

Cool Tips for March Frozen Food Month

Compiled from the National Frozen & Refrigerated Foods Association

For more information, visit their website at www.easyhomemeals.com

There is an abundance of great tasting, high quality, economical meal options in your grocers' frozen food case and National Frozen Food month is a perfect time to maximize frozen foods in your cooking. The commercial quick freezing process traps in nutrients and freshness, making these foods a flavorful, healthy option for your family. By following these proper handling and storage tips, you can ensure frozen foods maintain their integrity and flavor.

This chart from the National Frozen Food Association provides guidelines on shelf life for storing frozen food.

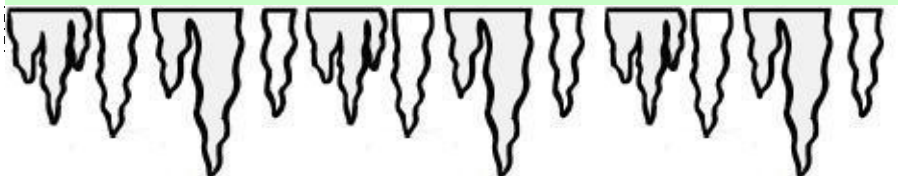
| ITEM | MAX. STORAGE TIME |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Beef Roasts | 12 months |
| Steak | 12 months |
| Fruit Juice Concentrate | 12 months |
| Lamb Roasts | 12 months |
| Whole Chickens, Turkeys | 12 months |
| Fresh Shrimp | 12 months |
| Chicken, Turkey Parts | 12 months |
| Fresh Pork Roasts | 8 months |
| Unbaked Berry, Apple Pie | 8 months |
| Veal Roasts | 8 months |
| Asparagus, Beans, Peas | 8 months |
| Cauliflower, Corn, Spinach | 8 months |
| Cooked Chicken, Sliced | 6 months |
| Pound Cake | 6 months |
| Veal Chops, Cutlets | 4 months |
| Fried Chicken | 4 months |
| Cooked Shrimp Creole | 3 months |
| Lamb Patties | 3 months |
| Cooked Meats | 3 months |
| Chicken Livers | 3 months |
| Bread, Rolls | 3 months |
| Ground Beef | 3 months |
| Perch Fillets | 2 months |
| Pork Sausage, Cured Pork | 2 months |
| Bacon | 1 month |
| Ice Cream, Sherbet | 1 month |

At the Store

- * Make the frozen food department your last stop at the grocery store.
- * Pack all frozen and cold food items together to help them stay cold.
- * On warm days, bring an insulated cooler and pack bags with frozen groceries in the cooler.
- * If you are doing multiple errands, make the grocery store your last stop to minimize thawing time.

At Home

- * Unpack frozen foods immediately and put them away in your freezer.
- * Write a purchase date on frozen items, and rotate foods so the first items in are the first ones to be used.
- * Maintain proper freezer temperature for maximum storage life. Set your freezer at 0° F and use a fridge/freezer thermometer to monitor the temperature.
- * Organize your freezer and store food groups together so meat, fish, vegetables, and baked goods each have their own section.
- * Thaw foods properly to avoid bacteria growth. Thawing in the refrigerator at 40° F or less is the safest option.
- * Do not refreeze thawed foods for safety and quality reasons.
- * Clean your freezer regularly to prevent the transfer of off-tastes and odors.
- * Do not over-pack your freezer. Having extra space in your freezer will allow for air to circulate around the food.



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