

Food Storage Chart - Food Storage Guidelines

Shelf Life of Food - Refrigerator & Freezer Storage Chart

Food Item	Room Temperature (70° F)	Refrigerator (37° to 40° F)	Freezer (0 °F)	Comments
Breads				
Dough				
Tube cans of rolls, biscuits, pizza dough, etc.		Use-by-date	Don't freeze	
Ready-to-bake pie crust		Use-by-date	2 months	
Cookie dough		Use-by-date unopened or opened	2 months	
Breads				
	Room Temperature (70° F)	Refrigerator (37° to 40° F)	Freezer (0 °F)	Comments
Breads, fresh	Store at room temperature. Use the date as a guide or use within 3 to 5 days.	Storing in the refrigerator promotes staling.	3 months	Over wrap well to prevent drying out; thaw at room temperature
Bread and rolls, unbaked dough		1 to 2 days	2 months	Sometimes dough doesn't rise as well if frozen
Muffins, rolls, quick breads		3 days	1 to 2 months	Wrap individually, pack in rigid containers to prevent crushing
Pancakes and waffles		2 days	1 to 2 months	Freeze with waxed paper between each two. Heat without thawing in a toaster or under broiler
Pastries, Danish, Doughnuts		Store at room temperature. Best used within 1 to 3 days	3 months	
Tortillas, corn or flour		1 week	3 months	Wrap well

Baked Goods

Cakes

	Room Temperature (70° F)	Refrigerator (37° to 40° F)	Freezer (0 °F)	Comments
Angel food & sponge cakes		3 days	4 to 6 months	Wrap well
Cheesecake		3 to 7 days	4 to 6 months	Wrap well
Fruit cakes			1 year	Wrap well
Layer cakes		Store at room temperature. Best used within 3 to 7 days	2 to 4 months	Wrap well. Butter frosting freezes well, fluffy egg white frostings don't

Cookies

Cookies, baked			4 to 6 months	Pack in airtight container
Cookies, unbaked dough		2 to 3 days	6 months	Form refrigerator dough cookies in rolls; wrap tightly, thaw in refrigerator before slicing or dropping on cookie sheets

Pies

Chiffon pie, Pumpkin pie		1 to 2 days	1 month	
Fruit pies, baked		1 to 2 days	1 year	Wrap well; thaw at room temperature; heat in 350 degree F. oven about 15 minutes
Fruit pies, unbaked			8 months	Cut holes in upper crust to vent; bake unthawed
Pies, starch-thickened custard		1 to 2 days	Do not freeze	Fillings become watery and lumpy and pastry becomes soggy
Pies, nut, baked		4 to 5 days	6 months	Wrap well
Pie shells, unbaked		1 day	2 months	Fit in pie pans; prick crusts. Stack pie pans with 2 layers freezer paper between. Place in freezer bags. Either bake frozen or thaw in refrigerator

Dairy & Eggs

Dairy

	Room Temperature (70° F)	Refrigerator (37° to 40° F)	Freezer (0 °F)	Comments
Butter		1 to 3 months	6 to 9 months	Leave in original wrapping; overwrap well
Buttermilk		7 to 14 days	Do not freeze	Texture changes
Canned Milk, opened		3 to 5 days		N/A
Cheese, Hard (such as Cheddar, Swiss)		6 months, unopened 3 to 4 weeks, opened	6 months	Best used in cooking; will crumble when sliced; thaw in refrigerator to minimize crumbling
Cheese, parmesan, grated			1 to 2 months	Repackage in freezer bags
Cheese Soft (such as Brie, Bel Paese)		1 week	6 months	Texture can change
Cottage Cheese, Ricotta		1 week	Doesn't freeze well	Separates, becomes grainy
Cream Cheese		2 weeks	Doesn't freeze well	Can be mixed with other ingredients and frozen; by itself becomes crumbly
Cream--Whipped, ultra-pasteurized		1 month	Doesn't freeze	
Cream--Whipped, Sweetened		1 day	1 to 2 months	Freeze small mounds of lightly sweetened whipped cream on cookie sheet; then repackage so the mounds won't be crushed; thaw in refrigerator or serve frozen.
Cream--Aerosol can, real whipped cream		3 to 4 weeks	Doesn't freeze	
Cream--Aerosol can, non dairy topping		3 months	Doesn't freeze	

Cream, Half and Half		3 to 4 days	4 months	Texture changes
Eggnog, commercial		3 to 5 days	6 months	
Ice Creams, Sorbets		Can't Refrigerate	1 to 2 months	Overwrap to prevent ice crystals, freezer burn
Margarine, Spread substitutes		4 to 5 months	12 months	Leave in original wrapping; overwrap well
Milk		7 days	1 month	Allow room for expansion in freezer container; thaw in refrigerator. Freezing affects flavor and appearance; use in cooking and baking.
Pudding		package date; 2 days after opening	Doesn't freeze	Can separate
Sour cream		7 to 21 days	Doesn't freeze	Separates when thawed
Whipped Butter and Margarine			Doesn't freeze	Emulsion will break and product will separate.
Yogurt		7 to 14 days	1 to 2 months	Texture changes
Eggs				
	Room Temperature (70° F)	Refrigerator (37° to 40° F)	Freezer (0 °F)	Comments
Fresh, in shell		3 to 5 weeks	Don't freeze	Shells break; eggs lose quality
Raw whites		2 to 4 days	1 year	Gently stir whites together; freeze in ice cube trays; remove blocks to plastic freezer bag when solid. Each contains about 2 tablespoons. 1 cube - 1 egg white.
Raw yolks		1 week	Don't freeze well	Yolks can clump
Hard cooked eggs		1 week	Don't freeze well	Whites become rubbery; water separates

Liquid pasteurized eggs, egg substitutes, opened unopened		3 days 10 days	Doesn't freeze well 1 year	If opened, read label instructions regarding freezing Freeze if unopened.
Mayonnaise, commercial, refrigerate after opening		2 months	Doesn't freeze	
Fruits				
Fruit, Fresh				
	Room Temperature (70° F)	Refrigerator (37° to 40° F)	Freezer (0 °F)	Comments
Commercially Frozen			1 year	
Canned Fruits		unopened - 12 to 24 months opened - 2 to 3 days	opened - 1 to 2 months	Do not store in opened can. Store in airtight container.
Dried fruits cooked uncooked		3 to 5 days 6 months	4 to 6 months 12 months	
Apples		3 to 5 months		
Apricots, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums		3 to 5 days	6 months	See preserving instructions for individual fruits
Avocados	2 to 3 days after ripened	5 to 10 days		
Bananas	Store at room temperature			Freeze whole in skin or peel and mash; great in breads and cakes
Berries, cherries		2 to 3 days	Freeze individually on cookie sheets; repackage in heavy plastic bags	
Cranberries		3 to 4 weeks		8 to 12 months
Grapefruit	7 days	2 weeks	4 to 6 months	Wrap cut surfaces to prevent loss of Vitamin C.

Grapes		1 to 2 weeks		
Guavas, papayas		1 to 2 days		
Kiwi Fruit	3 to 5 days after ripening	4 to 6 months if unripe.		
Lemons	1 week	2 to 5 weeks		
Limes	1 week	2 to 5 weeks		
Melons		1 week	8 to 12 months	Wrap cut surfaces to prevent Vitamin C loss, control odors.
Oranges	3 to 4 days	5 to 6 weeks		
Peaches	Ripen at room temperature	2 to 3 days		
Pineapple	1 to 2 days	3 to 5 days		
Tangerines	2 to 3 days	1 week		
Watermelon	Uncut watermelon can be stored at room temperature for a few days	6 to 8 days		
Fruit Beverages				
Juices in cartons, fruit drinks, punch		3 weeks unopened 7 to 10 days opened	8 to 12 months	
Meats				
Deli & Vacuum-Packed Products				
	Room Temperature (70° F)	Refrigerator (37° to 40° F)	Freezer (0 °F)	Comments
Store-prepared (or homemade) egg, chicken, ham, tuna, macaroni salads		3 to 5 days	Doesn't freeze well	
Hot dogs & Luncheon Meats				
Hot dogs, opened package unopened package		1 week 2 weeks	1 to 2 months 1 to 2 months	Changes texture, flavor Changes texture, flavor

Luncheon meats opened package unopened package		3 to 5 days 2 weeks	1 to 2 months 1 to 2 months	These lose flavor quickly; wrap tightly These lose flavor quickly; wrap tightly
Bacon & Sausage				
Bacon and pancetta		7 days	1 month	Leave unopened in original wrapping; over wrap well
Sausage, fresh; raw from chicken, turkey, pork, beef		1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months	Over wrap packages well
Smoked breakfast links, patties		7 days	1 to 2 months	Over wrap packages well
Hard sausage--pepperoni, jerky sticks		2 to 3 weeks	1 to 2 months	Keep in original packaging; over wrap well
Summer sausage--labeled "Keep Refrigerated" opened unopened		3 weeks 3 months	1 to 2 months 1 to 2 months	
Ham, Corned Beef				
Corned beef, in pouch with pickling juices		5 to 7 days	Drained, 1 month	
Ham, canned--labeled "Keep Refrigerated" opened unopened		3 to 5 days 6 to 9 months	1 to 2 months Doesn't freeze	
Ham, fully cooked vacuum sealed at plant, undated, unopened		2 weeks	1 to 2 months	
Ham, fully cooked vacuum sealed at plant, dated, unopened		"use by" date on package	1 to 2 months	
Ham, fully cooked, whole		7 days	1 to 2 months	
Ham, fully cooked, half		3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months	
Ham, fully cooked, slices		3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months	

Hamburger, Ground				
Hamburger, ground beef		1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months	Remove from supermarket wrapping; wrap well in freezer plastic wrap; over wrap with heavy-duty aluminum foil
Ground turkey, veal, pork, lamb & mixtures of them		1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months	Remove from supermarket wrapping; wrap well in freezer plastic wrap; over wrap with heavy-duty aluminum foil
Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb, Pork				
Steaks		3 to 5 days	6 to 12 months	Wrap pieces individually, then over wrap tightly
Chops		3 to 5 days	4 to 6 months	Wrap pieces individually, then over wrap tightly
Roasts		3 to 5 days	4 to 12 months	Wrap pieces individually, then over wrap tightly
Variety meats-- tongue, liver, heart, kidneys, chitterlings		1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months	
Pre-stuffed, uncooked pork chops, lamb chops, or chicken breast stuffed with dressing		1 day	Don't freeze well	
Soup & Stews				
Chili			4 to 6 months	All-meat chili freeze better than those containing beans, which can break down & become mushy
Soups, broth-based		3 to 4 days	4 months	Freeze in usable amounts or individual servings
Soups, cream-based, such as chowders, bisques		2 days	Do not freeze	Can curdle and separate

Stock		3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months	Freeze in usable amounts
Stews		3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months	Freeze in usable amounts
Meat Leftovers				
Cooked meat and meat casseroles		3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months	
Gravy and meat broth		1 to 2 days	2 to 3 months	
Fresh Poultry				
Chicken, turkey, or duck, whole		1 to 2 days	1 year	Keep in original packaging
Chicken or turkey, pieces		1 to 2 days	9 months	Over wrap well
Giblets		1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months	
Cooked Poultry				
Fried chicken		3 to 4 days	4 months	
Cooked poultry casseroles		3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months	
Pieces, plain		3 to 4 days	4 months	Best frozen in stock, used in soups, casseroles
Pieces covered with broth, gravy		1 to 2 days	6 months	
Chicken nuggets, patties		1 to 2 days	1 to 3 months	
Pizza				
Pizza		3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months	
Stuffing				
Stuffing, cooked		3 to 4 days	1 month	
Seafood and Fish				
Fish				
Lean fish (cod, flounder, haddock, sole, etc.)		1 to 2 days	6 months	remove from light supermarket wrap; wrap well or use ice method below.

Fatty fish (salmon, bluefish, mackerel, salmon, etc.)		1 to 2 days	2 to 3 months	Place on cookie sheet, loosely covered with foil. Freeze. Dip in water several times; freeze to form thin ice glaze; wrap well; over wrap well
Cooked fish		3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months	Texture becomes mushy
Smoked fish		14 days or date on vacuum package	2 months in vacuum package	Vacuum package
Shellfish				
Clams, oysters, scallops; live			7 to 10 days	Remove from shells; freeze in their own liquid in airtight plastic freezer bags or containers; raw scallops easily become rubbery
Cooked shellfish		3 to 4 days	3 months	
Crab, cooked		1 to 2 days	2 months	If in shell, leave in shell; dip in water and freeze to form thin ice glaze to prevent drying out and becoming stringy; then repackage
Fish Sticks			18 months	
Lobster tails, raw			3 months	Over wrap original wrapping well
Lobster & Crab, live		same day purchased		
Shrimp, crayfish, squid, shucked clams, & mussels; raw		1 to 2 days	3 to 6 months	Dip in water, freeze, to form ice glaze; place in freezer plastic bags
Shrimp, cooked			Don't freeze	Texture becomes mushy
Shrimp, breaded, commercial				1 year

Staples or Pantry Items

Staples or Pantry Items	Room Temperature (70° F)	Refrigerator (37° to 40° F)	Freezer (0 °F)	Comments
Baby Food, canned	unopened - 12 months opened - 2 days			
Baking Powder	unopened - 18 months opened - 6 months			Keep dry and covered.
Baking Soda	unopened - 2 years opened - 6 months			Keep dry and covered.
Biscuit Mix	12 to 18 months			
Bouillon Cubes or Granules	2 years			Keep dry and covered.
Brownie Mix	9 to 12 months			
Cake Mix	9 to 12 months			
Candies		2 to 4 months	6 months	Chocolate-coated varieties may develop white bloom on outside from temperature; thaw in refrigerator
Catsup, Chili Sauce	unopened - 12 months opened 1 month			Refrigerate for longer storage
Cereals, ready-to-eat	6 to 12 months (opened & unopened)			Refold package liner tightly after opening
Chocolate	semi-sweet - 18 months unsweetened - 18 months			Keep in a cool place
Chocolate Syrup	unopened - 2 years	opened - 6 months		Cover tightly and refrigerate after opening
Cocoa Mixes	unopened - 8 months opened - 3 to 6 months			Cover tightly
Cocoa, Baking	24 months			

Coconut, shredded (canned or packaged)	unopened - 1 year	opened - 6 months		Refrigerate after opening
Coffee, cans	unopened - 2 years			Storing coffee at room temperature is the most convenient method of storage. It works well for coffee that will be consumed within one to two weeks of purchase.
Coffee, instant	unopened - 1 to 2 years			
Coffee, whole bans	opened - 2 months 1 to 2 weeks			
Cornmeal	12 months			Keep tightly closed
Cornstarch	Indefinite			Keep tightly closed
Crackers	6 months		3 months	Freeze "sleeves" in heavy plastic bags
Flour, white	6 to 8 months		1 year	Store in refrigerator
Flour, whole wheat		6 to 8 months		
Flour, bread	6 to 8 months		1 year	
Gelatin, all types	18 months			Keep in original containers
Grits	12 months			Store in airtight container
Herbs	6 months			
Honey	12 months			Cover tightly. If crystallizes, warm jar in pan of hot water
Jelly, Jam & Preserves	unopened - 12 months	opened - 6 months		Refrigerate after opening
Molasses	unopened - 12 months opened - 6 months			Keep tightly closed. Refrigerate to extend storage life.
Marshmallow Cream	unopened - 3 to 4 months			
Marshmallows	2 to 3 months			Keep in airtight container

Mayonnaise	unopened - 2 to 3 months	opened - 2 to 3 months		Refrigerate after opening
Mustard, prepared yellow	unopened - 2 years opened 6 to 8 months			May be refrigerated. Stir before using.
Nuts (Nuts; hazelnuts, walnut, pecans), in shell	4 months	1 year	2 years	Refrigerate after shelling. Freeze for longer storage.
Nuts, vacuum can	3 months			
Milk (condensed or evaporated, canned)	12 months +			Invert cans every 2 months
Milk, non-fat dry	unopened - 6 months opened - 3 months			Store in airtight container
Olives, bottled or canned	1 year			
Pancake Mixes	6 to 9 months			
Pasta (dry spaghetti, macaroni, etc.)	2 years			Once opened, store in airtight container
Peanut Butter	unopened - 6 to 9 months opened - 2 to 3 months			Refrigeration not necessary, but will keep longer if refrigerated.
Pectin, liquid	opened - 1 month			
Pickles	unopened - 1 to 2 years			
Pie Crust Mix	unopened - 8 months			
Popcorn	1 to 2 years			Keep in airtight container
Potatoes, Instant	6 to 12 months			
Pudding Mixes	12 months			
Rice, white	2 years +			Keep tightly closed
Rice, flavored or herb	6 months			

Salad Dressings, bottled	Unopened- 10-12 months Opened-3 mos.			Refrigerate after opening
Salad Oils (corn, canola)	18 months			
Olive Oil	24 months			
Sauces & Gravy Mixes	6 to 12 months			
Shortening	unopened - 18 months opened - 6 to 8 months			
Spices, whole	1 to 2 years			Store in airtight container in a dry place.
Spices, ground	6 months			
Sugar, granulated	2 years +			Put in airtight container and cover tightly
Sugar, brown	4 months			
Sugar, confectioners or powdered	18 months			
Sugar, sweeteners	2 years +			
Syrups	12 months			Keep tightly closed. Refrigerate to extend storage life.
Tea, bags	18 months			Store in airtight container
Tea, instant	3 years			
Tea, loose	2 years			
Tofu		1 week	5 months	Change storage water every day or two after opening.
Vanilla Extract	unopened - 2 years opened 12 months			Keep tightly closed
Vinegar	unopened - 2 years + opened - 12 months			Keep tightly closed
Yeast, dry or frozen compressed		6 weeks	1 to 2 years	

Vegetables

Vegetables	Room Temperature (70° F)	Refrigerator (37° to 40° F)	Freezer (0 °F)	Comments
Commercially Frozen			1 year	Store in original package
Canned Vegetables		opened - 3 days		Do not store in the opened can. Store in airtight container.
Artichokes		1 week		
Asparagus		3 to 5 days	8 to 12 months	
Beets, carrots		2 weeks	8 to 12 months	
Beans, broccoli, lima beans, peas, summer squash		3 to 6 days	8 to 12 months	
Bell Peppers		1 to 2 weeks	3 to 4 months	Freeze raw, slice in strips or dice
Cabbage		1 week	Do not freeze	Too watery to freeze well
Cauliflower		1 week	8 to 12 months	
Celery, chilies		1 week	8 to 12 months	
Corn		Use immediately for best flavor	8 to 12 months	
Green onions		3 to 5 days	Do not freeze	Become limp
Greens: collards, kale, mustard, spinach, Swiss chard		3 to 5 days	8 to 12 months	
Green beans		1 week	8 to 12 months	
Lettuce and salad greens		1 week	Do not freeze	Too watery; becomes limp
Mushrooms		1 to 2 days	8 to 12 months	Slice thinly and saute first, otherwise they become rubbery and lose flavor

Radishes		2 weeks		
Squash, hard	3 to 6 months			
Tomatoes			3 to 4 months	Cut in wedges, freeze in usable portions in freezer bags. Use in cook dishes.

Storage does not improve the quality of any food. The quality of a food will also not decrease significantly during storage as long as the food is stored properly and used within the recommended time frame.

Maintaining a food's quality depends on several factors: the quality of the raw product; the procedures used during processing; the way the food is stored; and the length of storage. The recommended storage time takes these factors into consideration.

Since bacteria frequently get into food through careless food handling, keep everything — hands, refrigerator, freezer and storage containers — clean.

These short but safe time limits will help keep refrigerated foods from spoiling or becoming dangerous to eat. Because freezing keeps food safe indefinitely, recommended storage times are for quality only. Storage times are from date of purchase unless specified on chart. It is not important if a date expires after food is frozen.

Sources: Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service and Oregonian FOODday.