

A–Z food storage tips and advice

This is an A-Z of tips to help you make your food last longer, along with leftover ideas and handy hints on the best way to store your food.



The list was compiled by members of the public, top chefs and LFHW enthusiasts.

APPLES

- For freshness and quality store your apples in the fridge. Keeping them in the fridge in a loosely tied bag will help stop them shrivelling up. Add to the fruit bowl to bring to room temperature before eating.
- There's always one bad apple that spoils the barrel so keep an eye on your fruit. Separate fruit which is ripening more quickly than the others.
- If apples have bruised areas, simply cut off and grate the remaining apple into salads, or cut into wedges and give to children as a snack.
- Apples are good added to pickles and chutneys or eaten with cheese and cold meats.
- Apples can be frozen in slices after they have been quickly cooked in boiling water. Freeze in a single layer then pack into bags once frozen. Use the frozen apples to make into apple cake or apple sauce.
- If you've got a surplus of cooking apples, cut them into quarters, core and peel them. To prevent apples turning brown while you're peeling them, squeeze the juice of half a lemon into a bowl of water and drop the pieces into it. Drain, quickly pack the apples in freezer bags or containers and freeze them. To use, put the frozen fruit in a pan with some sugar, add a very small amount of water and cook as normal.
- Peel and chop the apples, and place in a saucepan with a little water, lemon juice and castor sugar (maybe some cinnamon too). Cook gently for about 15 minutes, stirring regularly. Then whisk or blend smooth. It's lovely with pork but can also be a dessert with cream or ice-cream.
- When making jam add one or two apples to the mixture; the pectin in apples helps the jam to set.

BANANAS

- Always keep bananas separate from other fruits unless you want the other fruit to ripen quickly.
- They go brown quite quickly so if you see them start to go speckled, peel them and put them in the freezer. You can use frozen bananas in smoothies, banana loaf or bake them in the oven with a bit of honey dripped on top for a lovely dessert.

CHILLIES

- You usually need to buy a whole pack of chillies even though you may only need one. Deseed the chillies and chop finely, then add the same number of crushed garlic cloves. Pop in a bag then in an airtight container and freeze. Spoon out a small quantity as required.
- Alternatively, you can freeze them whole; you can cut them really easily from frozen and add to your cooking. The benefit is you're less likely to get spice on your fingers when you're cutting them from frozen!

DRIED FRUIT

- If you're making a fruit cake and the dried fruit looks a little too dry, pour boiling water over it in a bowl and leave for 30 minutes. You can add a tea bag for flavour.

EGGS

- Eggs should be kept at a constant temperature below 20°C. Most supermarkets are kept below 20°C so retailers don't need to store them in a fridge. This also prevents significant temperature fluctuations (for example eggs being moved from a fridge to a hot car after purchase).
- To avoid the typical temperature fluctuations in your kitchen, we recommend that eggs are stored in their box in the fridge.

FRUIT

- Storing all your fruit in the fridge will help it last longer (except bananas and pineapple).

GINGER

- Fresh ginger often ends up wrinkled and dry in the salad drawer of the fridge. The best way to keep it is to cut it into manageable chunks then peel it. Put the chunks

into a bag and freeze them. Ginger is much easier to grate from frozen than it is from fresh.

HERBS

- It's worth freezing herbs that you use regularly: mint, parsley, chives and tarragon, for example. Wash and dry them before freezing whole in freezer bags, or chopped in ice cube trays covered with water. Tip frozen cubes into a freezer bag.

JUICE

- Make lollies from leftover smoothies, apple juice or orange juice. You can buy lolly moulds to use in the freezer.

LETTUCE

- If you transfer your bagged salad leaves into an airtight container lined with kitchen roll this helps remove excess moisture. Your salad will be crisp and dry for even longer.

MILK

- Freeze semi-skimmed milk (fresh or long life) when you have half-finished bottles or bought too much. It means you can have a much-needed cup of tea when you get back to an otherwise empty fridge, whatever the time of day or night!

NUTS

- Place in an airtight container and store in the fridge. Check the information on the packet for specific storage instructions.

ONIONS

- Onions freeze well and it's easy to chop up as many as you like before freezing. If you're in a hurry, it's a great help to just grab a handful from the frozen lot, and there's no chopping board to wash!

POTATOES

- To store your potatoes, take them out of the bag and put them into a cloth or natural fibre bag. Store them away from strong smelling foods such as onions, and choose somewhere cool, dark and airy – not the fridge.

ROAST

- If you haven't got time to make a shepherd's pie from your leftover roast, whiz the meat with an onion in the food processor and pour into a freezer bag for later. It is

then quick and easy to cook the prepared meat mixture from frozen to make a shepherd's pie.

SPINACH

- If you wash spinach well in cold water, shake off as much water as you can and store in an airtight container in the fridge, it will keep fresh for longer. This method also revives old spinach.

TOMATOES

- To freeze tomatoes, remove their stalks and freeze whole in freezer bags. They can then be used in place of canned tomatoes, in a tomato or Bolognese sauce or chilli con carne. Just put the whole frozen tomatoes into the pan at the point when you would add the chopped tomatoes. Don't try to defrost them separately as they turn to mush.

VEGETABLES

- Peel and chop carrots, onions and so on, bag them and freeze. When needed just take out as much as you need and reseal. No more soggy veg at the bottom of your veg box!

WATERMELON

- If you have watermelon left over, chop it up into cubes and put it in the freezer. This makes a really sweet, healthy snack and is a good way to cool down on a hot day.

YOGHURT

- Mix yoghurt with any over ripe fruit, such as banana and strawberries. Pour into lolly moulds and freeze.