



## Freezing Vegetables

### Why Blanch Vegetables?

Blanching is the process of scalding vegetables in boiling water or steam for a short amount of time. Blanching is a must for most vegetables that are frozen. The blanching process is important to slow or stop enzyme action that causes loss of flavor, color and texture. Blanching time is important and varies with the vegetable and size of the pieces. Under blanching stimulates the activity of enzymes and is actually worse than no blanching. Over blanching causes the loss of flavor, color, vitamins and minerals.

### Blanching Directions

1. Wash, drain, sort, trim and cut vegetables.
2. Use 1 gallon water per pound of prepared vegetables or 2 gallons water per pound of leafy greens.
3. Put vegetables into blancher (wire basket, coarse mesh bag or perforated metal strainer) and lower into boiling water.
  - Or steam blanch: Add 1-2 inches of water to a pot and bring to boil then put a single layer of vegetables in the basket.
4. Cover. Start counting blanching time as soon as water returns to a boil.
  - If steam blanching, start counting immediately.
5. Keep heat high for the time given in the directions.
6. Cool immediately in ice water or cold water (60 degrees F or below) for the same time used in blanching (except for corn-on-the-cob for which cooling time is twice the time of blanching). Stir vegetables several times during cooling.
7. Drain vegetables thoroughly.
8. Pack the vegetables either by dry-pack or tray-pack.
  - Dry-pack: Pack vegetable tightly into containers or freezer bags. Press out air and seal tightly.

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Blanching pot with basket

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### Important Note

Freeze food at zero degrees Fahrenheit or lower. Do not overload the freezer when freezing vegetables. It will take longer to freeze.

Frozen vegetables will maintain high quality for 8 to 12 months at zero degrees F or lower.

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- Tray-pack: Put a single layer of the vegetables on a shallow pan and put the pan into the freezer. As soon as the vegetables are frozen, put them into a freezer bag or container. Press out air and seal tightly.

9. Freeze.

10. Frozen vegetables will maintain high quality for 8 to 12 months at zero degrees F or lower.

### Containers for Freezing

Using proper packaging material for freezing food is important to help protect flavor, color, moisture content and nutritive value of the food while in the freezer.

In general, rigid containers, such as glass and plastic, are suitable for all packs, especially for liquid packs. Regular glass breaks easily at freezer temperatures. If using glass jars, choose wide mouth jars that are made for freezing and canning. Plastic freezer-grade bags are good for dry pack with little to no liquid. If using plastic bags, press them to remove as much air as possible before closing.

General characteristics of packaging materials should be:

- Moisture vapor resistant
- Durable and leak proof
- Made of freezer grade material
- Resistant to oil, grease or water
- Protect foods from absorption of off flavor or odors
- Easy to seal - use freezer tape if needed to reinforce the seal
- Easy to label and date
- Containers that hold less than a one-half gallon

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## *Did You Know?*

Headspace is the unfilled space above the food in a container and below the top of lid that allows the food to expand during freezing.

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Green beans

<b>Vegetables</b>	<b>Preparation</b>	<b>Blanching Time (minutes)</b>
<b>Asparagus</b>	Wash. Sort according to thickness. Discard tough part of stalk. Cut into even lengths to fit container. Blanch, cool, and drain package, leaving no head space. Label, date and freeze.	Small- 2 Medium - 3 Large - 4
<b>Beans</b> Snap, Green or Wax	Wash. Remove ends. Snip or cut into 2-4 inch lengths. Blanch, cool, drain and package, leaving 1/2 inch head space. Label, date and freeze.	3
<b>Beets</b>	Wash and sort according to size. Trim tops, leaving 1/2 inch stem and root. Cook in boiling water until tender, for small beets 25-30 minutes; for medium beets 45-50 minutes. Cool in cold water, peel, remove stem and root and cut into slices or cubes. Package leaving 1/2 inch head space. Label, date and freeze.	Cook until tender
<b>Broccoli</b>	Remove leaves and woody portions. Wash. If desired, soak 30 minutes in brine (4 tsp. salt to 1 gallon water) to remove insects. Trim flowerets to 1 to 1 1/2 inch across. Blanch, cool, drain and package, leaving no head space. Label, date and freeze.	3 or steam 5
<b>Brussel Sprouts</b>	Select green, firm and compact heads. Trim, wash and sort according to size. Blanch, cool, drain and package leaving no head space. Label, date and freeze.	Small - 3 Medium - 4 Large - 5
<b>Carrots</b>	Remove tops, wash and peel. Cut as desired. Leave small carrots whole. Blanch, cool, drain and package leaving 1/2 inch head space. Label, date and freeze.	Whole - 5 Cut - 2
<b>Cauliflower</b>	Wash. If desired, soak 30 minutes in brine (4 tsp. salt to 1 gallon water) to remove insects. Trim head into 1 inch pieces across. Blanch in water containing 4 teaspoons salt per gallon of water. Cool, drain and package, leaving no head space. Label, date and freeze.	3



Beets

<b>Vegetables</b>	<b>Preparation</b>	<b>Blanching Time (minutes)</b>
<b>Corn</b>	Select tender, freshly gathered corn.	
On-the cob	Husk, trim, remove silk and wash. Blanch, cool quickly and completely, drain and package, leaving no head space.	Small - 7 Medium - 9 Large - 11
Whole kernel	Blanch corn on cob. Cool, drain and cut to about 2/3's the depth of the kernel. Package, leaving 1/2 inch head space.	4
Cream Style	Blanch corn on the cob. Cool and drain. Cut kernel tips from cob and scrape the cobs with back of knife to remove juice and heart of kernel. Package, leaving 1/2 inch head space.	4
<b>Greens</b> Including swiss chard, spinach & collards	Select young tender leaves. Wash thoroughly. Remove woody stems. Blanch, chill, drain and package, leaving 1/2 inch head space. Label, date and freeze.	2 Collards - 3
<b>Herbs</b>	Wash, drain, pat dry. Wrap in freezer wrap and place in freezer bag. Freeze. Use in cooked dishes. Label, date and freeze.	N/A
<b>Peas, Green</b>	Use young, tender peas. Shell, blanch, cool and drain. Package leaving 1/2 inch head space. Label, date and freeze.	1 1/2 to 2 1/2
<b>Peas, Edible pod</b>	Select flat, tender pods. Wash. Remove stems, blossom ends and strings. Leave whole. Blanch, cool, drain and package, leaving 1/2 inch head space. Label, date and freeze.	Small - 2 Large - 3
<b>Peppers</b> bell or sweet	Wash, stem and seed. If desired, cut into 1/2 inch strips or rings.  Heated - Blanch, cool, drain and package leaving 1/2 inch head space. Use in cooking.  Raw - Spread loosely on a tray. Freeze, then pack, leaving no head space. Use in uncooked or cooked foods. Label, date and freeze.	Halves - 3  Strips - 2

<b>Vegetables</b>	<b>Preparation</b>	<b>Blanching Time (minutes)</b>
<b>Pumpkin or Winter Squash</b>	Wash. Cut into pieces and remove seeds. Cook until soft. Remove pulp and mash. Cool quickly by placing pan in cold water. Package leaving 1/2 inch head space. Label, date and freeze.	Cook
<b>Summer Squash</b> including zucchini	Wash and cut into 1/2 inch slices. Blanch, cool, drain and package, leaving 1/2 inch head space. Label, date and freeze.	3
<b>Zucchini (grated)</b>	Wash and grate young tender zucchini. Steam blanch small amounts. Package, leaving 1/2 inch head space. Cool by placing containers in cold water. Pack in measuring amounts. Best used for baking. Label, date and freeze.	Steam 1 to 2
<b>Tomatoes</b>	Wash and dip in boiling water for 30 seconds to loosen skin. Peel and core. Freeze whole or in pieces. Package, leaving 1 inch head space. Use for cooking. Label, date and freeze.	N/A



Tomatoes



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#### **For More Information**

For more information of food preservation, go to the National Center for Home Food Preservation Website - <https://nchfp.uga.edu/>.

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