

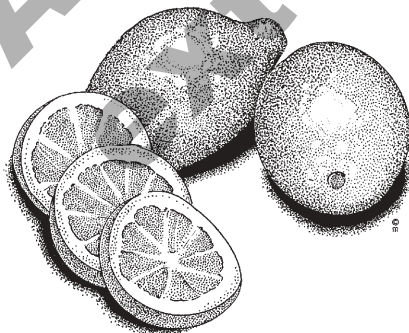
FOOD PRESERVATION

Freezing Unusual Fruits and Vegetables

Barbara J. Willenberg, Associate State Food and Nutrition Specialist

Fruits and vegetables, including many unusual produce items, that were once available only "in season" are now available year round in supermarkets. If you're lucky enough to have an excess, freezing is an excellent way to preserve fruits and vegetables for later mealtime enjoyment.

For basic information on the freezing process, including packaging, refer to MU publication GH 1501, *Freezing Basics*. The general directions for freezing fruit, including preparation of syrup, are given in MU publication GH 1502, *Freezing Fruits*. General information on freezing vegetables, including blanching, is given in MU publication GH 1503, *Freezing Vegetables*. These three publications should be used with this guide to give you the complete information necessary for successful home freezing of fruits and vegetables.



Quality for Keeps



Fruits

Citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruit)

Select firm, tree-ripened fruit heavy for its size and free from soft spots. Wash and peel. Divide fruit into sections, removing all membranes and seeds. Slice oranges if desired. For grapefruit with many seeds, cut fruit in half and remove seeds; cut or scoop out sections.

- **Syrup pack** — Pack fruit into containers. Cover with 40 percent syrup made with excess fruit juice or water, leave head space, seal and freeze.
- **Juice** — Select fruit as directed for sections. Squeeze juice from fruit, using squeezer that does not press oil from rind. Sweeten with 2 tablespoons sugar for each quart of

juice or pack without sugar. Pour juice into containers immediately. To avoid development of off flavors, use glass freezer jars. Leave head space, seal and freeze.

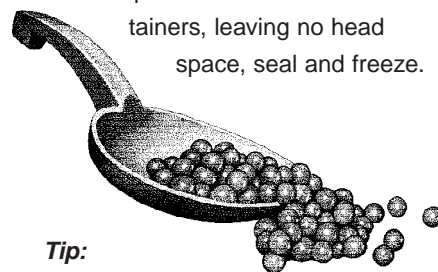
Coconut

Shred fresh coconut meat or put it through a food chopper. Pack into containers and, if desired, cover with coconut milk. Leave head space, seal and freeze.

Cranberries

Choose firm, deep red berries with glossy skins. Stem and sort. Wash and drain.

- **Unsweetened pack** — Tray freeze; then pack cranberries into containers, leaving no head space, seal and freeze.



Tip:

Frozen cranberries are easy to chop in a blender or food processor.

- **Syrup pack** — Pack into containers, cover with 50 percent syrup, leave head space, seal and freeze.

Huckleberries

Select full-flavored, ripe huckleberries. Wash, drain and discard immature or defective berries. Preheat in steam for 2 to 3 minutes to tenderize the skin and improve the flavor.

- **Unsweetened pack** — Tray freeze; then pack into containers, leaving no head space, seal and freeze.

Tip: Frozen huckleberries can be used like blueberries in muffins, pancakes or other recipes. If too tart, huckleberries may need to be sweetened before use in recipes.

Kiwi

Select plump, ripe kiwi fruit that yield to gentle pressure when squeezed. Wash, peel and slice.

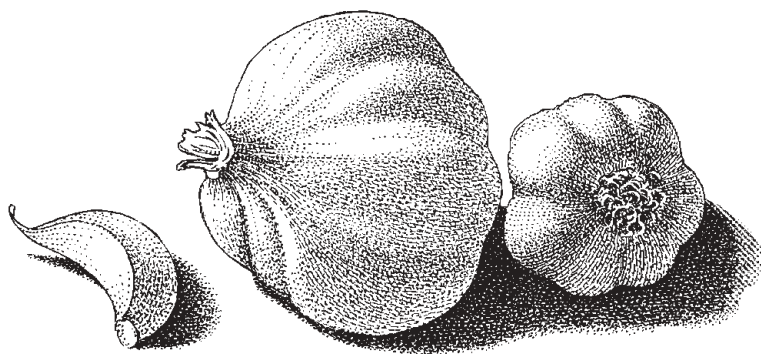
- **Syrup pack** — Pack fruit into containers. Cover with 30 or 40 percent syrup, leave head space, seal and freeze.

Tip: If you plan to use frozen kiwi fruit in gelatin desserts, bring it to a boil, simmer 2 to 3 minutes and cool before freezing. Raw kiwi fruit, either fresh or frozen, contains an enzyme that prevents a gel from forming. Heating the kiwi fruit before freezing will prevent this problem.

Rhubarb

Choose firm, tender, well-colored stalks with good flavor and few fibers. Wash, trim and cut into 1- or 2-inch pieces or in lengths to fit the package. Heat rhubarb in boiling water for 1 minute and cool promptly in cold water to help retain color and flavor. Drain.

- **Unsweetened pack** — Pack either raw or preheated rhubarb tightly in containers without sugar. Leave head space, seal and freeze.
- **Syrup pack** — Pack either raw or preheated rhubarb tightly into containers, cover with 40 percent syrup. Leave head space, seal and



freeze.

- **Sugar pack** — Mix either raw or preheated rhubarb with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar per quart of prepared fruit. Pack into containers, seal and freeze.

Vegetables

Garlic

Garlic can be root-celled for several months in cool, dry conditions. The flavor of garlic may become stronger when frozen. It also is difficult to package garlic so that other foods stored with it do not pick up its odor or flavor. Keeping these shortcomings in mind, garlic can be frozen using one of these methods. Blanching is not necessary.

- Peel garlic and grind or chop cloves. Pack into containers, seal and freeze. To use, grate or break off the amount needed.

OR:

- Pack unpeeled garlic cloves into

containers, seal and freeze. To use, remove cloves as needed.

OR:

- Peel garlic cloves and puree them with oil in a blender or food processor, using two parts vegetable oil to one part garlic. Pack into containers, seal and freeze. The puree will stay soft enough in the freezer to scrape off amounts as needed to use in sautéing.

Jerusalem artichokes (sunchokes)

Select young, medium-size sunchokes. Peel or scrape and wash.

Water blanch 3 to 5 minutes depending on the size. Cool, drain, pack into containers, seal and freeze.

Mushrooms

Select medium and small mushrooms with white, tight caps; prepare and freeze the same day as picked or

Caution!

Only an expert should attempt to identify and harvest wild mushrooms. Although many wild mushrooms are edible, others are poisonous. For help in identifying wild mushrooms, check with the Missouri Conservation Commission.

purchased. Handle carefully to prevent bruising; wash well in cold water and drain thoroughly. Do not soak. Cut off the base of the stems and sort for size. Leave whole, slice or quarter. Mushrooms should be blanched or steamed before freezing. An alternate method is to sauté mushrooms in butter or margarine before freezing.

- **To blanch** — Blanch whole mushrooms 5 minutes, buttons or quarters for 3½ minutes and slices for 3 minutes. Add 1 teaspoon of lemon juice or 1½ teaspoons citric acid to each pint of blanching water. Cool promptly, drain, pack into containers, seal and freeze.
- **To steam** — Mushrooms to be steamed have better color if given an anti-darkening treatment first. Dip for 5 minutes in a solution containing 1 teaspoon lemon juice or 1½ teaspoons citric acid to a pint of water. Then steam whole mushrooms for 5 minutes, buttons or quarters for 3½ minutes, and slices for 3 minutes. Cool promptly, drain, pack into containers, seal and freeze.
- **To sauté** — Heat small quantities of mushrooms in butter or margarine in an open fry pan until almost done. Set pan of mushrooms in cold water to cool promptly. Pack into containers, seal and freeze.

Pimientos

Select firm, crisp pimientos of deep red color. Peel by roasting in 400- to 450-degree F oven for 3 to 4 minutes or until skins can be rubbed off. Wash off charred skins, cut out stems and remove seeds. Pack into containers, seal and freeze.

Rutabagas

Select young, medium-size rutabagas. Cut off tops, wash and peel.

- **Cubed** — Cut into ½-inch cubes and water blanch 2 minutes. Cool, drain, pack into containers, seal and freeze.
- **Mashed** — Cut into chunks and cook until tender in boiling water. Drain, mash, cool and pack into containers. Seal and freeze.

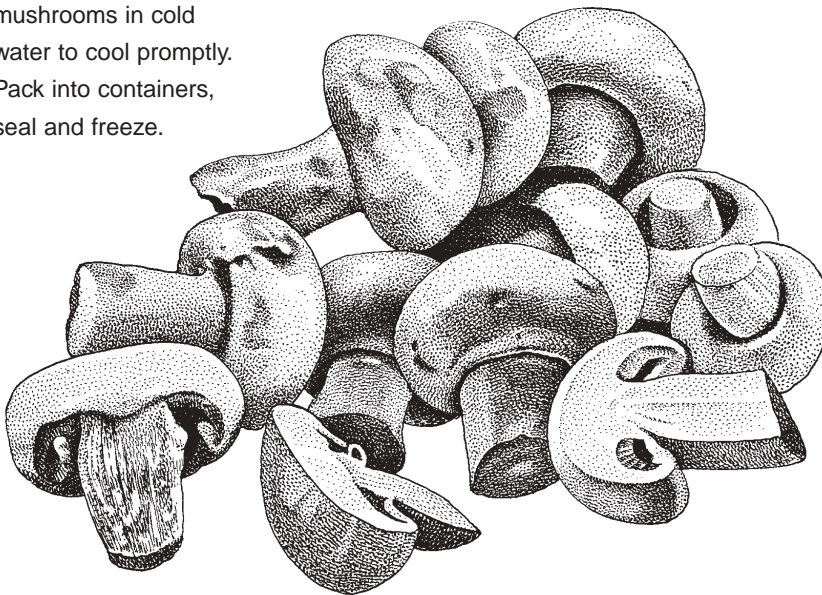
Spaghetti squash

Leave squash whole and pierce so steam can escape, or halve and remove seeds. Bake in an oven or microwave oven, or steam on top of the range until tender. Cool quickly by placing pan in cold water. Cut in half and remove seeds if necessary. Rake through pulp lengthwise with a fork to separate strands. Pack into containers, seal and freeze.

Sprouts (alfalfa, mung, chickpea, soybean, etc.)

Choose crisp, young sprouts. Wash and remove seed coats.

Heat one layer at a time in steam for 3 minutes. Cool, drain, pack into containers, seal and freeze.



For more information on this subject and many others, visit the MU Extension Publications Web site at:

<http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore>



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