

Prepared and
Precooked Foods
for the
Freezer



CONTENTS

	Page
MANAGING YOUR FREEZER	3
TYPES OF FOOD TO FREEZE	4
STORAGE TEMPERATURE	4
CONTAINERS AND WRAPPINGS	5
Types of Containers and Wrapping	5
Packing and Packaging Techniques	6
PREPARING PRECOOKED FOODS FOR THE FREEZER	7
Appetizers and Hors d'oeuvres	8
Breads — Quick	8
Breads — Yeast	9
Cakes	10
Candies	11
Cookies	11
Dairy Foods	12
Eggs	13
Frostings	14
Frozen Desserts	14
Fruit Desserts	14
Gravies	14
Jams	14
Leftovers	14
Main Dishes	15
Packed Lunches	15
Pies and Pastries	16
Plate Lunches	17
Puddings	18
Salads	18
Sandwiches	19
Sauces	20
Soups	20
Special Foods and Baby Foods	20
Stuffings	20
Vegetables	20
REMEMBER YOUR FREEZING ABC'S	21
TO REFREEZE OR NOT TO REFREEZE?	22
CAN FROZEN FOOD BE REFROZEN?	23

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Prepared and Precooked Foods for the Freezer

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MANAGING YOUR FREEZER

Your freezer can save you time and energy. A well-managed freezer can save trips to the market. You can buy in large quantities and store foods in season when they are plentiful.

With a well-stocked freezer, you can serve quick and nutritious family meals. You can produce delicious company meals in a short time with a minimum of last-minute preparation.

Freezing precooked and prepared foods enables you to choose the time you spend on meal planning and preparation. Work done ahead means less time spent just before serving the meal.

It is important to keep foods moving in and out of the freezer. Frequent turnover means greater use of freezer space and a lower cost per pound of food stored. Also, you can usually serve higher quality meals because the foods are used before they are stored too long. The rule for a continuous supply of high-quality frozen foods is "first in - first out."



Figure 1. Orderly storage

Foods in Freezer

Type	Pkg Size	No. Pkgs	Date Frozen	Location in Freezer	No. Pkgs Removed
Beef stew	pint	8	9/60	Rt. Bottom Front	III I
Hamburgers	1 lb.	10	10/60	Lf. Top Back	IIII
Apple pie	9 inch	6	9/60	Rt. Top Front	II

Figure 2. Record

The author gratefully acknowledges the cooperation of the Food Science Department of the College of Agriculture and the Home Economics Department of Douglass College.

A record, fastened on the freezer or conveniently placed nearby, is essential in order to know what foods are in the freezer and when they were put there. The recorded information should include: name or type of food, package size, date frozen, location in the freezer and number of packages put into and removed from freezer.

For added convenience, each package should be labeled with the date frozen, name of food, number of servings, final preparation directions and the storage time limit.

Crayon, special pen or grease pencil can be used for labeling.

Keeping like-foods together reduces the time for keeping the freezer open when removing packages. Place the latest packages in the bottom or back of the freezer.

TYPES OF FOOD TO FREEZE

Only foods of high quality are worth freezing. Freezing and holding do not improve the quality of food.

Precooked foods worth freezing are those that usually require a long preparation or a variety of ingredients or utensils. They include main dishes such as casseroles, chili con carne, meat loaf, meat balls in sauce, baked beans, stews, soups and chowders, breads, cakes, cookies and pies.

Because they can be cooked in the time it takes to thaw them, freezer space is wasted on potatoes, spaghetti, noodles, and rice unless they are in combination dishes.

Some leftovers are not satisfactory when frozen and reheated because they become overcooked.

It is often better to freeze the ingredients of meat pies and casseroles separately. The food thaws more rapidly in small quantities and can be used in different combinations.

For added convenience, foods can be wrapped and frozen in individual or meal-size portions.

Preparing, wrapping and freezing a week's supply of sandwiches saves the homemaker many minutes on work day mornings.

It is important to remember not to overload the freezer with too many unfrozen foods. This prevents the new items from freezing quickly, thereby reducing their quality.

If freezer is small, carefully select the foods to be stored. Avoid foods that can be kept in the refrigerator such as butter, cheese, bacon and cold cuts.

STORAGE TEMPERATURE

Do not allow the temperature of your freezer to go above 0° F. Fluctuating temperatures cause loss of quality.

CONTAINERS AND WRAPPINGS

Foods to be frozen are wrapped to keep moisture in, air out. Materials must resist grease and oil, be stainproof, liquidproof, give no odor or taste to a food, and be sturdy. All wrappings should adhere to surface of the food yet lift off easily whether food is thawed or frozen. Ordinary kraft or waxed papers do not have the above characteristics.

Types of Containers and Wrappings



Figure 3. Containers for liquid foods



Figure 4. Wrapping and sealing materials

Adequate reusable freezing containers are:

1. cartons with replaceable liners.
2. waxed, fiberboard, plastic, aluminum or glass direct-fill containers.
3. plastic polyethylene bags in a variety of sizes.
4. baking dishes of glass, aluminum or paper pie plates with metal rims.
5. coffee and shortening cans (see page 6).

Adequate wrappings are:

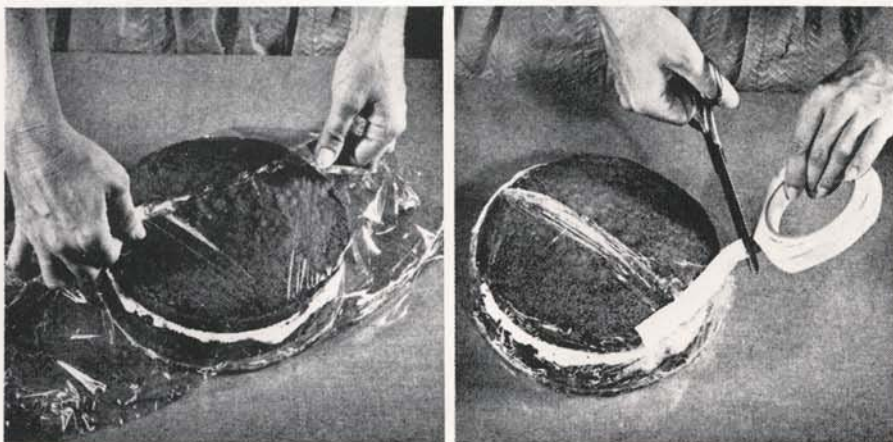
1. moisture-vapor-proof transparent plastic freezer films.
2. freezer aluminum foil.
3. heavily waxed freezer paper.
4. laminated papers (two or more layers of materials bonded together).
5. cellophane made for freezing purposes.
6. pliofilm.

Packaging materials include:

1. freezer tape.
2. stockinette — tubular mesh that holds cellophane close to food and provides protection to cellophane and glass jars.
3. plastic-covered metal strips or rubber bands for closing plastic bags.

Packing and Packaging Techniques

1. Be sure that wrappings fit tightly. Exclude air from the package. Air spaces cause off-flavor and allow the food to dry out.
2. When packing foods in a plastic film or polyethylene bag, press out air in filled bag by squeezing up and in on bag, or dip the package in hot water to just below the top. Remove the package from the hot water and twist the top tightly. Fasten the twist with a string, rubber band or plastic covered metal strip. Put the package in carton or freezer paper to protect from breakage.
3. Glass jars designed for freezing or canning can be used when expansion headspace is necessary. Allow 1 to 1½ inches of headspace in glass jars. Use lids and rubbers to seal jars but do not heat seal. Narrow-necked bottles will break if liquid foods are frozen in them.
4. Coffee cans with plastic covers are not tight enough to prevent loss of moisture and surface drying. Use only with an inner liner of cellophane, pliofilm or similar material.
5. Wax lined cartons are not suitable for hot foods as wax will melt.
6. The drugstore wrap is recommended for freezer packages. Place food or carton in center of freezer paper, bring opposite sides of paper together. Fold down at center top two or three times until tight around food or carton. Fold ends under securely and seal.



Figures 5 and 6. Packaging cake with drugstore wrap

7. Be sure containers such as glass, tin or aluminum will stand boiling water before filling them.
8. When plastic freezer containers are used, pack them solidly and cover foods with sauce or gravy to help exclude air. Careless packing can result in poor flavor after reheating.

PREPARING PRECOOKED FOODS FOR THE FREEZER

Foods should be prepared as if to serve immediately, but cooking time should be shortened slightly to allow for additional cooking during reheating. Cool foods promptly after cooking and package in amounts to be eaten in one meal.

To cool quickly, set uncovered pan of food in ice water, in running cold water or on ice. This will stop the cooking action, retard and prevent the growth of bacteria which causes spoilage and reduce the possibility of a leftover taste.



Figure 7. Packaging in casserole



Figure 8. Packaging stew in freezer jar

Casserole dishes which are heat proof can be put in the freezer. Simply cover with freezer wrap and seal with tape or tape the casserole cover and bottom together. If you cannot spare the baking utensil, line it with freezer wrap. Pour in food, when frozen, remove the food and wrap separately. Freezing in small casseroles is better than in larger ones unless food can be thawed entirely before reheating. Food in the larger casseroles may burn around the edges before it is warm in the center. Converted rice is an excellent binder for casseroles. Crumb or cheese toppings should be added when food is reheated.

To give you a gauge for number of servings: a quart container yields 4 to 6 servings; and a pint container, 2 to 3 servings.

Spices are affected by freezing. Pepper, cloves, synthetic vanilla, celery seasonings and curry become stronger as do fresh onions. Commercially dried onions do not become stronger during freezing. Monosodium glutamate will improve the flavor of some foods if added to the food as you would in regular cooking.

There are a few foods that do not freeze satisfactorily. Fried foods (except french fried potatoes and french fried onion rings), and potato cubes in soup and stew are examples. Hard-cooked egg whites become tough when frozen. Sauces thickened with egg yolks are smoother than those made with whole eggs. (Substitute two yolks for one egg.) Processed cheese makes a smoother sauce than natural cheese.

Appetizers and Hors d'oeuvres

Many appetizers and canapes freeze well, especially those with meat, egg, cheese or nut fillings. Before packaging, spread appetizers in single layers on metal pans and freeze. Place an assorted variety in a box with a layer of moisture resistant paper between layers of appetizers. Package toast or crisp base appetizers separately from others. Overwrap the box with freezer paper. **Storage time: 3 to 4 weeks.**

Breads — Quick

Use double-acting baking powder when making quick breads for freezing. Quick breads may be frozen baked or unbaked. However, when frozen unbaked the storage life is shorter. When frozen baked, the breads may take up less space, but they may be less tender.

Muffins may be baked, cooled and wrapped in freezer wrapping or packed in folding waxed cartons and overwrapped with freezer wrapping. The carton prevents crushing. The package should be tightly sealed. **Storage time for baked muffins: up to 3 months.** To serve, thaw for 1 hour in package, or heat (if package is aluminum foil) in a 300°F. oven for 20 minutes, or remove from wrapping and heat in a roll warmer or in paper bag that has been sprinkled with water.

To freeze unbaked muffins, line tin with paper cups. Fill $\frac{3}{4}$ full with batter. Freeze. Remove and wrap in freezer wrapping. Seal tightly, label. **Storage time for unbaked muffins: 2 to 4 weeks.** To serve, thaw at room temperature for 1 hour, bake in a 400°F. oven for 20 minutes.

Fruit and nut breads may be baked, cooled, wrapped in freezer wrapping, sealed and labeled for the freezer. **Storage time for fruit and nut breads: up to 2 months.** To serve, thaw in paper at room temperature, or if wrapped in aluminum foil, heat in a 400°F. oven for 20 minutes. For less crumbling, slice fruit and nut breads while partially frozen.

Biscuits may be frozen baked or unbaked; however, frozen biscuits do not save the homemaker much time. To freeze unbaked, place biscuits on baking sheet and freeze hard. Pack in freezer carton, separating layers of biscuits with two sheets of waxed paper. Wrap and seal. **Storage time for unbaked biscuits: up to 1 month.** To serve, bake unthawed biscuits in a 425°F. oven for 20 to 25 minutes. Or thaw $\frac{1}{2}$ hour at room temperature and bake in a 425° F. oven for 12 to 15 minutes.

To freeze baked biscuits, wrap in freezer foil or plastic freezer film or cellophane, and seal. **Storage time for baked biscuits: up to 3 months.** To serve, heat in a 250°F. oven for 20 minutes.

Waffles and pancakes may be baked, frozen, and reheated in toaster. **Storage time for baked waffles and pancakes: up to 2 months.**

Waffle and pancake batter may be frozen in rigid containers. **Storage time for batter: up to 1 week.** Thaw batter, thinning with milk if necessary. The batter may be thawed overnight in the refrigerator.

Breads — Yeast

Yeast breads and rolls are best baked before freezing. Use standard recipes. Coffee cakes, pecan rolls and products with high proportions of sugar and shortening are good choices for the freezer. Bake and cool the product. Wrap in freezer wrapping, seal, label and freeze. **Storage time: up to 6 months.** To serve cold, thaw in the package at room temperature for 1 hour or longer. To serve hot, place package in a 300°F. oven for 15 to 25 minutes. If freezer wrapping will not stand heat, place product in paper bag sprinkled with water and heat in oven, or in roll warmer.



Figure 9. Packaging rolls



Figure 10. Packaging bread

Partially baked rolls are convenient. Bake in a 275°F. oven for about 20 minutes in order to bake center but not brown rolls. Freeze. **Storage time: up to 4 months.** To serve, thaw package 10 to 15 minutes and bake in a 450°F. oven for 5 to 10 minutes or until browned.

Do not freeze cans of refrigerator rolls. Commercially baked breads and rolls can be frozen successfully. **Storage time in original wrapping: 2 weeks, rewrapped in freezer paper: up to 3 months.** French bread can be sliced and buttered with garlic butter, wrapped, sealed and frozen. When ready to serve, warm in a 300° F. oven 20 to 30 minutes. Rolls can be stored in plastic freezer bags closed tightly with a plastic covered wire. To serve, remove from bag and place on baking sheet and warm in a 400°F. oven 10 to 15 minutes.

Cakes

All varieties of baked cakes, those made with or without fat, home-made or made with a mix, can be successfully frozen. One-bowl method cakes stay moist because they contain high proportions of sugar and shortening.

Because spices become stronger in the freezer, it is well to reduce the amount to one-half that called for in your recipes. Use pure vanilla rather than synthetic types because the latter may produce an off-flavor.

Recent research indicates that a combination of butter and vegetable shortening will produce the best flavored chocolate cakes.

Cake batters can be frozen in greased baking pans, wrapped and sealed. **Storage time for batters: about 2 months.** To serve, layer cakes may be thawed about 30 minutes at room temperature or put in oven directly from the freezer. Bake at usual oven temperature, but allow longer baking time.



Figures 11 and 12. Packaging cupcakes

Cakes may be frozen in loaf, cupcake, layer or tube forms. For convenience, freeze meal-size portions — halves, quarters or slices. Cake may be frozen with or without a frosting.

Unfrosted baked cakes should be placed on a piece of foil-covered cardboard that fits the bottom of the cake. Wrap in cellophane, transparent plastic freezer film or aluminum foil and seal tightly. Freeze. Place in carton or in baking pan to prevent crushing. **Storage time: up to 6 months.**

Freeze frosted cakes first and then package.

Baked cupcakes may be frozen either individually wrapped and packed in a carton or tied in stockinette ball and chain style. **Storage time: up to 6 months.**

Do not allow the temperature of your freezer to go above 0°F.

Candies

If candy is purchased in a box, wrap box well, seal and freeze. Homemade candies, such as fudge, candied fruit penuche, divinity stuffed dates and fruit roll can be packed in a box lined with polyethylene wrap. Separate each layer with two layers of waxed paper or cellophane, then wrap for freezing. Coffee cans and plastic containers with tight fitting lids can be used. Seal the covers with plastic tape. **Storage time: from 3 to 6 months.** The white coating sometimes found on frozen candy will disappear during thawing.

Cookies

Bar, dropped, rolled and refrigerator types of cookies may be frozen baked or unbaked. Recipes high in fat and low in moisture are best for freezing. Unbaked doughs are easier to package and take less storage space than baked. **Storage time for unbaked doughs: up to 6 months.**

Baked cookies: Cool cookies. Wrap in aluminum foil, plastic, or freezer paper. Pack in metal containers, if desired, for further protection. Freeze. To serve, thaw at room temperature for half an hour in sealed package or on plate; or heat in a 350°F. oven 20 minutes.

Unbaked cookies:

Drop type — freeze batter in wide-mouthed jars or freezer cartons. To serve, thaw at room temperature until soft enough to drop onto baking sheet. Or freeze individual unbaked cookies on sheet. Remove and store in top opening boxes, separating layers of cookies with freezer wrapping or two sheets of waxed paper. Cookies may be baked without thawing.



Figure 13.
Packaging refrigerator-type cookie roll



Figure 14.
Packaging drop cookies

Do not allow the temperature of your freezer to go above 0°F.

Refrigerator type — form dough into rolls, wrap in freezer wrapping and seal. Freeze. To serve, let roll stand for a few minutes at room temperature. Slice ¼-inch thick, arrange on sheet and bake.

Bar type — freeze batter in wide-mouthed jars or freezer cartons. To serve, thaw in carton until soft enough to pour into baking pan. Another method of freezing bar type cookies is to pour batter into baking pan at room temperature and wrap with freezer wrapping. Freeze. To serve, bake in pan without thawing.

Rolled type — roll and cut dough into desired shapes. Store in top opening freezer box, separating layers with freezer paper. Wrap and seal in freezer wrapping. Freeze. To serve, bake without thawing.

Storage time for baked and unbaked cookies: up to 6 months.

Dairy Foods

Butter — salted or unsalted butter may be frozen. Wrap and freeze. **Storage time: up to 6 months.** To serve, thaw in refrigerator.

Cheese — pasteurized process American-type cheese should be stored in the original polyethylene package and overwrapped with aluminum foil. **Storage time: 1 to 2 months.**

Natural cheddar and Swiss cheeses retain flavor but can become dry when stored in the freezer. Wrap well. **Storage time: 6 to 12 months.** Thaw in refrigerator.

Uncreamed cottage cheese frozen in the original carton retains flavor but becomes slightly dry. **Storage time: 1 to 2 weeks.** Thaw in refrigerator.

Freeze plain cream cheese in the original foil package plus an overwrapping of moisture-vapor-proof paper. **Storage time: 4 months.**

Cream — with a high fat content may be frozen, preferably with ½ cup sugar added to each quart. **Storage time: up to 3 months.** Thaw in refrigerator.

Whipped Cream — it is convenient to freeze ready to top desserts. Whip the cream and sweeten with confectioner's sugar. Freeze in mounds or rosettes made with pastry tube on a cookie sheet or tray. They thaw quickly. Wrap and freeze. **Storage time: up to 1 month.**

Ice Cream — can be stored in the container in which it comes but because container is not always moisture-vapor-proof, wrap in approved freezer wrap or place it in a polyethylene bag which can be fastened by twisting the top, folding it over and securing with a rubber band.

Homemade ice cream freezes well. To make and store homemade ice cream, pour into ice cube trays or shallow metal pans. Freeze until mushy. Remove and whip in a chilled bowl with a mixer until double in bulk. Store in cartons. **Storage time: up to 3 months.** To preserve freshness after opening, place a sheet of transparent plastic freezer film over remaining section each time some is scooped out to prevent the formation of crystals.

For best results, keep freezer temperature at or below 0°F.

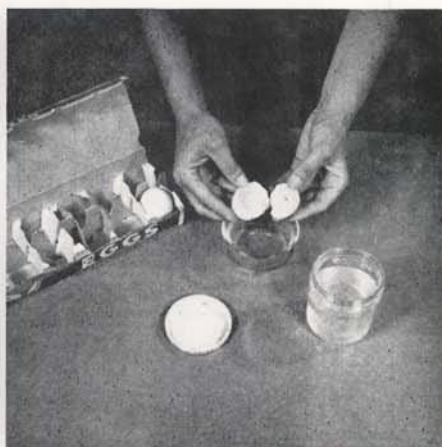


Figure 15. Packaging eggs in ice cube tray Figure 16. Packaging egg whites in quantity

Eggs

Fresh, raw eggs may be frozen. They can be broken out of the shell and frozen whole, or the yolks and whites may be frozen separately.

Egg whites may be frozen "as is." A pint container will hold approximately 11 unbeaten egg whites. It takes $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons of thawed egg white to equal 1 egg white. Frozen egg whites are used like fresh ones and produce equal results.

Egg yolks require the addition of salt or sweetening to prevent them from becoming gummy during freezing. Your choice of sweetening or salt will depend on the use you expect to make of the egg yolks. Add 1 tablespoon sugar or corn syrup to each cup of yolks. Or, add 1 teaspoon salt to each cup of yolks. Label packages accurately noting additions. It takes 1 tablespoon of egg yolk to equal 1 egg yolk. When you use these egg yolks, make allowances for the extra sweetening or salt.

Whole eggs may have either salt or sugar added. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoon sugar or corn syrup to each cup of whole eggs. Or, add $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt to each cup of whole eggs. It takes $2\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons mixed white and yolk to equal 1 whole egg.

To package small quantities of eggs, pour into small paper muffin cups in muffin tins and freeze. Remove, wrap, seal and label.

For larger quantities, jars and waxed cartons are good choices. Head-space should be allowed for expansion during freezing.

To package in amounts of 1 egg, or 2 whites, or 2 yolks, spoon these quantities into the ice cube tray. Freeze and wrap the egg cubes in freezer wrapping. Pack in waxed cartons. **Storage time for eggs: up to 6 months.** When thawed, use promptly.

Frostings

Uncooked frostings and those made with confectioner's sugar freeze best. Fat in the frosting prevents drying and crystallizing. Candy type frostings such as fudge and penuche can be stored for a short time (after 3 to 4 weeks they may crack). Boiled and other soft frostings and cream fillings are not suitable for cakes to be frozen because they separate. Frostings made with beaten egg whites dry out and become crystalline.

Frozen Desserts

Frozen desserts such as ices, mousse, sherbet, fruit sponge and Bavarian creams can be frozen. Recipes used should have a cooked base, and use gelatin or marshmallow. Recipes with whipped egg whites are not successful. Mousses can be poured into rigid containers, sealed and frozen. Fruit sponges and Bavarian creams should be frozen before they are set. **Storage time for frozen desserts: 2 months. Storage time for ices and sherbets: up to 6 months.** To serve, thaw in refrigerator or at room temperature until proper serving consistency.

Fruit Desserts

Fruit desserts suitable for freezing include baked apples, rhubarb, apple or cranberry sauce, fruit pulp and fruit combinations. **Storage time: up to 1 year.**

Gravies

Gravies may be frozen in plastic containers. Allow 1/2-inch headspace. To serve, heat in the top of a double boiler. Beat with rotary beater if separation has occurred.

Jams

Uncooked jam stored in freezer retains the fruit's fresh flavor and quality. Or, if you want to postpone jam or jelly making, prepare the fruit as usual. Place the prepared unsweetened fruit or fruit juice in moisture-vapor-proof containers and freeze immediately. When you're ready to make jam or jelly, thaw the unsweetened fruit in the container and proceed. **Storage time of uncooked jam: up to 6 months.**

Leftovers

It's a convenience to be able to freeze leftovers and serve them a few weeks later. Leftover cooked meats and poultry, cooked vegetables, and combinations of these foods retain quality for short periods of storage. Vegetables are often overcooked when they are thawed and reheated.

Separate leftover poultry meat from the stuffing for freezing. The meat can be covered with gravy to retain flavor and prevent drying. Package enough for individual servings or for one family meal. To reheat gravies and poultry mixtures, bring to boiling point throughout.

In handling all leftovers, it is essential that they be chilled immediately, packaged quickly and frozen rapidly. This is particularly important in warm weather. Special care should be taken to follow these rules with gravies and sauces.

You can combine leftover foods for a casserole dish that will be ready to heat and serve when thawed. Some good combinations are: cut-up meat or poultry with rice or macaroni and gravy, slices of turkey or chicken with cooked asparagus or broccoli and gravy or canned mushroom soup, lima beans with cubed meat and gravy, cooked spinach alternating with layers of cooked zucchini squash and cream sauce plus a grated cheese topping, chopped beef casserole combinations, beef stew, cooked corn with stewed tomatoes and minced green pepper.

Leftover fruits can be cut up and combined for fruit cocktail. Or they can be made into cobblers ready to bake.

Main Dishes

Main dishes that freeze well include:

Baked beans	Lobster Newburg
Beef or veal stew	Meat balls in tomato sauce
Chicken gumbo	Meat sauce for spaghetti
Chicken loaf with sauce	Mexican rice
Chicken or turkey a la king	Pot roast of beef with vegetables
Chili con carne	Roast turkey or chicken slices packed in gravy
Chop suey	Shrimp a la king
Creamed meat, poultry and fish dishes	Shrimp Creole
Fish loaf or patties	Spanish rice
Ham loaf	Stewed chicken
Ham or chicken turnovers	Stuffed peppers
Hash	Swiss steak
Hungarian goulash	Veal birds
Lasagna	Veal fricassee

Packed Lunches

Sandwiches, fruit combinations, cake and cookies to be used for box lunches can be stored in the freezer. Frozen foods in the lunch box help keep other foods, such as lettuce, celery, carrot strips or fresh fruit crisp.

Frozen sandwiches and cake packed in a lunch box in the morning will thaw by noon. See SANDWICHES for additional information.

Freeze individual packages of cookies and cakes. They are handier to use in this form than opening a large quantity in order to remove a small portion.

Package each tart separately.

Fruit cup combinations may be packed in individual servings for use in packed lunches.

For best results, keep freezer temperature at or below 0°F.

Pies and Pastries

Depending on the type, pies and pastries may be frozen either baked or unbaked. Fruit and mince pies can be frozen either way. Pumpkin pie is better when frozen unbaked. Crusts with chiffon pie fillings are always baked before freezing. Certain pies do not freeze well — cream-type and custard may become grainy. Meringues shrink and become tough with freezing and it is preferable to add them after pie is taken from freezer.

Single pie crusts and tart shells may be made as usual, or made with cookies, cereal flakes, coconut, cooky or graham cracker crumbs. The unbaked shells or tarts can be frozen, removed from their plates and stacked with a paper pie plate at the top and at the bottom to support them. Wrap and store in freezer.

When using, slip shell into baking plate of correct size, prick and bake in an oven preheated to 425°F. for 12 to 15 minutes. Cool crust and pour in filling. If making pumpkin or similar pie, pour filling into frozen shell and bake according to recipe.

Double crust pies are prepared in the usual way. If they are frozen before baking, do not cut vents in the top crust. To serve, make steam vents, bake in a 400°F. oven for about 1 hour or until lightly brown.

If the double crust pie is to be frozen after baking, follow the directions for your favorite recipe, cool, wrap in freezer paper and freeze. To serve, warm in a 325°F. oven for 25-30 minutes.

Chiffon and pumpkin pies should be thawed at room temperature. Cream puffs may be stored filled or unfilled. Storage time: up to 1 month. To serve, thaw in wrapping for 10 minutes at room temperature. Before serving, top with chocolate sauce or whipped cream.



Figures 17 and 18. Packaging a baked pie

Ice cream pies (crumb or pastry crust), filled with layers of different flavored ice cream, and eclairs are best when served within 1 to 2 weeks.

Pie fillings require special preparation to prevent the loss of color and flavor.

Steam apple slices 2 minutes, cool and drain. Or dip raw apple slices in a solution of $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ascorbic acid added to 1 cup water. Solution is sufficient for dipping apples for four or five pies.

To prepare peaches, peel without scalding and slice. Mix peach slices with 1 tablespoon lemon juice or with a solution of $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ascorbic acid added to 1 tablespoon water.

Coat berries or cherries with a mixture of sugar and flour.

Use spices sparingly, especially cloves, as they may become bitter and cause discoloration.

To wrap a pie for the freezer, cover with a paper or aluminum foil pie plate for protection. Tape plate in place and then wrap (using drug-store wrap) in freezer wrapping, and label. If desired, it may be protected with a cover of stockinette or placed in a paper box. **Storage time for all pies: up to 3 months.**

Plate Lunches

The most practical type of precooked meal is represented by the main dish, the vegetables, the dessert, and perhaps rolls that have been frozen in separate packages. This type of precooked meal allows for variety through different combinations of food.

The "TV tray" type of frozen precooked meal, however, has a special appeal. Served occasionally, it represents a novelty for the family and a vacation from dinner planning and preparation for the homemaker.



Figure 19. Packaging plate meal

Since the "TV meal" usually consists of meat and two vegetables, it requires a salad, bread, and dessert to round out the meal.

The foods packaged together should be capable of retaining quality for approximately the same length of time and should require similar heating time. Most vegetables with the exception of lima beans, need only blanching before freezing in the tray.

Some meals that can be arranged on sectioned aluminum trays and covered with foil for freezing are suggested below:

Roast beef, sliced, with gravy, Creole rice, green peas.

Chicken a la king, mashed potato, green beans.

Roast turkey, sliced, candied sliced sweet potato, buttered beets.

Baked ham, sliced, raisin sauce, winter squash, carrots and peas.

Stuffed green pepper, buttered corn, baked apple.

Hash square, creamed asparagus, spiced peach.

Hamburger with mushroom sauce, french fried potatoes, creamed spinach.

Fried fish fillet, stuffed baked potato, broccoli.

Storage time: for best quality, store 3 weeks to 1 month.

Frozen tray meals should be heated in a 300°F. oven for serving.

For foods that are to be crisp, such as fried fish or french fried potatoes, uncover that portion of tray for the last 10 or 15 minutes.

Puddings

Steamed puddings, such as plum, may be frozen before or after steaming. **Storage time: 8 to 10 months.** To serve, thaw at room temperature for 6 hours and then steam or reheat an already steamed product. They may be made in individual or large sizes.

Rice, tapioca and bread puddings also freeze well. Prepare as usual, cool quickly in cold running water or ice water. Place in rigid container. Leave headspace. Overwrap. **Storage time: about 2 weeks.**

Salads

Not all salad ingredients freeze well so a careful selection is necessary. For example, crisp greens and fresh vegetables do not freeze well. Mayonnaise and cooked dressing used alone have a tendency to separate. For complete safety it is better not to freeze turkey, chicken, fish and seafood salads. Freeze the cooked meat and use when defrosted to save time.

Gelatin salads, aspics (using cooked vegetables) and frozen fruit salads, plain or combined with whipped cream, cottage cheese, cream cheese or mayonnaise freeze well. Use citrus fruits in salads as they freeze well and also tend to prevent the discoloration of the other fruits. Raw grapes and apples have a tendency to become soft and pithy in flavor. If nuts are used, try to freeze the salad immediately to prevent their darkening. Probably any salad you have found satisfactory for freezing in the ice cube tray of the refrigerator will freeze well.

Molded salads can be frozen in any size container or mold. Allow $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch headspace. To serve, defrost slightly, unmold and slice. Individual salads can be frozen, unmolded, wrapped in polyethylene and stored in plastic containers or poultry bags in the freezer. Lunch box salads can be placed in paper containers with lids. Since these are not moisture proof, an overwrap is necessary.

Sandwiches

Satisfactory fillings for frozen sandwiches can be made of peanut butter, American-type and cream cheese, sliced or ground meat, fish or chicken. Avoid fillings that include hard-cooked egg whites (which are toughened by freezing) and raw vegetables. Substitute dairy sour cream as a binder instead of mayonnaise. Mayonnaise separates and soaks into the bread. Jelly or jam also soaks into bread and makes it soggy.

To prepare sandwiches for the freezer, spread softened but not melted butter to the edge of the bread. This will prevent the filling from soaking into the bread. Frozen bread slices are easier to spread than fresh bread. All kinds of bread may be used for variety: white, whole wheat, rye, raisin, cheese, Boston brown, nut, or date.

Wrap each sandwich separately in freezer wrapping, using the drug-store wrap. (See page 6.) Seal, label, and freeze.

Storage time: up to 2 weeks. Sandwiches will require 1 to 2 hours to thaw in original wrapper at room temperature.

Dainty tea sandwiches and canapes may be placed on a tray wrapped in moisture-vapor-proof material, or frozen on tray and packed in an open-top carton. **Storage time:** up to 1 week. Thaw for one hour or more before serving.



Figure 20. Packaging open-faced sandwiches

Sauces

Meat spaghetti sauces can be prepared, packed in lined cartons or glass jars and frozen. **Storage time: 6 to 8 months.** To serve, remove from package and heat for an hour in the top of a double boiler over low heat.

Ice cream sauces can be made in quantity and frozen in small plastic containers. Marshmallow, chocolate and butterscotch sauces freeze well. Defrost in the top of the double boiler over low heat.

Soups

Soups can be prepared ahead of time and frozen. Vegetable, split pea, chowders, chicken noodle, onion, and concentrated meat and poultry stock freeze well. Vegetable purees, prepared in season, and stock made at your leisure, can be frozen in ice cube trays then packaged in plastic bags. Rice can be used in place of potatoes which become soggy when frozen. Macaroni and noodles are best added upon reheating. Soups made with a milk base do not freeze well.

Special Foods and Baby Foods

Foods for diabetics may be prepared and frozen without sugar or can be sweetened with a non-caloric sweetener. When substituting a non-caloric sweetener for sugar, follow the label directions.

Not all regular recipes can be adapted to a non-caloric sweetener. When sugar is creamed or beaten with another ingredient to develop bulk, the substitution can not be made. For such baked goods, follow recipes developed specifically for non-caloric sweeteners. When sugar is used only for sweetness, the substitution can be made.

Purees of vegetables and fruits for babies and convalescents may be made and frozen when the fruits and vegetables are in season.

It is often a convenience to freeze individual portions without salt or without fat for persons on special diets.

Stuffings

Do not stuff poultry until it is thawed and ready to cook. **Storage time of prepared stuffings: 3 to 4 weeks.**

Commercially stuffed and frozen poultry is available. This is possible because of the better rapid-cooling facilities and quality control.

Vegetables

Examples of vegetables suitable for freezing are baked beans, parsnip fritters, sweet potatoes either sliced, mashed or candied, Harvard beets, stuffed baked potatoes, eggplant with tomatoes, and french fried potatoes.

Vegetables freeze well in sauces. Do not overcook vegetables.

Prepare larger quantities of vegetables than are needed immediately. Pack and freeze leftovers. They can be reheated in double boiler as needed. Use leftovers to prepare a variety of combination dishes to be frozen.

REMEMBER YOUR FREEZING ABC'S

- Always keep the freezer temperature at 0°F.
- Be sure all foods frozen are of top quality.
- Consider your family's needs when stocking the freezer.
- Don't forget to wrap, label and store all packages properly.
- Every package added to the freezer removes some cold air while freezing; so do not add too many packages at one time.
- For the best use, plan the foods to be frozen carefully. Avoid those foods that can be prepared in a short time such as rice.
- Give yourself a treat, freeze your family's favorites now and serve later.

TO REFREEZE OR NOT TO REFREEZE?

(See table on page 23.)

1. Refreezing always causes loss of quality (texture, appearance, flavor), and it may cause loss of food values, too.
2. Freezing foods does not sterilize them—it only prevents further growth of bacteria as long as the food is kept in a proper frozen state. As soon as thawing starts, bacterial growth begins. The “punishment” that thawed frozen foods can undergo and still be safely refrozen depends on two important factors:
 - a. The nature and quality of the original food and the care with which it was handled and processed. This is of particular importance in dealing with highly perishable dishes, such as meat, fish, and poultry pies. If these foods have not been well selected and handled, the bacterial count at the time of freezing may be so high that spoilage will proceed very rapidly after thawing.
 - b. The length of time and the temperature to which the partially or wholly thawed food is exposed before refreezing.

The suggestions in the table on page 23 apply only to frozen foods that have been selected, handled, and processed under the best possible conditions as exemplified by well-known brands. These suggestions apply only to safety. Quality will always be sacrificed. The general rule, “Don’t re-freeze,” which appears on commercial frozen-food packages, still seems to be the best one. (Incidentally, this does not apply to cooked roasts, casseroles, or any made dish that you may prepare with frozen uncooked meat, poultry, or fish. This is really a “first-freezing” for the completed dish.)

The chart that follows is meant to help you avoid unnecessary waste in abnormal or emergency situations. Did you take something out of the freezer and then find you couldn’t use it that day? Were you unfortunately delayed in getting home from market on a hot day?

Was there a power failure in your community, or did you come home from vacation and find your freezer off? In these last two situations, here are some helpful facts to remember:

1. Food in a fully loaded freezer is likely to stay frozen for at least 2 days without power, even in summer. If only partially loaded, it will stay frozen for at least 1 day.
2. When power is interrupted, open the freezer as little as possible.
3. If power failure extends beyond 1 or 2 days, dry ice will keep the temperature in the freezer below freezing — 25 pounds in a 10-cubic-foot cabinet will be ample for 2 or 3 days if partially full — 3 to 4 days if fully loaded.
4. Food that has completely thawed in a freezer during prolonged non-operation will probably be unsatisfactory, and possibly unsafe, for use or refreezing.

CAN FROZEN FOODS BE SAFELY REFROZEN WHEN THEY HAVE:

(a)
completely thawed and
remained at room tempera-
ture for only a short and
known time (never more
than 2 to 3 hours)?

(b)
completely thawed and
remained at room tempera-
ture for a prolonged or
unknown time?

FROZEN UNCOOKED FOOD

Fruits	Yes	Probably safe — may be inedible due to fermentation.
Fruit Juice Concentrates	Yes, but flavor may be poor, and reconstituted juice will probably separate.	No. Fermentation may have proceeded too far — can may explode. Discard.
Vegetables	Yes	Questionable. Safer to discard.
Meat	Yes	Yes, if odor is normal. If there are "off" odors, discard.
Variety Meats (liver, kidney, heart, etc.)	Yes, if odor is normal. If there is the slightest "off" odor, discard.	No. Discard.
Poultry	Yes, if odor is normal. If there is the slightest "off" odor, discard.	No. Discard.
Fish and Shellfish	Yes, if odor is normal. If there is the slightest "off" odor, discard.	No. Discard.

FROZEN PREPARED AND PRECOOKED FOOD

Meat, Poultry, and Fish Pies, "Dinners," and Similar Prepared Dishes	No. Discard.	No. Discard.
Soups	No. Discard.	No. Discard.
Fruit Pies	Yes	Questionable. Safer to discard.
Ice Cream and Sherbet	Yes, but texture will be affected — less if you can beat once or twice during refreezing.	No. Discard.

All of these foods can be safely refrozen if only partially thawed or if completely thawed but still very cold. But remember: refrozen foods will never have the same quality they had originally.

Adapted from **Good Housekeeping**, 57th Street at 8th Avenue, New York 19, N. Y.



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