



## Favorite Freezer Foods

Time saving techniques for moms who want healthy meals  
without slaving in the kitchen every night.

# The Freezing Food Crash Course

A guilt-free guide to making evenings more peaceful and dinner more simple for working moms who want to take even better care of their families.

by Michelle Zack

Dedicated to Nevaeh, the niece I never knew.

# Welcome to your Freezing Food Crash Course.

A guide for working moms to start stocking their freezers with real, homemade food.

This is your guide to a more peaceful life, starting with the dinner hour.

You work all day and get home tired with a hungry brood wondering "What's for dinner." The last thing you want to do is a kitchen stadium style marathon with no plan, the secret ingredients in the fridge and not-so-well stocked pantry to serve the pickiest judges ever- your kids- just so you can clean up before you finally relax for the night.

When you eat out you can't help feeling guilty as you watch the grease from a so called hamburger dripping down your son's arm. You try not to count the calories, but it doesn't help you feel like a good mom.

It doesn't have to be that way.

That's where freezing food can help.

It's possible to have a healthy homemade meal on the table for dinner without slaving in the kitchen every night.

It's possible *for you*.

It doesn't matter how many hours you work or how long your commute is.

It doesn't matter how many kids you have.

You decide that you want to be a mom who has dinner figured out and you'll get there. Your freezer will help. No more guilt. You can regain your sanity and be in control of what your family eats without racing the clock in the witching hour.

## If your ready, lets get started.

Even if you're new to freezing food you've probably heard those "30 meals in one day" claims. It's called Once a Month Cooking or OAMC. And Guess what?

It's not that easy. With OAMC you assemble 30 meals in one day but you spend a full day preparing the ingredients and a ton of time planning and shopping before that.

I want to show you a way that is easier.

Because there are other things you want to do during the weekend.

Instead I'd like to show how, when you have time, you can dove-tail your efforts in the kitchen to save time later.

I call these processes Time Savers, Budget Keepers, Meal Starters and Meal Kits. Plus you can freeze Prepared Meals with less stress than OAMC through Batch Cooking and Session Cooking.

In plain English let's define these concepts.

**Time Savers** are things you do that only take minutes now that save time later.

Already boiling a pot of rice? Make twice as much as you need and freeze half the pot and next time you need rice you'll be saving nearly an hour. 1/2, 1 or 2 cup portions are good sizes to freeze. It can thaw in the fridge, in it's sealed container under warm running water or in the microwave with a damp paper towel or cloth on top.

Already chopping an onion? Chop the whole thing, use half with dinner tonight and freeze the other half. You can't use it for eating or serving raw but it's fine for cooking.

Making a pot of [broth](#)? Use some for soup and freeze the rest.

Time Savers are where you dove-tail your efforts in the kitchen. Since the chopping board is already out and the knife is already dirty chopping some extra onion doesn't take as much time now as it will later. Plus you only have to wash the knife and board once.

I usually think of time savers as being a fairly blank canvas flavor wise. Season it lightly but keep your options open.

**Budget Keepers** are things you freeze to help save money.

For example, instead of buying one pound of ground beef you can buy the warehouse pack that is five pounds and freeze the other four raw, in one pound portions.

Freezing the bounty of your garden is another example of a Budget Keeper.

**Meal Starters** are the building blocks of meals.

For example, cooked ground beef with chopped onions, garlic and taco seasoning can be frozen and used to save time preparing meals like tacos, burritos, nachos or whatever else you want.

**What's the difference between a Time Saver and a Meal Starter?**

Time Savers are like a blank canvas, some of the work is done but you can be spontaneous about what you make with them.

In the ground beef example you could make Sheppard's pie or tacos or sloppy joes or chili

or Italian style meat sauce.

A Meal Starter is a building block; it saves more time but reduces options.

To continue with the ground beef example you could make taco meat that you can use as a building block to make tacos, burritos, enchiladas, etc. Or that Italian meat sauce which you could use to make lasagna -or lasagna roll-up, mostaccioli, spaghetti and meatballs.

**Meal Kits** are a collection of ingredients for a meal that you package together. For example you could put a container of Italian Meat Sauce, 12 meatballs and a loaf of garlic bread together for an easy meal, just cook the spaghetti fresh.

Another example is taco meat, Mexican rice, black beans, guacamole, refried beans and tortilla shells together in the freezer for an easy to prepare burrito night, just add fresh sour cream, salsa and lettuce.

**Assembled Meals** are ready to be heated and served. They need a little or no preparation before serving.

Prepare those burritos without lettuce and you can wrap them up individually to freeze and reheat in the microwave or oven later.

**Batch Cooking** is preparing multiples of a dish, one for dinner tonight and the other to be frozen for later. Like making 2 or 3 pans of enchiladas instead of one. You can have one in two weeks and another a month later. This way you get the time saving benefits of making larger servings without the drudgery of eating the same thing over and over so it doesn't go to waste.

**Session Cooking** is making many prepared meals with similar ingredients so you get the maximum convenience, variety and time saving benefits while stocking your freezer fast. You'll use a few of these meals and add others so eventually you're freezer will get well stocked with a huge range of good food.

One session could be Mexican beef or chicken where you make burritos, enchiladas, taquitos etc all in one afternoon. The more similar recipes with shared ingredients the more time saving benefits.

Another session could be ham and cheddar recipes with [breakfast burritos](#), quiche, mac n cheese with ham, stuffed pizza and ham cheddar soup.

Can you see how flexible this is? It's all about using what you've already got going -aka dovetailing- and freezing food for later in whatever stage of preparation works best for you.

## **Now let's get your freezer ready.**

The first thing you need to know is how to keep track of what you've got.

**Keeping a freezer inventory** is vital to getting the most out of your freezer. The way to get the most out of your freezer meals is to eat them and replace them.

Generally, the contents of your freezer should change about four times a year.

This means that you are using the food you freeze and getting some value for your hard work.

Some things will be kept longer, for example those garden fresh veggies you want to save until the middle of winter or if you buy meat 'by the side,' (half a cow, pig or lamb at a time) you can keep those items longer.

No one likes to find that chicken meal from a year ago or ground beef that is 3 years. But the question is how do you keep track of what is in the freezer and how long it's been there?

A freezer inventory. And a simple labeling system.

Your inventory should be an easy to read guide to the contents of your freezer so you know what you have without even opening the door.

There is a copy of my Freezer Inventory Sheet at the end of this book.

### **Let's walk through the Inventory Sheet together.**

The first column is labeled Item

Here you'll want to write what you frozen and what state it's in.

Did you freeze cooked ground beef? Is it seasoned? How much in each portion?

If it's 1/2 cup portions of taco seasoned ground beef write "1/2 cup taco seasoned gr. beef" in the Item column. **Then write the same thing on the label on your freezer container and add the date.**

If you only write "ground beef" and you pull out ground beef with taco seasoning to make Italian meat sauce you won't be happy.

The second column is labeled Quantity.

You need to know how much of each item you have. I find including the size of the package under item and then recording the number of portions is the easiest way.

Think of the quantity as the number of portions of the item. So if you made 4 cups of taco

meat and frozen them in 1/2 cup portions then stored them in a 1 gallon freezer bag you'd mark a slash in 8 boxes for the quantity.

So make a slash for every portion you freeze and make that slash into an X when you pull a portion out to use. Then you know how much you made, how much you've used and how much is still in the freezer.

### **Updating your Freezer Inventory**

Once your inventory is started update it every time you add something to your freezer and every time you take something out.

Keep the sheet on a clip board next to your freezer and teach your family to make that X every time they take something out.

### **Organize your freezer.**

Alright, you're armed with an Inventory Sheet and you know how to use it.

Now you need to get your freezer organized and ready. If you're using a small freezer it's easiest to just take everything out, with a large freezer you might want to work in sections.

The goal is to make space to add more good stuff to your freezer.

**Condense** packages by pressing extra air out of bags and seal them tightly. Air in your freezer containers is bad and can cause freezer burn.

Check the size of your containers, if you can easily move something into a small container do it.

**Consolidate:** If you have a dozen [breakfast burritos](#) individually wrapped instead of hoping they don't all fall out when you open the door put them into a larger container together.

My favorite way to group things is with gallon and two gallon freezer bags. They are see through, add an extra layer of protection and fit just about everything.

**Chuck It:** Sometimes it's best to just throw things away. You can't get the benefits of using your freezer if it's full of garbage!

What to chuck?

Anything your family didn't like and won't eat.

Any meals over a year old.

Anything that's been destroyed by frost bite (it'll look old, shriveled up and dried out.)

Any fatty/salty meat (like bacon, sausage and ham) that's more than a few months old.

Seriously, bacon, sausage and ham have the worst freezer shelf lives because with all that salt the fat goes rancid in the freezer fast. The USDA only recommends storing this stuff 1-2 months.

### **Set your freezer to the right temperature.**

Although water freezes at 32 Fahrenheit (0 Celsius) most foods require much lower temperatures to freeze.

The ideal freezer temperature is 0 Fahrenheit (-18 Celsius) for storing food.

The faster food freezes the smaller the ice crystals. The smaller the ice crystals the smaller the change in texture and better quality when thawed but keeping your freezer too cold wastes energy.

This is really important because freezing food stops the growth of bacteria, it doesn't kill bacteria. So if the freezer gets too warm bacteria can start to grow again.

For every five degrees Fahrenheit above 0 F the storage time before your food spoils is cut in half. If it's not properly frozen and stored at the right temperature then food can slowly go bad.

Spending \$10 and getting a freezer thermometer is a good investment if you're not sure your freezer is cold enough.

Also keep a sealed freezer bag of ice cubes in the freezer. If the ice cubes melt and refreeze you'll know that the temperature got too warm.

Best to error on the side of a freezer that's too cold than too warm.

### **Stocking your Freezer**

It's easiest to find stuff if it's put away in the right spot and it's easiest to put it away if you know where it should go.

In your freezer you should keep similar items together such as breads and baked goods, fruits and veggies, cooked meals or Meal Starters and raw meats.

Raw meats should always go at the bottom of the freezer because if for some reason there is a power out or open door and they thaw they won't leak juices onto other foods below them and contaminate them making everything inedible.

Next put dairy like frozen milk or sour cream that could thaw and go bad quickly and can also leak onto other foods.

You should keep cooked meals and Meal Starters above the raw meats and dairy. They



might leak juices and ruin other foods if they thaw but it's less likely.

Above those keep your frozen fruits and veggies.

Last, breads and baked goods should go at the top of the freezer so they don't get smashed or destroyed.

## **What Freezes?**

It's surprising how many foods can freeze but it's also essential to know which ones can't.

Some foods change texture in the freezer because of their water content. When foods freeze the water inside them expands and if there is too much water it can destroy the original texture.

You'll find a copy of my Does It Freeze Chart at the back of this book. It's your cheat sheet to what freezes. The chart is also organized from top to bottom based on approximately where in your freezer an item should go.

A copy to keep with your inventory sheet near the freezer until your confident you know can freeze.

Learning what you can freeze and can't freeze is one of the hardest lessons for beginning freezer cooks. There's nothing more disappointing than spending your time and money to make a big batch of something for the freezer just to throw it away because it turns out bad.

Wasted food is a huge drain on anyone's food budget and no one likes to throw food away. But certain items simply can't freeze and are bound to give you bad results.

Learn what you can freeze and can't and you're on your way to saving tons of time and money in the kitchen while getting healthy homemade meals on the table.

**Just one really important rule: Don't freeze anything you wouldn't serve now.**

If it's too old and going bad you have to toss it.

If you didn't like it the first time you won't like it when you thaw and reheat it either.

If something is getting close to expiring you can write a note on the label. "Use immediately" is a simple reminder that something needs to be cooked or eaten right away.

For example most dinner leftovers are good for 3-4 days. If after a day you know they won't get eaten in time then freeze them and write "use immediately" on the label. Then when you go to thaw or reheat it you know that it needs to be eaten in a day or two max.

And always cool foods before freezing them.

### **Foods That Can Freeze:**

**Meat, poultry and fish** all can be frozen with success. Raw meat is preferable for long storage because it doesn't dry out or get freezer burn as fast as cooked meat.

**Breads and baked goods** can freeze and do well in the freezer. This includes cakes, pies, muffins, bagels, quick and yeast breads both as dough/batter or baked, cookies raw or baked and pizza crusts raw or baked.

**Butter and margarine** freeze great.

**Beans** freeze well and can save you a ton of money if you buy dry beans then soak and cook them yourself instead of buying the canned variety.

**Rice** can also freeze and cooking it ahead can save a ton of time.

### **Foods That Can Freeze But Will Change In Texture:**

**Fruits and vegetables** all soften and those with high water content do not freeze well. Fruit that still has ice crystals can be eaten as is after thawing but most fruits and veggies should be used for cooking after being frozen. Fruits and veggies do need some prep work as well.

**Potatoes** freeze great and make quick side dishes, however they must be cooked before freezing to insure they don't turn black.

**Pastas** will become much softer after they are frozen and should only be cooked about three quarters of the recommended time. Also pastas frozen in liquid or sauce will absorb a lot of the moisture.

**Milk and dairy products** can be frozen but may separate after being frozen. Cheeses become crumbly and hard to slice but they are fine for cooking or melting.

**Herbs** lose their texture but retain their flavor. Frozen herbs can be used for cooked dishes but not for garnishes.

**Raw eggs** removed from their shells can be frozen but are mixed with a bit of salt or sugar to keep them from turning rubbery.

**Cooked eggs** that are scrambled or used in a recipe freeze well. Boiled eggs don't do as well because the whites get rubbery.

**Fried foods** lose their crispness but do OK when reheated in the oven.

**Salty fatty items**, such as bacon, sausage, ham, hot dogs, some lunch meats and some fish **do not last long in the freezer**. The USDA only recommends freezing these items for 1-2 months. The salt causes fat to go rancid in the freezer. Many people freeze these items longer so use your best judgment. If it looks or smells 'off' toss it.

### **Foods That Can't Freeze**

**Cornstarch** loses its thickening power. Use a roux made of butter and flour (or rice flour if you're gluten free) instead.

**Gelatin** weeps, or loses water.

**Vegetables with high water content** such as lettuces, celery, radishes, cabbage, cucumbers become a watery mess. However frozen celery can be used to make broth.

**Melons** get very soft and lose much of their juice. They can still be used for smoothies but generally are not frozen.

**Meringue toppings** become tough and rubbery.

**Custards and cream puddings** can separate.

**Mayonnaise** tends to separate.

**Crumb toppings** for things like casseroles or desserts can become soggy. Freeze them separately and top before browning or serving.

**Egg white based icing or frosting** can become frothy or weep. Use butter cream or cream cheese based frostings instead.

## **How Long Can You Freeze Food?**

Throw out those multi-page freezer storage charts and learn three rules to help you determine how long to keep food in the freezer.

Food doesn't go bad in the freezer like it does in the fridge. As long as you keep the temperature set right most foods last years, the biggest problem being freezer burn.

The type of food, how it's packaged, freezer temperature, the number of power outs and their durations, the amount of surface area are all factors in how long something can last.

Always write the date on the package when freezing food so you know how old it is. I don't suggest you add the date to your freezer inventory sheet because the length of time

is a minor factor. However, if you have multiples of an item in the freezer you should always use the oldest first.

Quality is the most important factor when deciding on freezer storage times. Freezer burn leaves food safe to eat but dry, bland and chewy.

Freezing does not improve food. It can't turn back the clock on overripe, over cooked or spoiled food.

It does, however, put bacteria into a state of hibernation while frozen, bacteria will continue to multiple while food is freezing and while food thaws.

So you start with a good product and freeze it, but how long will last?

If you want to know what factors [determine how long something will keep](#) in the freezer you can find more info on my website.

## **Three Rules for Freezer Storage Times**

### **The One Year Rule**

As a general rule I never plan to keep things in the freezer more than one year.

Storing things longer than that is simply an uneconomical use of space, electricity and an unnecessary risk that when you go to use your food it won't be appetizing.

Despite the 'fresh' food available in the grocery store daily I still believe food has seasons.

When food is in season and at it's peak is the ideal time to stock up and freeze some and there is nothing wrong with freezing a year supply of a Budget Keeper but no reason to assume you won't or can't stock up again next season.

When it comes to meats I feel the same way. If you buy in bulk and get more than a year supply share your abundance with others or plan to split the cost and the meat with a friend, family member or neighbor.

### **The Three Month Rule**

When it comes to Time Savers, Meal Kits and Assembled Meals use the three month rule.

Only freeze enough of anything to last three months or a single season.

With the three month rule you get the real benefits of freezer cooking. Your constantly using your Time Savers and Meal Kits. Your freezer contents get turned over so you have room for new foods and nothing is in there long enough to get freezer burn.

## **The Inspection Rule**

We have a natural instinct to not eat bad stuff. If it looks [freezer burnt](#) you probably won't want to eat it-it's completely safe just dry and unappetizing. If it smells bad it either is bad or absorbed other smells in freezer (due to poor packaging) and you won't want to eat it.

This is the third rule for a reason, package it right and follow the first two rules and you'll rarely have to deal with this one. But if you do then simply inspect the food.

We've learned that we shouldn't waste food and that wasting food is like throwing money away but getting sick is a waste too. So, when in doubt throw it out.

Ask yourself if it was packaged well, stayed frozen, looks OK and smells OK. If so you can eat it, if not toss it.

## **Freezer Burn**

Freezer burn is the biggest problem people new to freezer cooking face. You've probably seen meat that comes out of the freezer and looks 'off.' It usually looks grayish white and dry like it's been overcooked.

Freezer burn is damage to your food from dehydration and oxidation caused by air. Food with freezer burn is safe to eat, the quality is what suffers. Often you can just cut off the dehydrated part, but if it's too bad just throw the whole thing away.

Water evaporates at all temperatures, so water will continue to evaporate out of your frozen food unless there is something to prevent it. That something should be a moisture-vapor barrier provided by your freezer container.

Freezer quality containers have a moisture-vapor barrier that keeps the moisture in your food. This is the best insurance you have for the quality of your freezer meals so don't cheapen out here.

Use the proper size containers. Rigid containers should be nearly full with just enough room for food to expand as it freezes. Freezer bags should have all the air sucked or pushed out of them and close fitting wraps such as freezer paper should be touching the food.

Vacuum sealers are best for long term storage because they remove all the air from the package.

Food storage bags, plastic wrap, bread wrappers and Styrofoam trays with plastic wrap will not provide a moisture-vapor barrier and do not prevent your food from dehydrating.

## **Oxidation:**

Oxidation is an often overlooked problem with freezer cooking. Air reaching your food

can cause fats in meats to oxidize leading to rancidity. It's also a huge problem with fruits and vegetables as oxidation leaches nutrients from them. The good news is that the same methods that prevent freezer burn can prevent oxidation.

You can read more about preventing [freezer burn and oxidation](#) if you want.

## **Flash Freezing**

Having individual pieces of frozen food means you can take just as much as you need instead of freezing large portions and having to thaw that large portion and potentially wasting food. Not only does flash freezing mean less chances of waste, smaller portions thaw faster saving you even more time.

### **How to Flash Freeze Food**

Do not try this technique with liquids.

If the food is damp, like washed and sliced fruit, dry it with paper towels or a clean cloth first.

Cut it to the desired size before freezing.

Lay prepared food flat in a single layer on a baking sheet. Technically a cookie sheet has no sides and the sides on a baking sheet help keep the food from sliding off as you move the sheet around the kitchen.

Place the baking sheet flat in the freeze for a few hours or until the food is completely frozen and then package it in a freezer container and add it to your freezer inventory sheet.

### **Tips for Flash Freezing Food**

If your freezing a lot of food set your freezer to -10 the night before you start flash freezing. Learn more about freezer temperatures.  
breast.

Set a timer if you need to. Don't forget your food and leave it on the baking sheet or it will start to freezer burn as the cold air pulls it the moisture out of the exposed food.

## **The Right Freezer Containers**

Quality freezer containers are the best investment you can make to keep your frozen food fresh.

There's nothing worse than spending time and money on freezing food to cheapen out on containers and have to toss all that food in the trash when it gets freezer burned or

oxidized.

The good news is that not all freezer safe containers are expensive and you probably already have some, like aluminum foil or freezer bags, on hand.

### **What Features To Look For In Freezer Containers**

Containers for the freezer absolutely need to be moisture and vapor proof. The moisture-vapor barrier stops freezer burn, keeps odors from spreading and stops freezer burn and oxidation. Look for items that say “freezer quality.”

Containers should be durable, odorless, tasteless, grease-proof, water-proof, resistant to low temperatures and easy to seal, label and clean.

Try to keep both sturdy, rigid containers, like plastic containers or metal pans, and flexible containers, such as freezer bags and aluminum foil, on hand for different types of foods.

### **Portion Sizes**

Freezing food is all about the right portion sizes. Think about what you want to do with something when you're taking it out of the freezer.

Individual portions and family portions are what you want. If your family is two people you'll be freezing small sized portions than someone with a family of four or six. Use containers that match your needs.

### **Types Of Freezer Storage Containers**

**Glass containers** must be freezer grade. Some types of glass can crack in the freezer, and most glass containers can not go from the freezer straight to the oven. These are also heavy and break easily but are reusable and environmentally friendly.

**Freezer bags** are the most versatile type of freezer container and can be used for practically anything. These are cheap, flexible and can be given away. Do not use freezer bags with sharp items such as the cut end on bones.

**Metal pans** like those used for baking do ok in the freezer but it can be expensive getting a full set to cook with and to leave in the freezer. Line the pan with aluminum foil before adding your freezer meal and remove the pan during storage.

**Aluminum pans** that are disposable freezer containers and a great option for meals you plan to give away. Aluminum pans tend to be wobbly so use a cookie sheet under the pan to give it stability when filling and moving to the freezer. These can also be used more than one.

**Rigid plastic containers** range in quality and price. They are good for freezing liquids. Choose the proper sizes for individual and family portions so that there is not excess air in the container with your food. Good plastic containers can go from the freezer to the

microwave and are dishwasher safe.

**Aluminum foil** is perfect for covering pans or wrapping something oddly shaped. My preference is to use it as an outer layer with plastic wrap inside to hold any juices or crumbs and as an extra layer in case the foil tears. Aluminum foil can be reused and recycled when it's torn. This is one of the most versatile freezer containers and should be in every kitchen. To help prevent tears put the foil wrapped food in a freezer bag.

**Silicone pans** are relatively new on the market. They can withstand very high and low temperature and are suitable for freezing food and can go straight in the oven. They are very easy to use and clean but can also be wobbly, a cookie sheet helps with this sort of pan.

**Vacuum sealers** are great for long term storage. They come with special and you use the vacuum sealer to suck the air out of the package and get a nice tight wrap. They also allow you to see what is inside the package.

**Freezer tape** works well with plastic or foil packages. Freezer grade tape stays sticky at cold temperatures where other tapes lose their adhesiveness. Freezer tape can also be used to reseal bags of items like store bought frozen vegetables.

Permanent marker is ideal for labeling containers. On reusable containers you can use freezer tape to write on.

Do not use regular waxed paper, plastic wrap or plastic bags for freezer storage containers.

Think of containers for the freezer as an investment and slowly build up a large collection of the type that meets your personal needs. The better the freezer container, the longer food can stay in the freezer without losing quality.

### **Shapes**

The best shapes for freezer containers are squares and rectangles. Round containers leave too much empty space in the freezer. Many rectangular containers will fit in the shelves of your freezer door.

### **Feeling Guilty? Don't.**

I hereby absolve you of all guilt and give you unconditional permission to use disposal freezer containers.

Actually, you should feel GOOD about it. Think of it this way, that one freezer container that you're using is LESS packaging than a store bought or fast food meal. The food it holds is healthier for you and your family. Plus, that homemade meal will carry a smaller carbon footprint than the junk you would have had delivered. And you can use the money you save to buy reusable freezer containers.



## Thawing Food

Learning how to thaw frozen food safely is vital. Improper thawing methods can allow bacteria to grow on your food and make people sick.

### What NOT to thaw?

Not everything needs to be thawed before you reheat or serve it.

Thawing **stuffed poultry** is not recommended and it should be cooked from frozen.

**Assembled meals** do not need to be thawed, but may cook more evenly after they have been thawed.

Many cuts of raw **meat** do not need to be thawed if they are being cooked fast at a high heat, almost everything going in the crock pot should be thawed however.

**Frozen veggies** do not need to be thawed and should be cooked frozen.

**Frozen fruit** can be added to other dishes where it will be cooked.

**Allow 50% more time to cook something from frozen.** So a casserole that usually takes an hour to cook will take about an hour and a half from frozen. Exact times will vary based on the size of the meal and your individual oven.

## How To Thaw Frozen Food

There are a few basic methods of thawing food and not all of them are safe for all foods. These four methods include the fridge, cold water, the microwave and the counter.

**The fridge** is the safest way to thaw food, when in doubt thaw it in the fridge. However, the fridge is also the slowest way to thaw food. This method is ideal for meats, dairy and anything else usually stored cold. You can also thaw breads and baked goods, pastas, rice, beans and fruit in the fridge. Whole meals with any of these items also do well in the fridge.

Try not to push the food to the back of the fridge where it is the coldest.

Thawing food in the fridge is easy. Just leave the food in the freezer container until it is fully thawed. Planning ahead is essential, your best bet is to pull foods 1 or 2 days before you want to eat or cook with them. Again, the larger the portion the longer it takes.

**Cold water** is as safe as thawing in the fridge when done right and most foods can be thawed this way. It is also faster than using the fridge. This method is great for meat, fruit, sauces, veggies and dairy. Do not thaw baked goods in cold water.

Make sure the food is in a water proof package and well sealed then submerge it in cold water. You can use a bucket if you'll need your sink. Every 30 minutes the water must be drained and fresh cold water added to make sure the temperature doesn't get too warm and bacteria doesn't start to grow.

Cold water thawing is faster than the fridge for big things that take long to thaw like frozen meats, I usually thaw my turkeys this way.

**The microwave** is the fastest way to thaw food but gives the most uneven results. Food can start cooking on the outside while the inside is still frozen and the microwave usually dries out foods. Use this method of thawing only when necessary.

Any food thawed in the microwave needs to be cooked immediately.

The microwave is ideal for reheating single portions without thawing.

### **How To Thaw Food Tips**

Leave the food in the same package in was in in the freezer.

Use a platter if necessary to catch as juice that might drip from meats, fruit or liquids.

## **Can You Refreeze Food That Thawed?**

Ever wonder if you can refreeze food you thawed for dinner or worse- the entire contents of your freezer after the door was left open or a power out? Life happens and sometimes our plans for dinner get adjusted.

We all hate to waste food but it's better than getting ill from food born bacteria. Ignoring the cost, is saving some money worth the risk of getting sick? Did you know severe cases of food poisoning can kill someone?

So the question is how do we know what is still safe and what isn't?

**Refreezing food is not dangerous, the danger is that food can spoil before it's refrozen or after it's thawed again before being cooked and eaten.**

Freezing food does not kill bacteria, so once thawed bacteria continues to multiple at the same exponential rate it was multiplying at before being frozen.

Refreezing also reduces quality because the already slightly damages cells are being expanded with ice crystals again. This isn't a big deal for meats or baked foods but is huge for rice, pasta, fruits and veggies.

Try to figure out how long things have been thawing/thawed to help you make a safe decision. .

**Toss it if**

- \* Temperature went above 40F
- \* There is a bad odor
- \* You have any doubts the food is still safe

**Refreeze if**

\* Food still has ice crystals. Use your best judgment here, something big like a turkey could be really warm and thus unsafe on the surface while there are still ice crystals in the cavity thus you need to toss it.

\* Fully cook any raw meats that thawed but are still cold, under 40F, but not icy, before refreezing.

\* Be careful with prepared/cooked foods, it's best to reheat and eat them instead of refreezing them because of the risk of bacteria and the loss of texture.

\* Label clearly so you know to use this item fast. I usually write something like "Refrozen -Do not thaw" if you can cook it from frozen or "Refrozen-Use as soon as thawed" so I know that this item should be cooked as soon as it thaws when I have to refreeze something.

To learn more about [foods you can refreeze click here](#).

## Conclusion

Freezing food can be as easy as you want it to be. So next time your at the store think about buying a little extra and getting yourself some Time Savers and Budget Keepers in the freezer.

Start freezing meals when you're ready to, but don't feel like you have to prepare a whole dish before you can freeze it.

And don't be afraid to use what's in your freezer. Saving it for a busier day doesn't help you, the whole point of freezing food is that it's ready WHENEVER you want it.

This is Version 1.0 of the Freezing Food Crash Course.

[Help make this eBook even better. Please take a few moments and share your thoughts with me by completing a simple questionnaire. You can assess the questionnaire by clicking here.](#)

[Know someone who could benefit from the information in this book? Send them to http://www.favoritefreezerfoods.com/Freezing-Food-Crash-Course.html to download a copy of their own.](http://www.favoritefreezerfoods.com/Freezing-Food-Crash-Course.html)

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## Does It Freeze?

Breads/Muffins	Freeze great.
Cakes	Unfrosted cakes freeze great. Butter cream frosting is fine. Custard or egg white frostings do not freeze.
Fruit and Nut Pies	Freeze fine raw and baked.
Custard, Cream and Meringue Pies	No.
Cookies	Baked cookies freeze fine. Butter cream frosting fine. Most raw doughs freeze ok.
Nuts/Seeds	Freeze great - increases shelf life.
Grains/Legumes	Freeze great raw or cooked.
Fruits	Freeze ok -texture will be softer. Eat while still cold and slightly icy or cook with them, not as good for eating raw after thawed.
Vegetables	Most freeze ok (fresh veg should be blanched before freezing-some, like potatoes must be cooked before freezing) Texture will be softer than when fresh. Do not freeze lettuces.
Pasta	Raw pasta freezes well. If cooked it should be undercooked by 1-2 minutes. Best frozen with sauce on top to prevent freezer burn.
Casseroles	Most freeze great. Should be frozen after it's prepared or under-baked when possible (meats must be fully cooked). Freeze toppings separately if you want it crunchy.
Cheese	Most freeze ok. Best sliced or portioned before freezing. Texture will be crumbly after thawing but it's fine for cooking/melting.
Eggs cooked	Scrambled eggs freeze ok but most others do not freeze well.
Eggs -raw	Freeze raw by mixing yolk and white together or separately by mixing the yolk with some salt or sugar (1/8 tsp salt or 1+1/2 tsp sugar per 4 yolks -add to freezer label). Whites are fine as is.
Dairy	Freezes ok for cooking. Milk, cream, sour cream all separate when frozen, they can be stirred back together but the texture changes.
Butter	Freezes Great
Sauces	Depends. Many sauces separate in the freezer. They do better frozen as part of a meal than frozen alone. Avoid thickening with cornstarch (aka corn flour).
Meat and Poultry	Freeze great raw and cooked.