



Stocking up for Winter!

What Veggies Can I Freeze and How:

Beets

Select deep, uniformly colored, tender, young beets. Wash and sort according to size. Trim tops, leaving 1/2-inch of stem and tap root, to prevent bleeding of color during cooking. Cook in boiling water until tender — for small beets 25 to 30 minutes; for medium beets 45 to 50 minutes. Cool promptly in cold water. Peel, remove stem and tap root and cut into slices, julienne strips or cubes. Package, seal and freeze.

Broccoli

Select firm, young, tender stalks with compact heads. Remove leaves and woody portions. Separate heads into convenient-size sections and immerse in brine (4 teaspoons salt to 1 gallon water) for 30 minutes to remove insects. Drain and split lengthwise so flowerets are no more than 1-1/2 inches across. Water blanch for 3 minutes in boiling water or steam blanch 5 minutes. Cool promptly, drain, package, seal and freeze.

Cabbage (including Chinese cabbage)

Frozen cabbage or Chinese cabbage is suitable for use only as a cooked vegetable. Select freshly picked, solid heads. Trim coarse outer leaves from head. Cut into medium to coarse shreds or thin wedges, or separate head into leaves.

Water blanch 1-1/2 minutes. Cool promptly, drain, package, seal and freeze.

Carrots

Select young, tender, coreless carrots. Remove tops, wash and peel. Leave small carrots whole. Cut others into thin slices, 1/4-inch cubes or lengthwise strips.

Water blanch small whole carrots 5 minutes, diced or sliced 2 minutes, and lengthwise strips 2 minutes. Cool promptly, drain, package, seal and freeze.

Cauliflower

Choose compact, snow-white heads. Trim off leaves, cut head into pieces about 1 inch across and immerse in brine (4 teaspoons salt to 1 gallon of water) for 30 minutes to remove insects. Drain. Water blanch for 3 minutes in water containing 4 teaspoons salt per gallon of water. To prevent darkening, add 2 to 3 tablespoons of lemon juice per gallon of blanching water. Cool promptly, drain, package, seal and freeze.

Greens (Includes beet, chard, collard, kale, mustard, spinach and turnip greens.)

Select young, tender green leaves. Wash thoroughly and cut off woody stems. Cut leaves of chard into pieces.

Water blanch collards 3 minutes and all other greens 2 minutes. Blanch tender young leaves 1-1/2 minutes. Cool, drain, package, seal and freeze.

*****Note** Do not steam blanch greens.

Fresh herbs

Wash, drain and pat dry with paper towels. Wrap a few sprigs of leaves in freezer film wrap and place in a freezer bag. Seal and freeze. Chop and use in cooked dishes. Herbs prepared in this way are usually not suitable for garnish, as they become limp when thawed.

Kohlrabi/ Turnips/ Rutabegas/ Parsnips

Select young, tender, mild-flavored kohlrabi, small to medium in size. Cut off tops and roots. Wash and peel. Leave whole or dice into 1/2-inch cubes.

Water blanch whole kohlrabi 3 minutes and cubes 1 minute. Cool promptly, drain, package, seal and freeze.

Peppers: bell or sweet

Sweet or bell peppers can be frozen without blanching. Blanched peppers are limp and easier to pack; however, they can only be used in cooked dishes. Select crisp, tender, green or bright red pods. Wash, cut out stems, cut in half and remove seeds and white membrane. Cut in halves, slices, 1/2-inch strips, rings or dice depending on intended use. **Blanched**

Water blanch halves 3 minutes, strips or rings 2 minutes. Cool promptly, drain, package, seal and freeze. **Unblanched** Package raw, seal and freeze.

Squash: summer (Cocozelle, Crookneck, Straightneck, White scallop, Zucchini)

Choose young squash with tender skin. Wash and cut in 1/2-inch slices.

Water blanch 3 minutes. Cool promptly, drain, package, seal and freeze.

Grated zucchini (for baking)

Choose young tender zucchini. Wash and grate without peeling. Steam blanch in small quantities for 1 to 2 minutes until translucent. Drain well and pack in containers in amounts needed for recipes. Cool by placing the containers in cold water. Seal and freeze. If watery when thawed, drain the liquid before using the zucchini.

Tips for successful freezing

- Select varieties suitable for freezing –ask the grower.
- Work under sanitary conditions.
- Select young, tender vegetables of good quality that are fresh from the garden. Freezing does not improve quality. Sort for size, ripeness and color.
- If the vegetables cannot be frozen immediately, refrigerate them.
- To prevent loss of quality and nutrients, work in small quantities, enough for only a few containers at a time.
- Wash and drain all vegetables before removing skins or shells. Wash small lots at a time through several changes of cold water. Lift the produce out of the water so the dirt washed off will not get back on the food. Do not let the vegetables soak.

Types of packs**Dry pack**

Dry packing is recommended for all vegetables because it results in a good quality product and preparation for freezing and serving is easier. After vegetables are blanched, cooled and drained, package quickly in rigid freezer containers or freezer bags. Remove as much air as possible from bags. Leave 1/2-inch headspace for rigid containers. Seal tightly, label and freeze.

Tray pack

A variation of dry packing is tray packing. After vegetables are blanched, cooled and drained, spread in a single layer on shallow trays and freeze. Leave in the freezer just long enough to freeze firm. Longer exposure to dry freezer air will result in moisture loss and quality changes. When frozen, promptly package leaving no headspace, seal tightly, label and return to the freezer. The advantage of tray packing is that vegetable pieces remain loose and can be poured from the container and the package reclosed.

Root Cellar Storage: Storing in a cool dry place will keep veggies such as winter squash, potatoes, onion, garlic, parsnips, turnips and other root veggies good for weeks. No root cellar? Unheated basements or even a spot under the porch will do read more here:

http://www.garden.org/foodguide/browse/veggie/roots_harvesting/623