices with gravy, sauce, or broth to avoid stale flavor.
- Cooked poultry has better flavor if frozen as soon as possible after cooking, even if the freezer storage is just a few days.

Recommended Storage Times

Uncooked poultry

Giblets	3 months
Turkey, duck, goose	6 months
Chicken	12 months
Wild pheasant, grouse, chukar, etc.	8-12 months

Cooked poultry

Sandwiches of poultry meat	1 month
Fried chicken	3 months
Slices or pieces, covered with broth or gravy	6 months
Cooked poultry dishes	6 months

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