



Freeze your Vegetable Harvest

Extend the benefits of your summer garden.

The end of the growing season does not have to mean the end of a gardener's supply of home-grown vegetables. Most freshly picked produce can be saved for months if preserved properly. Freezing is an economical and simple method to continue enjoying the fruits of your labor all winter long.

Salt Soak

Soaking of some vegetables in a salt solution is recommended to draw out possible insects. Soak for ½ hour in solution of 1 Tbsp. of salt per 1 quart of water. This is recommended for use with Broccoli, Cauliflower and Brussels sprouts.

Blanching

Preheating is necessary for all vegetables to stop them from losing flavor, color and/or getting tough.

Time needed is based on the size and texture of the vegetable. Blanching in boiling water is easy. Use no more than 1lb of vegetables for 4 quarts of boiling water. Submerge vegetable in water for required time (see chart). **It is essential that vegetables are immediately submerged in icy water to cool quickly.** A wire basket or cheesecloth is ideal for dunking and fast cooling. Spread out on clean paper towel, pat dry and it is ready to be packed.

Some vegetables can be blanched using steam or in the microwave.

Dry Packing

Place freezer-ready vegetables in a single layer on any freezer-ready tray. If possible, sharp-freeze prepared vegetables at approximately -20F. Most kitchen freezers store food between 0 degrees-5 degrees Fahrenheit. Deep freezers and chests can be set to a lower temperature. The lower initial freezing temperature will allow pieces to freeze individually. Then pour the frozen vegetables into freezer appropriate container and seal. Vegetables frozen separately in this manner can now be used as needed with remains returned to freezer.

Vegetable	Preparation	Blanching	Packing
Asparagus	Wash, sort by size, cut off tough ends, cut to uniform size	Boil: Thin stalks 2min Medium 3min, Thick 4min	Alternate spears top to bottom or if upright, all spears down, leave headroom. Seal; freeze.
Beans-Lima	Shell, wash, sort by size	Boil: small 2min, medium 3min, large 4min	½ inch headroom Seal; freeze.
Beans- Snap, String, Green, Italian	Wash, Cut in 1-2 inch pieces, slice length -wise or leave whole if young and tender	Soft Boil: 3 minutes	½ inch headroom Seal; freeze.
Beets	Wash and sort for size, max 3". Leave tail and ½ inch of stem so juice does not leak out.	Boil: 25-30 min for small 45-50 min for medium	Cool, slip off skins, trim, cut into slices or cubes. ½ inch headroom for cubes, none for sliced or whole.
Broccoli	Peel course stalks, trim leaves and blemishes, split if large. Salt soak ½ hour	Steam: 5min stalks Boil: 3min stalks	Leave no headroom Seal; freeze.
Brussels Sprouts	Salt soak, wash, trim outer leaves, sort by size	Boil: small heads 3min, medium 4min, large 5 min	Leave no headroom Seal; freeze.
Cabbage (use for cooked dishes)	Trim course outer leaves, cut heads in medium or course shreds, thin wedges or separate leaves.	Boil: 1 ½ minutes	Leave ½ inch headroom Seal; freeze.
Carrots	Remove tops, wash, and peel, leave baby ones whole, cut others into ¼ inch cubes, thin slices or lengthwise strips.	Boil: tiny whole ones 5 min, dice slices or strips 2 min	Leave ½ inch headroom Seal; freeze.
Cauliflower	Break or cut florets into 1" pieces, salt soak, wash, drain.	Boil: salted water (1 tsp per quart) 3 min	Leave no headroom Seal; freeze
Celery (use for cooked dishes)	Strip course strings from young stalks; wash, trim and cut 1" pieces. Leaves may be minced	Boil: salted water (1 tsp per quart) 3 min	Leave no headroom Seal; freeze

Vegetable	Preparation	Blanching	Packing
	for separate storage.		
Corn	<u>Whole Kernel</u> : choose ears with thin, sweet milk. Husk, remove silky strands, and wash. <u>Cream style</u> : choose ears with thick, starchy milk Husk, remove silky strands and wash. <u>On-the Cob</u> : Choose ears with thin sweet milk. Husk, remove silky strands, wash, sort for size.	Boil: 4 min Boil: 4 min Boil : small ears, less than 1 ¼ “ diameter for 7min. Medium ears to 1 ½ for 9min. Large ears for 11 min.	Cut from cobs at 2/3 depth. Leave ½ inch head room. Cut from cob at center of kernel. Scrape cob with back of knife to force out hearts of kernels and juice, mix with cut corn. Leave ½ inch head room. In containers or wrap in moisture/vapor-resistant material.
Eggplant	Choose glossy small fruits w/tender seeds. Very young eggplant need not be peeled.	Steam: diced or small slices 2 min. Up to 5 min for thick slices. Chill in cold water with lemon juice 4tsp per gallon.	Leave ½ inch headroom Seal; freeze
Greens, Garden	Remove imperfect leaves, trim away tough midribs and stems. Cut large leaves in pieces. Wash carefully, lifting leaves from water to let silt settle.	Boil: Salted water (1 tsp per gallon, shake pot to keep leaves separated. Spinach, kale, chard, mustard, beet and turnip for 2 min. Collards for 3 min.	Leave ½ inch headroom Seal; freeze
Mushrooms	Wash carefully in cold water. Cut off ends and stems, mushrooms larger than 1”, slice or quarter.	<u>Steam</u> (when serving cold): in one layer, whole for 5 min, quarters/caps for 3 ½ minutes, slices 3 min. <u>Pre-cook</u> (when serving hot): sauté in skillet until nearly done. Freeze in pan juices.	Leave ½ inch headroom Seal; freeze
Okra (use in soups and stews)	Wash and cut off stems. Careful not to open the seed cells.	Boil: Small pods 3 min, large pods 4 min	Leave whole or cut into crosswise slices. Leave ½ inch headroom. Seal; freeze
Peas, Black-eyed (cowpeas)	Shell, use only tender peas.	Boil: 2 min	Leave ½ inch headroom Seal; freeze
Peas, Green	Shell, use only tender sweet peas.	Boil: 1 ½ min.	Leave ½ inch headroom Seal; freeze
Peppers, Green (Bell, Sweet)	Wash, cut out stems, seeds and white membranes.	Blanching not necessary: May precook halves for 3min or slices for 2 min to soften to condense space needed for packing.	Blanched: Leave ½ inch headroom Raw: leave no headroom Seal; freeze.
Peppers, Hot	Wash and stem	No blanching necessary	Leave no headroom. Seal; freeze.
Squash, Summer & Zucchini	Use young squash with small seeds and tender rinds. Cut off blossom and stem ends. Wash and cut in slices.	Boil: 3 min. Steam: 3-4 min.	Leave ½ inch headroom Seal; freeze.
Sweet Potatoes	Use medium/large sweet potatoes that have air-dried (cured). Can store whole, sliced or mashed. Sort for size; wash. Leave skins on.	Precook: Cook until almost tender, in water, steam, pressure cooker or oven. Cool. Peel; cut in halves, slices or mash.	Dip peeled potatoes in ½ cup of lemon juice mixed in 1qt of water to prevent darkening. Mashed potatoes mix in 2 tbs. Orange or lemon juice per qt Leave ½ inch headroom Seal; freeze.
Tomatoes	Stew: Remove stem ends and cores of ripe tomatoes; peel and quarter.	Cook: covered enamel or stainless steel kettle, gently in own juice until tender 10-20 minutes. Put kettle in cold water to cool contents.	Leave ½ inch headroom Seal; freeze
Turnips (white)	Store in root cellar. Wash, cube & freeze or cook fully and mash.		Leave ½ inch headroom Seal; freeze.