

COOL TIPS FOR MARCH FROZEN FOOD MONTH

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.

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.

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

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

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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