

Preparation Guide for Freezing Vegetables

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When vegetables are prepared, pack, leave recommended headspace, seal, label and freeze immediately. Headspace to allow between packed food and closure: Liquid pack – pints, 1/2 inch; quarts, 1 inch. Dry pack (vegetables packed without added liquid) – pints, 1/2 inch; quarts, 1/2 inch. Vegetables that pack loosely such as broccoli and asparagus require no headspace.

Vegetable	Method of Preparation	Blanching and Cooling Times*
ASPARAGUS	Discard tough stalks, wash well, sort according to thickness of stalk. Cut into short lengths or leave whole. Blanch, cool, and drain. Pack, leaving no headspace, or use moisture-vaporproof paper for wrapping whole spears.	Small stalks - 2 min. Med. stalks - 3 min. Large stalks - 4 min.
BEANS, LIMA	Shell, wash and sort according to size. Blanch and cool. Pack.	2 to 4 minutes according to size.
BEANS, SNAP GREEN OR WAX	Select young tender stringless beans that snap when broken. Wash, remove ends. Cut in 1 or 2 inch pieces or slice lengthwise into strips for Frenched snap beans. Blanch in boiling water. Chill promptly.	3 minutes
BROCCOLI	Select compact, dark green heads with tender stalks. Wash and trim. Split lengthwise into pieces so heads are not more than 1 1/2 inches across. Blanch 3 minutes or steam 5 minutes, cool and drain.	3 minutes
CARROTS	Select tender, mild flavored carrots. Peel. Leave small carrots whole. Slice others crosswise or lengthwise. Blanch, cool.	Small whole - 5 min. Sliced - 2 min.
CAULIFLOWER	Select firm white, compact heads. Break into pieces about 1 inch across. Wash, blanch and cool.	3 min. Add 4 tsp. salt to each gallon of boiling water
CORN-ON-COB	Select corn in thin, sweet milk stage. Husk, silk, trim, wash and sort ears according to size. Blanch and cool. Pack into containers or wrap in moisture-vaporproof material.	Small ears - 7 min. Med. ears - 9 min. Large ears - 11 min.
CORN, WHOLE KERNEL	Select corn in sweet milk stage. Husk, silk, trim and wash. Blanch and cool. Cut from cob at about two-thirds the depth of the kernels.	4 min.

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Vegetable	Method of Preparation	Blanching and Cooling Times*
CORN, CREAM STYLE	Cut corn from cob at about the center of the kernels. Scrape the cob with the back of the knife to remove juice and heart of the kernel. Add 1 cup of boiling water to each pint of corn. Bring to a boil. Set the pan of corn in iced water to cool.	
EGGPLANT	Wash, peel and slice 1/3 inch. Blanch in 1 gallon boiling water containing 4 1/2 teaspoons citric acid or 1/2 cup lemon juice. Cool, drain, package and freeze.	4 minutes
GREENS	Select young, tender leaves. Wash well. Remove tough stems and imperfect leaves. Cut leaves of chard into pieces as desired. Blanch and cool. Drain.	2 min. for all greens except very tender leaves of spinach. Scald 1 1/2 min.
OKRA	Select tender green pods. Wash and sort according to size. Cut off stems in such a way as not to cut open the seed cells. Blanch and cool. Drain. Leave whole or slice crosswise.	Small pods - 3 min. Large pods - 4 min.
PEAS, FIELD	Select well-filled pods with young peas. Wash, shell, blanch, cool.	2 minutes
PEAS, GREEN (ENGLISH)	Choose bright green, plump, firm pods with sweet, tender peas. Do not use immature or tough peas. Wash, blanch and cool.	1 1/2 minutes
PEAS, SNOW (also called Chinese peas and pea pods)	Wash and remove stem, string and blossom end. Blanch, cool, drain, pack, label and freeze.	2 minutes
PEPPERS, GREEN	Select firm, crisp, thick-walled peppers. Wash, cut out stems, cut in halves or 1/2 inch slices or rings. Remove seeds. Blanch. Cool. (For uncooked food, freeze without blanching. Leave no headspace in unheated pepper.)	Halves - 3 min. Slices - 2 min.
PIMENTOS	Select firm, crisp, thick-walled pimentos. To peel, roast in 400°F oven for 3 to 4 minutes. Rinse in cold water. Remove charred skins.	
POTATOES, FRENCH FRIED or SHOESTRING	Cut strips rather small. Blanch in boiling water. Drain well. Fry quickly to light brown. Drain. Do not salt. Cool quickly.	1 to 2 minutes
POTATOES, IRISH	Wash thoroughly, peel or scrape, wash. Blanch, cool, drain and package.	3 to 5 minutes
PUMPKIN or WINTER SQUASH	Wash, cut into small pieces and remove seeds. Cook until soft in boiling water, steam, pressure cooker or in the oven. Remove pulp from rind and mash or put through sieve. To cool, place pan containing product in ice water. Stir occasionally.	
SQUASH, SUMMER	Select squash with small seeds and tender rind. Wash, cut in 1/2 inch slices. Blanch and cool.	3 minutes
SWEET POTATOES	Wash, cook until almost tender. Cool, peel, cut in halves, slice or mash. To prevent darkening, sprinkle sliced sweet potatoes with lemon juice. Roll in sugar if desired. To keep mashed sweet potatoes from darkening, mix 2 table-spoons orange or lemon juice with each quart of mashed sweet potatoes.	
TOMATO JUICE	Wash vine-ripened tomatoes. Cut in quarters or eighths. Simmer 5 to 10 minutes. Pass through a sieve. If desired, season with 1 teaspoon salt to each quart of juice. Pour into containers, leaving headspace.	
STEWED TOMATOES	Remove stem ends, peel and quarter ripe tomatoes. Cover and cook until tender (10 to 20 minutes). Place pan in cold water to cool.	

*Same time for blanching as for cooling.

This fact sheet was originally prepared by Dr. Marjorie M. Phillips, Extension food and nutrition specialist (retired), and is recommended to Arkansans by Dr. Pamela L. Brady, Extension foods specialist.

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