

the

FOOD KEEPER

A Consumer Guide to Food Quality & Safe Handling



TODAY'S SUPERMARKET

Supermarkets stock an amazing array of fresh, frozen and prepared foods. After selecting these perishable food items, it's up to you to take care of them properly. The Food Keeper is designed to help you shop for groceries and handle food products carefully, and safely, from the store to the table.

Shopping Smart

- Begin your grocery shopping by selecting shelf-stable items such as canned goods, chips and soft drinks. Make sure the containers are intact. Cans should not be bulging, leaking or dented on the seam or rim. Lids must be secure. Plastic or paper packaging shouldn't be torn.
- Select refrigerated and frozen foods and hot deli items last – right before checkout.
- Don't choose meat, fish, poultry or dairy products that feel warm to the touch or have a damaged or torn package. If a package begins to leak, wrap it in plastic bags.
- Choose only pasteurized dairy products and refrigerated eggs that are not cracked or dirty.
- Check "sell-by" and "use-by" dates on packages.

Once you purchase food, take it directly home. If this is not possible, keep a cooler in the car to transport cold perishable items. Immediately put perishables into the refrigerator or freezer.



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Call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline toll free at:
1-800-535-4555, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern time,
Monday through Friday year round, for more information
about the safe handling, cooking, and storage of food.
Web site: www.fsis.usda.gov

Call FDA's Center for Food Safety and
Applied Nutrition toll free at
1-(888) 723-3366.
Web site: www.cfsan.fda.gov

foods purchased refrigerated

THE FOOD KEEPER

The Food Keeper contains valuable storage advice to help you maintain the freshness and quality of foods. Some foods deteriorate quickly, while the quality of other items may last longer than expected. This is why the storage times listed in the accompanying charts are intended as useful guidelines, not hard and fast rules.

Remember to buy foods in reasonable quantities and rotate them in your pantry, refrigerator and freezer.

REFRIGERATED FOOD

Refrigerate food to preserve freshness. However, over time, even chilled food begins to go bad. The Food Keeper charts indicate refrigerator storage times for a wide variety of food items, calculated from the date of purchase.

Temperature

- Set the refrigerator to maintain a temperature of 40°F or below.
- Keep a refrigerator thermometer in the unit or check the temperature seasonally.
- Don't overload the refrigerator. Air must circulate freely to cool all foods evenly.



= Does not apply

| PRODUCT | REFRIGERATED | FROZEN |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------|
| BEVERAGES, FRUIT | | |
| Juice in cartons, fruit drinks, punch | 3 weeks, unopened; 7-10 days open | 8-12 months |
| DAIRY PRODUCTS | | |
| Butter | 1-3 months | 6-9 months |
| Buttermilk | 1-2 weeks | 3 months |
| Cheese, hard (such as cheddar, swiss, block parmesan) | 6 months unopened; 3-4 weeks opened | 6 months |
| Parmesan, shredded | 1 month opened | 3-4 months |
| Shredded cheddar, mozzarella, etc. | 1 month | 3-4 months |
| Cheese, processed slices | 1-2 months | Doesn't freeze well |
| Cheese, soft (such as Brie, Bel Paese) | 1 week | 6 months |
| Cottage cheese, ricotta | 1 week | Doesn't freeze well |
| Cream cheese | 2 weeks | Doesn't freeze well |
| Cream, whipping, ultrapasteurized | 1 month | Do not freeze |
| Whipped, sweetened | 1 day | 1-2 months |
| Aerosol can, real whipped cream | 3-4 weeks | Do not freeze |
| Aerosol can, nondairy topping | 3 months | Do not freeze |
| Cream, half-and-half | 3-4 days | 4 months |
| Dips, sour cream based | 2 weeks | Do not freeze |
| Egg substitutes, liquid | | |
| unopened | 10 days | Do not freeze |
| opened | 3 days | |
| Eggnog, commercial | 3-5 days | 6 months |
| Eggs, in shell | 3-5 weeks | Do not freeze |
| raw whites, yolks* | 2-4 days | 12 months |
| hard cooked | 1 week | Doesn't freeze well |
| Kefir (fermented milk) | 1 week after date; opened 1-2 days | Do not freeze |
| Margarine | 6 months | 12 months |
| Milk, plain or flavored | 1 week | 3 months |
| Pudding | Package date; 2 days after opening | Do not freeze |
| Sour cream | 7-21 days | Doesn't freeze well |
| Yogurt | 7-14 days | 1-2 months |
| DOUGH | | |
| Tube cans of biscuits, rolls, pizza dough, etc. | Use-by date | Do not freeze |
| Ready-to-bake pie crust | Use-by date | 2 months |
| Cookie dough | Use by date, unopened or opened | 2 months |
| PASTA, fresh | | |
| | 1-2 days or use-by date on package | 2 months |
| PESTO or SALSA | | |
| | Date on carton; 3 days after opening | 1-2 months |
| SOY PRODUCTS | | |
| Soy or rice beverage, refrigerated | 7-10 days | Do not freeze |
| Tofu | 1 week or package date | 5 months |
| Miso | 3 months | Do not freeze |

*When freezing egg yolks, beat in either 1/8 teaspoon salt or 1 1/2 teaspoons sugar or corn syrup per 1/4 cup egg yolks (4 yolks).

foods purchased refrigerated

STORING REFRIGERATED FOOD

- Leave meat, poultry and seafood in the store packaging before using. Repeated handling can introduce bacteria into products.
- Store opened food in foil, plastic wrap, leak-proof plastic bags or airtight, food storage containers to keep food from drying out.
- Place meat, poultry and seafood in the coldest part of the refrigerator. Store eggs in their original carton on a shelf, not in the door.
- Defrost or marinate meat in the refrigerator – never on the kitchen counter.
- Place meat, poultry and seafood items on the lowest shelf to minimize leakage onto other stored foods.
- Clean the refrigerator regularly to remove spoiled food, odors and bacteria. Don't overload the refrigerator. Air must circulate freely to cool all foods evenly.

HANDLING FOOD SAFELY AT HOME

Many cases of foodborne illness occur each year due to improper handling of food in the home. Microorganisms multiply rapidly at temperatures between 40°F and 140°F. Unfortunately, the harmful bacteria that cause most cases of foodborne illness cannot be seen, smelled or tasted. Therefore, it's important to:

Keep Cold foods Cold (40°F or below) and Hot foods Hot (140°F or above).

and follow these additional rules from the FightBAC!® Partnership for Food Safety:

1. **CLEAN:** Wash hands and surfaces often and thoroughly.
2. **SEPARATE:** Don't cross-contaminate.
3. **COOK:** Cook to proper temperatures.
4. **CHILL:** Refrigerate promptly. (after home cooking) 3-4 days refrigerated or 2-3 months frozen.

| MEAT, POULTRY & FISH | REFRIGERATED | FROZEN |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| FISH | | |
| Lean fish (cod, flounder, haddock, halibut, sole, etc.) | 1-2 days | 6-8 months |
| Lean fish (pollock, ocean perch, rockfish, sea trout) | 1-2 days | 4 months |
| Fatty fish (bluefish, mackerel, mullet, salmon, tuna, etc.) | 1-2 days | 2-3 months |
| Caviar, fresh, in jar | 1-4 weeks; 2 days open | Doesn't freeze well |
| Cooked fish, all | 3-4 days | 1-2 months |
| Surimi seafood | 3-4 days or package date | 9 months |
| SHELLFISH | | |
| Shrimp, scallops, crayfish, squid | 1-2 days | 3-6 months |
| Shucked clams, mussels and oysters | 1-2 days | 3-4 months |
| Crab meat, fresh | 1-2 days | 4 months |
| Crab meat, pasteurized | 6 months unopened; 3-5 days, opened | 4 months |
| Crab legs, king, dungeness, snow | 5 days | 9-12 months |
| Live clams, mussels, crab and oysters | 1-2 days | 2-3 months |
| Live lobsters | 1-2 days | 2-3 months |
| Lobster tails | 1-2 days | 6 months |
| Cooked shellfish, all | 3-4 days | 3 months |
| SMOKED FISH | | |
| Herring | 3-4 days | 2 months |
| Salmon, whitefish, cold-smoked | 5-8 days | 2 months |
| Salmon, whitefish, hot smoked | 14 days or date on vacuum pkg | 6 months in vacuum pkg |
| MEAT, FRESH | | |
| Beef, lamb, pork or veal chops, steaks, roasts | 3-5 days | 4-12 months |
| Ground meat | 1-2 days | 3-4 months |
| Variety meats (liver, tongue, chitterlings, etc.) | 1-2 days | 3-4 months |
| Cooked meats (after home cooking) | 3-4 days | 2-3 months |
| MEAT, SMOKED OR PROCESSED | | |
| Bacon | 1 week | 1 month |
| Corned beef, in pouch with pickling juices | 5-7 days | 1 month |
| Ham, canned ("keep refrigerated" label) | 6-9 months | Do not freeze |
| Ham, fully cooked, whole | 1 week | 1-2 months |
| Ham, fully cooked, slices or half | 3-4 days | 1-2 months |
| Ham, cook before eating | 1 week | 1-2 months |
| Hot dogs, sealed in package | 2 weeks | 1-2 months |
| Hot dogs, after opening | 1 week | 1-2 months |
| Lunch meats, sealed in package | 2 weeks | 1-2 months |
| Lunch meats, after opening | 3-5 days | 1-2 months |
| Sausage, raw, bulk type | 1-2 days | 1-2 months |
| Sausage, smoked links, patties | 1 week | 1-2 months |
| Sausage, hard, dry (pepperoni), sliced | 2-3 weeks | 1-2 months |
| POULTRY, FRESH | | |
| Chicken or turkey, whole | 1-2 days | 12 months |
| Chicken or turkey, parts | 1-2 days | 9 months |
| Duckling or goose, whole | 1-2 days | 6 months |
| Giblets | 1-2 days | 3-4 months |
| POULTRY, COOKED or PROCESSED | | |
| Chicken nuggets, patties | 1-2 days | 1-3 months |
| Cooked poultry dishes | 3-4 days | 4-6 months |
| Fried chicken | 3-4 days | 4 months |
| Ground turkey or chicken | 1-2 days | 3-4 months |
| Lunch meats, sealed in package | 2 weeks | 1-2 months |
| Lunch meats, after opening | 3-5 days | 1-2 months |
| Pieces covered with broth or gravy | 1-2 days | 6 months |
| Rotisserie chicken | 3-4 days | 4 months |

fresh fruits and vegetables

| FRUITS | SHELF | REFRIGERATOR | FREEZER |
|------------------------|------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Apples | 1-2 days | 3 weeks | Cooked, 8 months |
| Apricots | Until ripe | 2-3 days | Do not freeze |
| Avocados | Until ripe | 3-4 days | Do not freeze |
| Bananas | Until ripe | 2 days, skin will blacken | Whole peeled, 1 month |
| Berries, cherries | | 1-2 days | 4 months |
| Citrus Fruit | 10 days | 1-2 weeks | Do not freeze |
| Coconuts, fresh | 1 week | 2-3 weeks | Shredded, 6 months |
| Grapes | 1 day | 1 week | Whole, 1 month |
| Kiwi Fruit | Until ripe | 3-4 days | Do not freeze |
| Melons | 1-2 days | 3-4 days | Balls, 1 month |
| Papaya, mango | 3-5 days | 1 week | Do not freeze |
| Peaches, nectarines | Until ripe | 3-4 days | Sliced, lemon juice & sugar, 2 months |
| Pears, Plums | 3-5 days | 3-4 days | Do not freeze |
| VEGETABLES | SHELF | RAW, REFRIG. | FROZEN* |
| Artichokes, whole | 1-2 days | 1-2 weeks | Do not freeze |
| Asparagus | | 3-4 days | 8 months |
| Beans, green or wax | | 3-4 days | 8 months |
| Beets | 1 day | 7-10 days | 6-8 months |
| Bok choy | | 2-3 days | 10-12 months |
| Broccoli, raab, rapini | | 3-5 days | 10-12 months |
| Brussels sprouts | | 3-5 days | 10-12 months |
| Cauliflower | | 3-5 days | 10-12 months |
| Cabbage | | 1-2 weeks | 10-12 months |
| Carrots, parsnips | | 3 weeks | 10-12 months |
| Celery | | 1-2 weeks | 10-12 months |
| Corn on the cob | | 1-2 days | 8 months |
| Cucumbers | | 4-5 days | Do not freeze |
| Eggplant | 1 day | 3-4 days | 6-8 months |
| Garlic | 1 month | 1-2 weeks | 1 month |
| Ginger Root | 1-2 days | 1-2 weeks | 1 month |
| Greens | | 1-2 days | 10-12 months |
| Herbs, fresh | | 7-10 days | 1-2 months |
| Leeks | | 1-2 weeks | 10-12 months |
| Lettuce, iceberg | | 1-2 weeks | Do not freeze |
| Lettuce, leaf | | 3-7 days | Do not freeze |
| Mushrooms | | 2-3 days | 10-12 months |
| Okra | | 2-3 days | 10-12 months |
| Onions, dry | 2-3 weeks | 2 months | 10-12 months |
| Spring or green | | 1-2 weeks | 10-12 months |
| Parsley, cilantro | | 1 week | 1-2 months |
| Peppers, bell or chile | | 4-5 days | 6-8 months |
| Potatoes | 1-2 months | 1-2 weeks | Cooked and mashed, 10-12 months |
| Radishes | | 10-14 days | Do not freeze |
| Rutabagas | 1 week | 2 weeks | 8-10 months |
| Spinach | | 1-2 days | 10-12 months |
| Squash, summer | | 4-5 days | 10-12 months |
| winter | 1 week | 2 weeks | 10-12 months |
| Turnips | | 2 weeks | 8-10 months |
| Tomatoes | Until ripe | 2-3 days | 2 months |

*It is recommended to blanch (partially cook) or cook vegetables before freezing.

FRESH PRODUCE

- Raw fruit and vegetables can be held at room temperature, stored in the refrigerator or frozen. For most produce, refrigeration is the best way to maintain quality and delay ripening.

- Wash produce under running water before preparation.

- Once fruits and vegetables are cut, chopped or cooked, they should be placed in the refrigerator within two hours, or frozen in plastic freezer containers.

Here are more rules for handling food safely in the home:

- Keep EVERYTHING clean – hands, utensils, counters, cutting boards and sinks.

- Always WASH HANDS and EQUIPMENT thoroughly with soap and hot water before preparing foods and after handling raw meat, poultry or seafood.

- Don't let juices from raw meat, poultry or seafood touch ready-to-eat foods during shopping, in the refrigerator or during preparation.

- Always put cooked food on a clean plate that did not previously hold raw meat, poultry or seafood.

- Cutting boards can be a source of bacterial contamination, so it's a good idea to use different cutting boards for raw meat and poultry, produce and ready-to-eat foods. When using cutting boards, make sure that they are thoroughly cleaned.

- Cook foods to proper temperatures to kill bacteria.

- Use a clean food thermometer to make sure foods reach proper temperatures.



foods purchased frozen

FROZEN FOODS

Because foods frozen at peak quality will taste better than foods frozen near the end of their useful life, quickly freeze items you don't plan to use in the next day or two. Keep the freezer temperature at 0°F or below; frozen food quality deteriorates more rapidly above 0°F.

Remember, freezing to 0°F inactivates but does not destroy microbes such as bacteria, yeasts and molds that can be present in food. Once a frozen food item is thawed, these microbes can become active, multiplying under the right conditions to levels that can lead to foodborne illness.

Defrosting

Never defrost foods outdoors, in a cold room in the house, such as the basement, or on the kitchen counter. These methods encourage growth of harmful bacteria.

- There are three ways to defrost food: in the refrigerator, in a sealed package in cold water, and in the microwave oven. Never defrost or thaw a food product by leaving it out on the kitchen counter.
- Food thawed in the refrigerator can be refrozen without cooking. Plan ahead because food may take several hours to thaw in the refrigerator (or even days for turkeys).
- Foods defrosted in cold water or in the microwave should be cooked immediately.

DELI FOODS

Your supermarket deli maintains rigid quality assurance and sanitation standards to ensure you will always receive fresh, wholesome products.

- As soon as you get home, immediately put cold perishables into the refrigerator or freezer.
- Hot perishable foods from the deli department need to be kept at 140°F or above, or consumed within two hours.
- For hot deli foods to be eaten at a later time, place them in shallow, covered containers and refrigerate or freeze within two hours.
- Reheat foods to 165°F.

| FROZEN ITEMS | FREEZER | REFRIGERATOR AFTER THAWING |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Bagels | 2 months | 1-2 weeks |
| Bread Dough, commercial | Use-by date | After baking, 4-7 days |
| Burritos, sandwiches | 2 months | 3-4 days |
| Egg substitutes | 12 months | Date on Carton |
| Fish, breaded | 3-6 months | Do not defrost. Cook frozen. |
| Fish, raw | 6 months | 1-2 days |
| Fruit such as berries, melons | 4-6 months | 4-5 days |
| Guacamole | 3-4 months | 3-4 days |
| Ice cream | 2-4 months | |
| Juice concentrates | 6-12 months | 7-10 days |
| Lobster tails | 3 months | 2 days |
| Pancakes, Waffles | 2 months | 3-4 days |
| Sausages, uncooked | 1-2 months | 1-2 days |
| precooked | 1-2 months | 1 week |
| Sherbet, sorbet | 2-4 months | |
| Shrimp, shellfish | 12 months | 1-2 days |
| Soy crumbles and hotdogs | 9 months | 3-4 days |
| Soy meat substitutes | 12-18 months | 3-4 days |
| Tempeh | 12 months | 1-2 weeks |
| Topping, whipped | 6 months | 2 weeks |
| TV Dinners, entrees, breakfast | 3 months | Do not defrost. Cook frozen. |
| Vegetables | 8 months | 3-4 days |

deli foods

| DELI FOODS | REFRIGERATOR | FREEZER |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Main dishes or meals, hot or refrigerated | 3-4 days | 2-3 months |
| Meats covered with gravy or broth | 1-2 days | 6 months |
| Commercial brand vacuum packed dinners with USDA seal | 2 weeks | Does not freeze well |
| Chicken, rotisserie or fried | 3-4 days | 4 months |
| Luncheon meats, store-sliced | 3-5 days | 1-2 months |
| Paté | 1-2 days | 1-2 months |
| Cheese, store-sliced, hard cheese such as cheddar or swiss | 3-4 weeks | 6 months |
| Cheese, soft (such as brie, bel paese, goat cheese, fresh mozzarella) | 1 week | 6 months |
| Salads containing meat, fish, poultry or eggs | 3-4 days | Don't freeze. |
| Salads, vegetable | 3-5 days | Don't freeze. |
| Side dishes such as cooked vegetables, rice or potatoes | 3-4 days | 1-2 months |
| Olives | 2 weeks | Don't freeze. |
| Pudding | Package date; 2 days after opening | Don't freeze. |
| Fruit, cut | Package date; 4 days after opening | Don't freeze. |
| Cheesecake | 1 week | 2-3 months |



shelf-stable foods

| SHELF STABLE FOODS | UNOPENED IN PANTRY | REFRIGERATOR AFTER OPENING | IN PANTRY AFTER OPENING | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----------|
| Baby food, jars or cans, fruits & vegetables meats & eggs cereal, dry mixes Formula | Use-by date | 2-3 days | | |
| | | 1 day | | |
| | | | | 2 months |
| | | 1-2 days | | |
| Bacon Bits, limitation | 4 months | refer to jar | 4 months | |
| Beans, Dried | 12 months | | 12 months | |
| Canned goods, low acid (such as meat, poultry, fish, gravy, stew, soups, beans, carrots, corn, pasta, peas, potatoes, spinach) | 2-5 years | 3-4 days | | |
| Canned goods, high acid (such as juices, fruit, pickles, sauerkraut, tomato soup, and foods in vinegar-based sauce) | 12-18 months | 5-7 days | | |
| Cereal, ready-to-eat Cook before eating (oatmeal, etc.) | 6-12 months | | 3 months | |
| | 12 months | | 6-12 months | |
| Coffee, whole beans, non-vacuum bag ground, in cans instant, jars and tins | 1-3 weeks | (For all types; 3-4 months frozen; 2 weeks refrigerated) | 1 week | |
| | 2 years | | 1 week | |
| | 12 months | | 2-3 months | |
| BAKING INGREDIENTS | | | | |
| Baking powder | 6 months | | 3 months | |
| Baking soda | 18 months | | 6 months | |
| Biscuit or pancake mix | 15 months | | Pkg use-by date | |
| Cake, Brownie, Bread Mixes | 12-18 months | | Pkg use-by date | |
| Commeal, regular, degerminated stone ground or blue | 6-12 months | 12 months | | |
| | 1 month | 2-3 months | | |
| Cornstarch | 18 months | | 18 months | |
| Flour, white Flour, whole wheat | 6-12 months | | 6-8 months | |
| | 1 month | 6-8 months | | |
| Frosting, canned Frosting mixes | 10 months | 1 week | 3 months | |
| | 12 months | | 3 months | |
| Chocolate, unsweetened and semi-sweet, solid | 18-24 months | | 1 year | |
| Chocolate syrup | 2 years | 6 months | | |
| Cocoa and Cocoa Mixes | Indefinitely | | 1 year | |
| CONDIMENTS | | | | |
| Barbecue sauce, bottled | 12 months | 4 months | 1 month | |
| Ketchup, Cocktail or Chili sauce | 12 months | 6 months | 1 month | |
| | | | | |
| Chutney | 12 months | 1-2 months | | |
| Horseradish, in jar | 12 months | 3-4 months | | |
| Mayonnaise, commercial | 2-3 months | 2 months | | |
| Mustard | 12 months | 12 months | 1 month | |
| Olives, black and green | 12-18 months | 2 weeks | | |
| Pickles | 12 months | 1-2 weeks | | |
| Salad Dressings, commercial, bottled | 10-12 months | 3 months | | |
| | | | | |
| Salsa, picante & taco sauces | 12 months | 1 month | | |
| COOKIES, packaged | 2 months | 8-12 months frozen | 4 weeks | |
| CRACKERS | 8 months | Freeze or refrigerate 3-4 months | 1 month | |

PANTRY STORAGE

Shelf-stable foods such as canned goods, cereal, baking mixes, pasta, dry beans, mustard, ketchup and peanut butter can be kept safely at room temperature.

To keep these foods at their best quality, store them in clean, dry, cool (below 85°F) cabinets away from the stove or the refrigerator's exhaust. Extremely hot (over 100°F) and freezing temperatures are harmful to canned goods.

Never use food from cans that are leaking, rusting, bulging, badly dented, or with a foul odor; cracked jars or jars with loose or bulging lids; or any container that spurts liquid when you open it. NEVER TASTE such foods. Throw out any food you suspect is spoiled. In general, most canned foods have a long shelf life, and when properly stored, can be eaten for several years:

- Low-acid canned goods — two to five years (canned meat and poultry, stews, soups except tomato, pasta products, potatoes, corn, carrots, spinach, beans, beets, peas and pumpkin).
- High-acid canned goods — 12 to 18 months (tomato products, fruits, sauerkraut and foods in vinegar-based sauces or dressings).
- Some canned hams are shelf-stable. Never store ham or any foods labeled “keep refrigerated” in the pantry. These foods must be stored in the refrigerator.

Many shelf-stable foods remain edible for several weeks, or even months, after opening, as the accompanying chart indicates. However, be sure to read package labels. Some items must be refrigerated after opening. Of course, products that become contaminated (bugs in flour, for example) should be immediately thrown out.



shelf-stable foods

FOOD PRODUCT DATING

Dates are printed on many food items, but product dating is not required by federal regulations except on infant formula and baby foods. Dating of some foods, usually dairy products, is required by more than 20 states. An expired date doesn't necessarily mean that the food needs to be discarded. Still, it's helpful to understand the differences among package dates.

Coded dates (packing numbers) may appear on shelf-stable products such as cans and boxes of food. This enables manufacturers to rotate their stock, as well as locate their products in the event of a recall.

Calendar dates help stores determine how long to display the product for sale and relate to the peak quality of food, not safety. Calendar dates are found primarily on perishable foods, such as dairy products, eggs, meat and poultry.

Here are the three ways that products are dated:

- "Sell-by" date - tells the store how long to display the product for sale. You should buy the product before the date expires.
- "Best if Used By (or Before)" - recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.
- "Use By" - the last date recommended for use of the product while at peak quality. The manufacturer of the product has determined the date.

BABY FOOD

Do not buy or use infant formula and baby food past its "use-by" date. Federal regulations require a date on these products.



| SHELF STABLE FOODS | UNOPENED IN PANTRY | REFRIGERATOR AFTER OPENING | IN PANTRY AFTER OPENING |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Diet powder mixes | 6 months | | 3 months |
| Extracts, vanilla, lemon, etc. | 3 years | | 1 year |
| Fruits, dried | 6 months | 6 months | 1 month |
| Garlic, chopped, commercial jars | 18 months 8 months | Refrigerate; use by date on jar | |
| Gelatin, flavored unflavored | 18 months 3 years | | Use all or reseal for 3-4 months |
| Gravy, jars and cans dry gravy mixes | 2-5 years 2 years | 1-2 days 1-2 days | Use entire can Mix entire packet |
| Herbs, dried | 1-2 years | | Cool, dark place 1 year |
| Honey | 12 months | | 12 months |
| Jams, jellies, preserves | 12 months | 6 months | |
| Jerky, commercially dried | 12 months | 2-3 months | |
| Jerky, homemade | | 1-2 months | 1-2 months |
| Juice, boxes | 4-6 months | 8-12 days | |
| Lentils, dried | 12 months | | 12 months |
| Marshmallows, marshmallow creme | 2-4 months | | 1 month |
| Milk, canned evaporated | 12 months | 4-5 days | |
| Molasses | 12 months | | 6 months |
| Mushrooms, dried | 6 months | | 3 months |
| Oils, olive or vegetable nut oils vegetable oil sprays | 6 months 6 months 2 years | 4 months | 1-3 months 1 year |
| Nuts, jars or cans | 12 months | Refrigerate 4-6 months Freeze 9-12 months | 1 month |
| Pasta, dry, without eggs | 2 years | | 1 year |
| Dry egg noodles | 2 years | | 1-2 months |
| Peanut butter, commercial | 6-9 months | | 2-3 months |
| Peas, dried split | 12 months | | 12 months |
| Pectin | Use by pkg. date | | 1 month |
| Popcorn, dry kernels in jar | 2 years | | 1 year |
| Commercially popped in bags microwave packets | 2-3 months 12 months | | 1-2 weeks 1-2 days popped |
| Potato chips | 2 months | | 1-2 weeks |
| Potatoes, instant | 6-12 months | | 6-12 months |
| Pudding mixes | 12 months | | 3-4 months |
| Rice, white or wild brown flavored or herb mixes | 2 years 1 year 6 months | 6 months | 1 year 1 year Use all |
| Sauce mixes, nondairy (spaghetti, taco, etc.) Cream sauces, milk solids | 2 years 1 year | | Use entire amount |
| Shortening, solid | 8 months | | 3 months |
| Soda such as carbonated cola drinks, mixers: diet sodas, bottles or cans regular sodas, bottles regular sodas, cans | 3 mos. after date 3 mos. after date 9 mos. after date | 2-3 days 2-3 days | 1 week 2 weeks |
| Soup mixes, dry bouillon | 12 months | | 12 months |
| SOY PRODUCTS | | | |
| Soy or rice beverage, shelf stable | 3 months or "use-by" date | 7-10 days | |
| soy beverage powders | 6 months | | 3-4 months |
| soy flour, de-fatted, low-fat | 1 year | | 1 year |
| soy flour, full-fat | 2 months | 6 months | |
| Textured soy protein (TSP) | 2 years | | 3-4 months |
| Re-hydrated TSP | 3-4 months | 3-4 days | |
| Spaghetti sauce in jars | 18 months | 4 days | |

shelf-stable foods/bakery items

| SHELF STABLE FOODS | UNOPENED IN PANTRY | REFRIGERATOR AFTER OPENING | IN PANTRY AFTER OPENING |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Spices, whole ground paprika, red pepper, & chili powder | 2-4 years total | | Included in total |
| | 2-3 years total | | Included in total |
| Sugar, brown granulated confectioners sugar substitutes | 2 years total | Store in refrigerator | Included in total |
| | 4 months | | Sugar never spoils |
| | 2 years | | |
| | 18 months | | |
| 2 years | | | |
| Syrup, pancake genuine or real maple | 12 months | | 12 months |
| | 12 months | 12 months | |
| Tapioca | 12 months | | 12 months |
| Tea, bags loose instant | 18 months | | 12 months |
| | 2 years | | 6-12 months |
| | 3 years | | 6-12 months |
| Toaster pastries, fruit filled non-fruit fillings | 6 months | | Keep foil packets sealed |
| | 9 months | | |
| Tomatoes, sun dried, packed in oil packed in cellophane | 12 months | 6-12 months | 3-6 months |
| | 9 months | 6-12 months | 3-6 months |
| Vinegar | 2 years | | 12 months |
| Yeast, dry, packets and jars | Use by date | Refrigerate open jars | |
| Water, bottled | 1-2 years | | 3 months |
| Worcestershire Sauce | 1 year | | 1 year |
| BAKERY ITEMS | SHELF | REFRIGERATOR | FREEZER |
| Bread, commercial* | 2-4 days | 7-14 days | 3 months |
| Bread, flat (tortillas, pita) | 2-4 days | 4-7 days | 4 months |
| Cakes, angel food chiffon, sponge chocolate fruit cake made from mix pound cake | 1-2 days | 1 week | 2 months |
| | 1-2 day | 1 week | 2 months |
| | 1-2 days | 1 week | 4 months |
| | 1 month | 6 months | 12 months |
| | 3-4 days | 1 week | 4 months |
| | 3-4 days | 1 week | 6 months |
| (Refrigerate any cake with frosting made of dairy products or eggs) | *Any breads containing meat, hard cooked eggs, custard filling or other perishable ingredients must be refrigerated within two hours. | | |
| Cheesecake | | 1 week | 2-3 months |
| Cookies, bakery or homemade | | | |
| | 2-3 weeks | 2 months | 8-12 months |
| Croissants, butter | 1 day | 1 week | 2 months |
| Doughnuts, glazed or cake dairy cream filled | 1-2 days | 1 week | 1 month |
| | | 3-4 days | |
| Eclairs, dairy cream filled | | 3-4 days | |
| Muffins | 1-2 days | 1 week | 2 months |
| Pastries, danish | 1-2 days | 1 week | 2 months |
| Pies, cream chiffon fruit mincemeat pecan pumpkin | | 3-4 days | |
| | | 1-2 days | |
| | 1-2 days | 1 week | 8 months |
| | 2 hours | 1 week | 8 months |
| | 2 hours | 3-4 days | 1-2 months |
| | 2 hours | 3-4 days | 1-2 months |
| Quiche | 2 hours | 3-4 days | 2 months |
| Rolls, yeast, baked yeast, partially baked filled, meat or vegetables | 3-4 days | 1 week | 2 months |
| | Package date | 1 week | 2 months |
| | 2 hours | 3-4 days | 2 months |

KEEPING FOOD SAFE DURING A POWER OUTAGE

Sooner or later, the electricity may fail due to a power outage, and a refrigerator without electricity cannot keep food safe very long. To be prepared, keep an appliance thermometer in both the refrigerator and freezer to monitor the temperature.

In the Freezer

- Even when the power is off, a full freezer will stay frozen for about two days; a half-full freezer about one day. So keep the freezer door closed.
- If you think power will be out for several days, locate some block ice, bags of ice or dry ice to put in the freezer along with your refrigerated perishable food, or keep the food continually iced in an insulated cooler.
- You can also pack foods tightly together to insulate one another.
- All thawed raw or cooked foods can be refrozen if they still contain ice crystals or are 40°F or below, but there may be some quality loss.
- Foods thawed and held above 40°F for more than two hours should be discarded.

Foods in the Refrigerator

- Refrigerated foods should be edible as long as power is out no more than four hours.
- Discard any perishable foods that have been above 40°F for two hours or more, and any food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture, or feels warm to the touch.
- If you have any doubts about the safety of any item in your refrigerator after power is restored, it's best to err on the side of caution and discard it.

For additional information about food safety during power outages, call the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555.

