

Home Freezing Guide for Fresh Vegetables

Freezing most vegetables at home is a fast, convenient way to preserve produce at their peak maturity and nutritional quality. Here are various techniques for freezing and thawing vegetables, as well as how to cook your frozen vegetables.

Note: Freezing is not recommended for artichokes, Belgian endive, eggplant, lettuce greens, potatoes, radishes, sprouts, and sweet potatoes.

Follow these steps on how to freeze and thaw your veggies:

- 1. Blanching-** Blanching vegetables before freezing (except onions and peppers) preserves their quality. To blanch, bring water to a boil in a large covered pot. Place clean, trimmed vegetables in the boiling water and stir. Cover and immediately begin to count blanching time. Keep heat on high to quickly return water to a boil. Blanching time for each vegetable is provided in the chart to follow.
- 2. Chilling-** After blanching, remove vegetables from boiling water and immediately plunge into ice-cold water to stop the cooking process. Drain vegetables to remove water.
- 3. Freezing-** Place chilled vegetables in freezer containers/bags, remove excess air, and freeze. For best results, freeze no more than 3 lb at a time. Many vegetables can be frozen as individual pieces. Spread on a shallow pan, freeze until firm (1 hour), then pack in freezer containers or bags in portions that are usable (½ cup increments). Vegetables store well frozen for about 1 year.
- 4. Thawing-** Most vegetables do not need to be thawed before cooking. If thawing is necessary, thaw vegetables in their sealed packages at room temperature.

Cooking Methods for Frozen Vegetables

- 1. Boiling-** Use minimal amounts of water to cook frozen vegetables to retain the best flavor and nutrition. For every 2 cups of vegetables, use ¼ - ½ cup water and ½ tsp salt if desired. (Cook corn in enough boiling water to cover and avoid toughening the kernels by not using salt.) Bring water to a boil. Add vegetables, cover, and return to a boil. Once at a boil, begin counting cooking time, reduce heat, and simmer gently until vegetables are tender. Drain before serving.
- 2. Microwaving-** For leafy vegetables and those with high water content (mushroom), reheat 4-6 minutes per 1 lb. For dense vegetables reheat 8-10 minutes per 1 lb with 1/3 cup water and drain excess water after heating.
- 3. Pan frying-** Melt butter or oil in a frying pan over medium heat, add frozen vegetables, season, cover and cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally until tender.
- 4. Baking-** Frozen vegetables (carrots, parsnips, peppers, squash) can be baked along with a roast or in a casserole. Alternatively, place frozen vegetables in a lightly greased baking dish, season, cover, and bake at 325° F until tender. Stir occasionally.
- 5. Easily add frozen to sauces, soups, casseroles, stews, or to a stir-fry during cooking.**

Freezing Vegetables

Vegetable	Preparation	Blanching Time	Cooking Method and Time
Beans- green or wax	Trim ends. Leave whole or cut into 1 in. pieces.	Whole- 4 min Cut- 3 min	Whole- boil 5-7 min Cut- boil 4-6 min
Beets	Remove tops leaving 1 in. stems. Cook until tender, chill, peel, slice, and pack.	None	Thaw sliced beets for 30 min to separate. Reheat- 9-10 min Bake- 90 min at 325° F
Beet greens	Remove tough stems and imperfect leaves.	2 min	Boil- 1-2 min
Broccoli	Remove woody stems & cut into 1½ in. pieces.	Medium stalks- 3 min Large stalks- 4 min	Boil- 3-5 min
Brussel sprouts	Trim stems and outer leaves.	Small- 3 min Medium- 4 min Large- 5 min	Boil- 4-6 min
Cabbage	Trim outer leaves and core. Cut into wedges or shred coarsely.	Wedges- 2 min Shredded- 1 min	Wedges: thaw 20-30 min; boil 9-10 min Shredded: thaw 2 hr; boil 4-5 min
Carrots	Remove tops, trim and scrape or peel. Leave small carrots whole and cut large carrots into ½ in. cubes, slices, or strips.	Whole- 5 min Cubes, slices, or strips- 3 min	Whole: boil 6-8 min Cut-up: boil 5-7min Bake- 75 min at 325° F, breaking apart after 30 min. Add frozen to sauces, soups, casseroles, stews, or to a stir-fry during cooking.
Cauliflower	Cut into 1 inch pieces.	3 min	Boil- 3-5 min
Celery	Trim and cut into 1 in. pieces.	3 min	Add frozen to sauces, soups, casseroles, stews, or to a stir-fry during cooking.
Celeriac	Remove skin. Cut into 1 inch pieces	2 min	See Carrots.
Corn- whole kernel	Remove husks and silk.	4 min- cut kernels from cob and freeze on tray before packing.	Boil- 4-5 min
Corn- on cob	Remove husks and silk. Trim cobs to even lengths.	Small- 7 min Medium- 9 min Large- 11 min	Thaw 2 hr; boil 3-5 min
Eggplant	Slice or cube	Roast	Drop the frozen cubes into soups or stir fries. Rounds: remove needed number.
Fruit/Melons	Cube. Can leave berries	None.	Place berries or fruit in a

	whole. Lay them flat on a baking pan. Freeze until firm, a few hours. Transfer to freezer bags and store.		single layer on a plate at room temperature or in the fridge. Do not line with paper towel as this will absorb the natural juices.
Garlic	Peel outer skin.	Do not blanch. Freeze on tray before packing.	Thaw- 20 min Chop and add to sauces, soups, casseroles, stews, or to a stir-fry during cooking.
Greens- Swiss chard, collards, kale, mustard greens, spinach, turnip greens	Remove tough stems and imperfect leaves. For chard, cut into 1 in. pieces or separate leafy parts from stalks and cut into 4 in. pieces. Can also use to make into smoothie base and freeze (see recipe at end).	Greens- 2 min Collards and stems- 3 min Keeps for 6 months.	Boil- 1-2 min Thaw smoothie base and add fruit of choice.
Herbs	Chop or slice.	Do not blanch. Measure into Tbsps. and freeze in ice cube tray before packing.	Add frozen to sauces, soups, casseroles, stews, or to a stir-fry during cooking.
Kohlrabi	Remove tops and roots; Wash, peel and leave whole or cut into 1/2-inch cubes	Whole – 3 min Cubed – 1 ½ min	Add frozen to sauces, soups, casseroles, stews, or to a stir-fry during cooking.
Leeks	Wash and slice or dice	1 minute	Use as you would onions.
Mushrooms	Slice and sauté 2 cups mushrooms in 2 tbsp butter for 4 min.	None	Reheat- 15 min
Onions	Remove outer skin, root, stem ends, and chop.	None Freeze on tray before packing.	Add frozen to sauces, soups, casseroles, stews, or to a stir-fry during cooking.
Parsnips	Remove stem and root ends, peel, and cut into 1 in. finger or ½ in. slices.	1 min	Boil- 7-8 min Bake- 45-55 min at 325° F
Peas	Shell.	2 min	Boil- 3-5 min
Peppers, green or red	Remove stem, seed, leave whole, cut in half, or chop.	None	Add frozen to sauces, soups, casseroles, stews, or to a stir-fry during cooking. Thaw- 1 hr, stuff and bake
Potatoes, mashed	Place in mounds on	None	Thaw- 30 min



vines Binghamton Farm Share
www.vinesgardens.org/farmshare 607-238-3522



only	baking sheet. Freeze 1 hour & pack in containers.		Reheat- 15-20 min
Pumpkin- mashed	Prepare.	None	Reheat- 30 min
Rhubarb	Cut stalks into 1-inch pieces; lay them flat on a baking pan. Freeze until firm, a few hours. Transfer to freezer bags and store.	None	The frozen rhubarb can be added directly to baked goods and pies while still frozen.
Rutabaga, turnip	Peel and dice. Boil until tender and mash if desired.	Diced- 2 min	Reheat- 30 min
Squash: vegetable marrow, zucchini	Trim and cut into ½ in. slices.	2 min	Thaw- 5 min Boil- 6-8 min
Squash: acorn, butternut, hubbard	Cut in half and remove seeds and fibers. Cut into pieces, bake until tender, cool and remove from rind. Mash if desired.	Diced- 2 min	Diced: boil 7-8 min; bake 60-75 min at 325° F Mashed: reheat 30 min
Spaghetti squash	Cut in half and remove seeds. Cook until tender and cool. Pull a fork lengthwise through to separate into long strands.	None Keeps for 9 months frozen.	Strands: reheat 30 min
Tomatoes	Blanch for 30 sec, cool, remove skin, cut in half crosswise, and remove seeds. Or just place whole tomatoes in a bag.	None	Add frozen to sauces, soups, casseroles, stews, or to a stir-fry during cooking.

The Simple Green Smoothie Formula (makes 2 servings- 32 oz): 60% fruits to 40% leafy greens

2 cups leafy greens
(spinach, kale, romaine, bok choy, swiss chard, collards)



2 cups liquid base
(water, coconut water, coconut milk, almond milk)



3 cups ripe fruit (banana, mango, berries, orange, avocado, peach, pear, apple, pineapple, grapes)



vines Binghamton Farm Share
www.vinesgardens.org/farmshare 607-238-3522



Blend leafy greens and liquid base together first. You can simply freeze this and add fruits later or add fruits now, blend again, and then freeze.

