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Food Freezing Honor

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Why should we freeze food?

Freezing food is a way to preserve food and keep it from spoiling.

The moisture in the food is turned into ice and this slows down food decomposition and prevents the growth of most bacteria and microorganisms that cause food spoilage.

When properly done, is the method of food preservation which may potentially preserve the greatest quantity of nutrients.

Save money – buy in season, buy in bulk, and freeze.

What kind of food can be frozen?

- ▶ **DAIRY:**
- ▶ Butter
- ▶ Cheese
- ▶ Cottage cheese
- ▶ Egg whites (must be raw)
- ▶ Ice cream
- ▶ Milk
- ▶ Whipped cream (sweetened, in individual serving dollops)

What kind of food can be frozen?

- ▶ **MEAT, POULTRY, and SEAFOOD:**
- ▶ Beef
- ▶ Chicken
- ▶ Fish
- ▶ Hot dogs
- ▶ Lunch meat
- ▶ Sausage
- ▶ Turkey

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What kind of food can be frozen?

▶ **PRODUCE:**

- ▶ Artichokes
- ▶ Asparagus
- ▶ Avocado (pureed and prepped with lemon juice)
- ▶ Beets
- ▶ Berries
- ▶ Broccoli
- ▶ Brussels sprouts
- ▶ Carrots
- ▶ Cauliflower
- ▶ Cherries
- ▶ Greens (including spinach and collards)

▶ **PRODUCE:**

- ▶ Mangos
- ▶ Melon (chunks)
- ▶ Mushrooms
- ▶ Okra
- ▶ Onions
- ▶ Peaches (peeled, sliced)
- ▶ Peas
- ▶ Pineapple (chunks)
- ▶ Potatoes
- ▶ Pumpkin
- ▶ Squash (summer squash, zucchini, and all winter squashes)
- ▶ Strawberries (hulled)
- ▶ Sweet potatoes

What other foods can be frozen?

- ▶ Bread
- ▶ Butter
- ▶ Bananas
- ▶ Cheese
- ▶ Cookie dough
- ▶ Cake
- ▶ Cooked rice
- ▶ Grapes
- ▶ Tomatoes
- ▶ Nuts
- ▶ Flour
- ▶ Muffins
- ▶ Strawberries
- ▶ Blue berries
- ▶ Pineapple chunks
- ▶ Soup
- ▶ Homemade pancakes or waffles
- ▶ Tofu

Food Freezing Process



Question 1:

Define the following terms:

► **Blanching**

- Blanching is a food preparation process where the food, usually a vegetable or fruit, is plunged into boiling water, removed after a few minutes, and then plunged into iced water to stop the cooking process.
- It is best to place the food in a wire basket so that it can be lowered into boiling water, lifted out, and then lowered into the cold water.
- Blanching helps vegetables keep their vibrant colors and retain nutrients, and stops the enzymes (proteins) that would otherwise lead to spoilage.

Question 1:

Define the following terms:

▶ **Quick freeze**

- ▶ Quick freezing is used to quickly freeze perishable food items. In this case, water contained inside the food items is subjected to temperatures well below its melting/freezing point. This causes the water inside the foods to freeze in a very short period of time.
- ▶ Quick freezing lets you thaw and reheat individual servings instead of entire containers of food.
- ▶ It's a way to freeze single pieces — as in berries — or servings of food before packing them together for the longer term in the freezer.

Question 1:

Define the following terms:

► **Freezer burn**

- Freezer burn is a condition that occurs when frozen food has been damaged by ice crystals, due to air reaching the food.
- It is usually caused by non-airtight packaging.
- Freezer burn often results in change of texture and color of the food. It appears as gray to brown leathery spots on the food.
- Although freezer burn affects the quality of food, it does not make it unsafe or unhealthful to eat.

Question 2:

What kinds of containers can be used for freezing foods?

Plastic containers - never put hot food or liquids into plastic containers, don't scratch the plastic with metal utensils, don't use cheap, single use plastic or old containers that are visibly breaking down

Metal containers

Glass containers – don't use old glass containers, use containers with straight sides, don't fill up to the top

Plastic freezer bags - Freezer bags are thicker than storage bags and will keep the food fresh longer

The important considerations are that the container be food-safe, freezer-safe, air-tight, and not be damaged by freezing.

Question 3:
What are the
essential things
to be
considered
when selecting
vegetables or
fruits for
freezing?

- ▶ First check the quality as you would for any fresh fruit or vegetable.
- ▶ Wash thoroughly and make sure the fruit or vegetable has no salt on it.
- ▶ When you freeze the fruit or vegetable make sure that it is not damaged.

Question 4. How do you thaw frozen vegetables for the table? How do you thaw frozen fruits for the table?

Vegetables

- ▶ Most vegetables should be cooked without thawing first.
- ▶ Corn on the cob should be partially thawed before cooking,
- ▶ Leafy green vegetables should be completely thawed.
- ▶ **Thawing should not be done at room temperature.** Food is safe indefinitely while it is frozen, but as soon as the temperature rises above 39.2° F/4°C, it is susceptible to bacteria (which can cause food poisoning).
- ▶ Thaw it in the refrigerator 6-8 hours ahead of time, or under *cold* (below 69.8°F/21°C) running water for 30 minutes. Do not remove the vegetables from their packaging, as this allows bacteria to get in. Turn the package every few minutes.
- ▶ Drop frozen vegetables in boiling water, and quickly return the water to a boil. Pry the vegetables apart as it thaws so that it can cook evenly.

Question 4. How do you thaw frozen vegetables for the table? How do you thaw frozen fruits for the table?

Fruits

- ▶ Do not thaw fruit at room temperature, for the same reasons you do not thaw vegetables at room temperature.
- ▶ Thaw fruit in the refrigerator 6-8 hours ahead of time.
- ▶ If you are in a hurry, you can also thaw fruit by running *cold* water over it, as long as the water temperature is below 69.8°F/21°C, turning the package every few minutes or so. This will take about half an hour for one pound of fruit.
- ▶ If you are going to use the fruit right away, you can thaw it in a microwave oven at a low setting.
- ▶ Do not thaw the fruit completely, as the ice crystals will give it a bit of firmness that freezing takes away.

Question 5. Freeze two vegetables (corn and another of your choice), then prepare and serve for sampling.

- ▶ Vegetables must be blanched before they are frozen.
- ▶ Drop the vegetable in boiling water for the "blanching time". This time is different for each vegetable.
- ▶ Transfer vegetables to cold water to stop the cooking process.
- ▶ Transfer to a baking sheet or tray covered in a towel paper towel to allow to dry.
- ▶ When packing into containers, *always* leave a bit of space. Water expands as it freezes, so you must leave room for this expansion or the container will be forced open and the food will get freezer-burned.
- ▶ Do not fill the freezer with too much warm food at a time because it will take longer to freeze.
- ▶ Do not stack the packages until they are completely frozen.
- ▶ Be sure to label the food packages as you freeze them. It can be difficult to tell them apart later.

Question 5. Freeze two vegetables (corn and another of your choice), then prepare and serve for sampling.

▶ **Corn**

- ▶ For corn on the cob, blanch for seven minutes.
- ▶ For kernel corn, blanch for four minutes.

▶ **Carrots**

- ▶ Cut off the tops and wash. Freeze small carrots whole, but cut large carrots into thin slices or into ½ inch or 1.5cm cubes. Blanch small whole carrots for 5 minutes, and blanch sliced or cubed carrots for 2 minutes.

▶ **Okra**

- ▶ Blanch small pods for 3 minutes, large pods for 4. Slice into "coins", package, and freeze.

▶ **Pumpkin and Winter Squash**

- ▶ Cook in boiling water until the pulp is soft. Remove the rind and mash the pulp. To cool, place the container of pumpkin pulp in cold water. Package and freeze.

▶ **Summer Squash and Zucchini**

- ▶ Cut into thin slices, and blanch for 3 minutes.

Question 6. Quick freeze a vegetable for easy pouring.

1

Blanch the vegetables as in the previous requirement. Allow them to dry on a tray or baking sheet in a single layer and separate them so they do not touch one another.

2

After the vegetables are frozen, place them in a container, seal, label, and return to the freezer.

3

The vegetables will separate easily and can be poured right out of the package when you need them.

Question 7. Why is salt not put in vegetables to be frozen?

- ▶ Salt lowers the freezing point of water from its normal temperature of 32°F (0°C) to –5.8°F (–21°C). Most food freezers operate at –0.4°F (–18°C) which is higher than the freezing point of salt water.
- ▶ If food to be frozen contains enough salt, it will not freeze in a regular freezer.
- ▶ If it contains only a little salt, the freezing point will be lowered, but not by as much. Even a small amount of salt will prevent it from quick-freezing.

Question 8. Freeze some peaches in light syrup and also some in orange or pineapple juice. What is the reason for using ascorbic acid in the syrup and not in the fruit juice? Why is ascorbic acid used in freezing peaches?

Packed in syrup

- ▶ First, you'll need to make the syrup which is just sugar and water. For peaches, you will need a 40% syrup, which is made by dissolving 1 cup (250ml) of syrup in 4 cups (1000ml) of lukewarm water. Chill the syrup before using.
- ▶ Wash and peel the peaches. Add ½ tsp (2.5ml) of ascorbic acid to the syrup. Place the peaches in a container and cover completely with the syrup, leaving some headroom. Wad up some wax paper and place it on top of the peaches to keep them submerged. Seal and freeze.

Packed in Fruit Juice

- ▶ Wash and peel the peaches. Place the peaches in a container and cover completely with the fruit juice, leaving some headroom. Wad up some wax paper and place it on top of the peaches to keep them submerged. Seal and freeze.

Question 8. Freeze some peaches in light syrup and also some in orange or pineapple juice. What is the reason for using ascorbic acid in the syrup and not in the fruit juice? Why is ascorbic acid used in freezing peaches?

Ascorbic acid is not needed when packing in fruit juice because the fruit juice has ascorbic acid in it already.

The ascorbic acid will prevent the peaches from turning brown.

Question 9. Freeze one type of berry without added sweeteners.

1

Wash and drain the berries

2

Place them on a tray in a single layer and separate them so they do not touch one another. Let them dry.

3

Place tray in freezer.

4

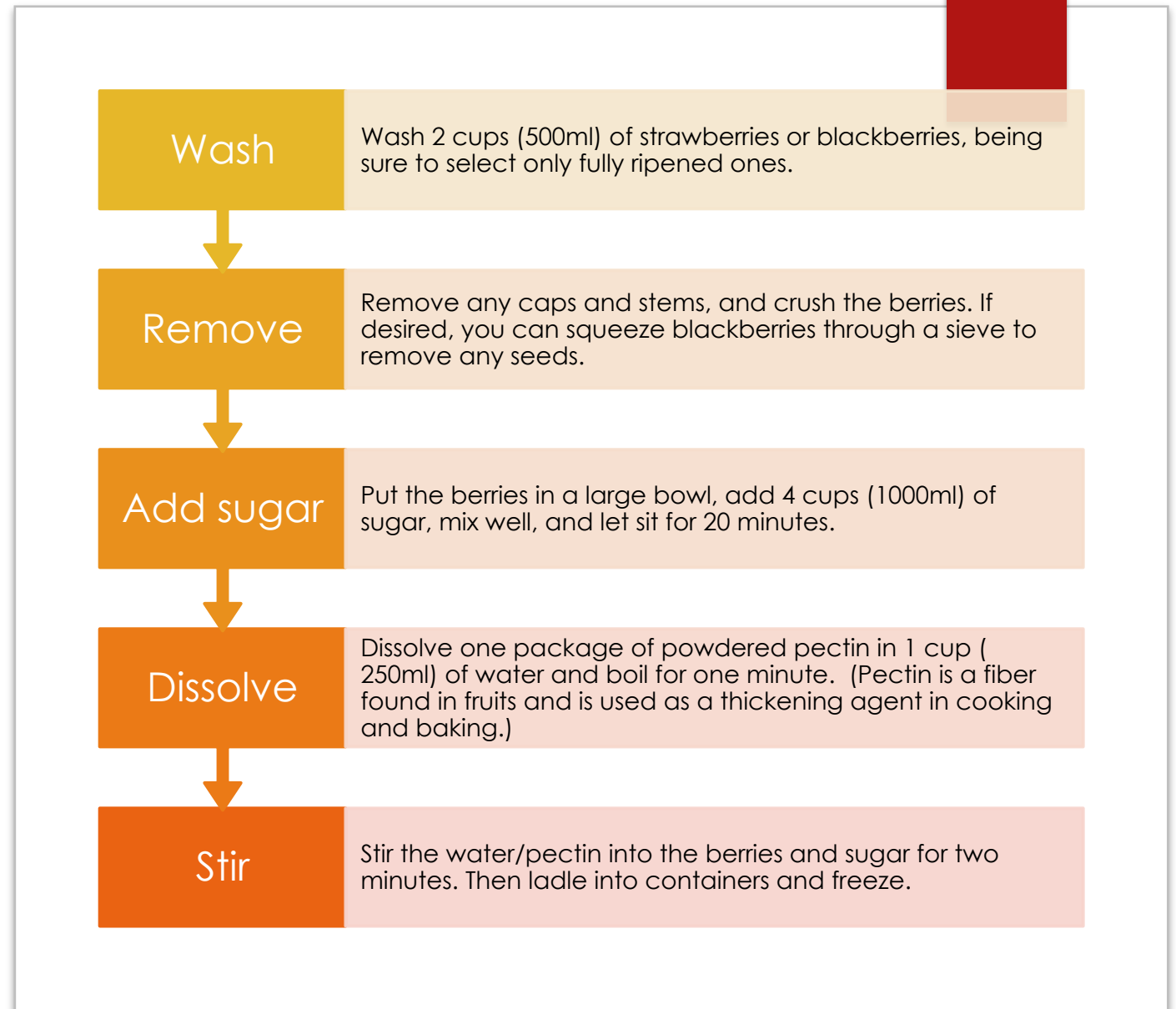
After the berries are frozen, place them in a container, seal, label, and return to the freezer.

Quick Freeze – Blueberries

"Vacuum Sealed"



Question 10. Make one kind of freezer jam.



Final Tips

Home-frozen foods should be used within 6 to 9 months.

Label each package with the current date.

Buy in bulk and in season when fruits are less expensive.

This honor was presented by:



▶ We would like to thank

▶ Instructor **Pauline McFarlane** for an excellent honor presentation! It would be impossible for us to continue our operation without volunteers like you. May God bless you!

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