

# Food Storage Guide

The storage times in the following charts are from the date of purchase and apply only when the food has been handled correctly. These storage times are based on an average and may not apply to all products. **Always follow package instructions.** Once opened, store food in foil, plastic wrap, leakproof plastic bags or airtight containers to keep it from drying out or being contaminated. Unfortunately, harmful bacteria and other contaminants that cause most cases of foodborne illness cannot be seen, smelled or tasted.

**Remember: when in doubt, throw it out!**

## BAKERY ITEMS

→ Bakery items containing custards, meat or vegetables or with frosting made of cream cheese, whipped cream or eggs must be kept refrigerated.

FOOD	SHELF	FRIDGE	FREEZER
Bread & Buns, commercial	2 – 4 days	7 – 14 days	1 – 3 months
Pita, Tortilla	2 – 4 days	4 – 7 days	1 – 2 months
Cakes, angel food, sponge	1 – 2 days	5 – 7 days	2 months
Cakes, pound	3 – 4 days	5 – 7 days	2 months
Cakes, filled and frosted	No	1 – 2 days	2 months
Cheesecake	No	7 days	2 – 3 months
Cookies	1 – 2 weeks	2 months	8 – 12 months
Doughnuts, glazed & cake	1 – 2 days	5 – 7 days	1 month
Doughnuts, cream filled	No	3 – 4 days	No
Muffins, Danish pastries	1 – 2 days	7 days	2 months
Pies, cream	No	3 – 4 days	No
Pies, fruit	1 – 2 days	7 days	6 months
Pies, pumpkin	No	3 – 4 days	1 – 2 months

## FOODS PURCHASED FROZEN

\*For most commercially purchased food, see “**best before date**”; cook from frozen unless otherwise instructed

→ When shopping, pick up frozen foods just before checking out. Take these foods directly home and place in freezer as soon as possible. Keep a thermometer in your freezer and check often that the temperature is safe, **below -18°C (0°F)**. For optimum safety, thaw these foods in the refrigerator or cook from frozen, depending on the packaging directions. If time is short, defrost in a sink of cold water, changing the water every half hour, or in the microwave following the appliance manufacturer’s directions and cook immediately.

FOOD	FREEZER	IN FRIDGE AFTER THAWING
Bread dough	See “best before date”	n/a
Cookie dough	See “best before date” or 2 – 4 months	Check label
Fish		
Breaded, sauced	3 months	Cook from frozen
Raw, fat (salmon, lake trout)	2 – 3 months	1 – 2 days
Raw, lean (sole, cod, pike)	3 – 6 months	1 – 2 days
Fruit (berries, melon)	4 – 6 months	4 – 5 days

FOOD	FREEZER	IN FRIDGE AFTER THAWING
Fruit juice concentrate	6 – 12 months	7 – 10 days
Ice cream		
Refrigerator freezer	1 month	n/a
Chest freezer	2 – 4 months	n/a
Lamb roasts	8 – 10 months	3 – 4 days
Lamb chops	8 – 10 months	2 – 3 days
Meat patties, beef	2 – 3 months	Cook from frozen
Pancakes, waffles	2 months	3 – 4 days
Pastry dough	2 – 3 months	1 day
Perogies	3 months	Check label
Pizza	1 – 2 months	1 day
Potatoes, French-fried	4 – 8 months	n/a
Poultry		
Chicken & turkey, whole	12 months	24 hours
Chicken & turkey, parts	6 months	2 days
Chicken & turkey, ground	2 – 3 months	1 day
Breaded, cooked	6 months	Cook from frozen
Breaded, uncooked	6 months	Cook from frozen
Breaded portions, stuffed/sauced	6 months	Cook from frozen
Sausages		
Precooked, deli style	1 – 2 months	7 days
Uncooked	1 – 2 months	1 – 2 days
Sherbet, frozen yogurt	2 – 4 months	n/a
Shrimp, shellfish, raw	2 – 3 months	1 – 2 days
Smoked fish, cooked	2 months	1 – 2 days
Prepared meals	Check label	Cook from frozen
Vegetables	8 – 12 months	Cook from frozen
Whipped topping	3 months	2 weeks

## FOODS PURCHASED REFRIGERATED

→ Keep a thermometer in your refrigerator and check often that the temperature is **below 4°C (40°F)**. At these temperatures, some bacteria can continue to grow and multiply, although very slowly. If you do not plan to use them right away, it's best to freeze foods right after purchasing. Raw juices from meat, poultry and fish can contain bacteria. Place packages of these foods on trays to prevent their juices dripping onto other foods.

FOOD	FRIDGE	FREEZER
<b>Beverages, fruit – cartons, bottles</b>		
Opened	7 – 10 days	
Unopened	Check label or 3 weeks	
Unpasteurized	1 day	
<b>Bread</b>		
Pizza crusts	See “best before date”	3 months
Tortillas	See “best before date”	1 – 2 months
Tube cans, biscuits, rolls	See “best before date”	Do not freeze
Cookie dough	See “best before date”	2 – 4 months
<b>Dairy Products</b>		
Butter		
Salted, unopened	12 weeks	6 – 8 months
Salted, opened	3 weeks	6 – 8 months

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FOOD	FRIDGE	FREEZER
Unsalted, unopened	8 weeks	6 months
Unsalted, opened	3 weeks	6 months
Cheese		
Firm, unopened	3 – 6 months	
Firm, opened	3 – 4 weeks	
Firm, sliced	2 weeks	
Grated, unopened	See “best before date”	
Grated, opened	5 days	
Semi-soft, unopened	See “best before date”	
Semi-soft, opened	2 – 3 weeks	
Soft, unopened	See “best before date”	
Soft, opened	1 week	
Processed, unopened	3 months	3 months
Processed, opened	3 – 4 weeks	
Cottage cheese, Ricotta, Quark	See “best before date”	n/a
Cream cheese	See “best before date”	
Cream cheese dips and spreads		
Unopened	See “best before date”	
Opened	10 days	
Cream		
Whipping	See “best before date”	n/a
Aerosol can, real whipped cream	See “best before date”	n/a
Coffee creamer	Opened: 2 weeks	
Eggnog, commercial	See “best before date”	2 months
Milk		
Homogenized	See “best before date”	3 months
Buttermilk	See “best before date”	3 months
Sour cream	See “best before date”	n/a
Yogurt		
Unopened	See “best before date”	n/a
Opened	7 – 10 days	n/a
Deli foods		
Meats & sausages, sliced	2 – 3 days	
Stuffed cabbage rolls	2 – 3 days	
Chicken, turkey, sliced	2 – 3 days	
Meat pies	2 – 3 days	
Rotisserie chicken, deboned	2 – 3 days	3 months if deboned at time of purchase
Salads	1 – 2 days	
Sausage rolls	2 – 3 days	
Eggs, whole	See “best before date”	4 months (blended)
Pasteurized egg products	See “best before date”	
Fish/ Shellfish (note: most fish have been previously frozen, therefore freezing is not recommended)		
Anchovies, opened	3 – 4 days	3 months
Anchovy paste	1 month	
Fish, fatty, raw (salmon, lake trout)	2 – 3 days	2 – 3 months
Fish, lean, raw (sole, cod, pike)	2 – 3 days	3 – 6 months

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FOOD	FRIDGE	FREEZER
Fish, cooked	1 – 2 days	1 month
Shellfish, raw crab & lobster	12 – 24 hours	2 – 3 months
Shellfish, raw, unshelled, shrimp	1 – 2 days	2 months
Shellfish, raw, peeled, shrimp & scallops	1 – 2 days	3 months
Shellfish, cooked, unpeeled, shrimp	1 – 2 days	2 months
Shellfish, raw & cooked, unpeeled, clams & mussels	3 days	2 months
Shellfish, raw & cooked, peeled, clams & mussels	3 days	3 months
Shellfish, oysters, live	1 day	4 months
Smoked salmon (fresh lox)	1 – 2 days	2 months
Lard	1 year	
Margarine		
Unopened	8 months	6 – 12 months
Opened	1 – 3 months	
Meat, fresh		
Ground meat	1 – 2 days	2 – 3 months
Beef roasts	3 – 4 days	10 – 12 months
Beef steaks	2 – 3 days	10 – 12 months
Lamb roasts	3 – 4 days	8 – 10 months
Lamb chops	2 – 3 days	8 – 10 months
Pork roasts	3 – 4 days	8 – 10 months
Pork chops & ribs	2 – 3 days	8 – 10 months
Sausages	1 – 2 days	1 – 2 months
Veal roasts	3 – 4 days	4 – 5 months
Veal chops	2 – 3 days	4 – 5 months
Variety meats, liver, kidneys	1 – 2 days	3 – 4 months
Meat, smoked or processed		
Bacon	6 – 7 days	1 – 2 months
Ham, whole	6 – 7 days	n/a
Ham, fully cooked, slices	3 – 4 days	n/a
Hot dogs, unopened	2 weeks	2 – 3 months
Hot dogs, opened	7 days	2 – 3 months
Lunch meats, packaged, unopened	See “best before date”	1 – 2 months
Lunch meats, packaged, opened	4 – 5 days	1 – 2 months
Sausages	7 days	2 – 3 months
Pasta, fresh	See “best before date”	1 – 2 months
Pizza	See “best before date”	
Poultry, fresh		
Chicken & turkey, ground	24 hours	2 – 3 months
Chicken & turkey, parts	2 days	6 months
Chicken & turkey, whole	See “best before date” or 5 days from slaughter	Not recommended
Chicken giblets	2 days	3 – 4 months
Duck & goose, whole	1 – 2 days	3 months
Salad dressing, commercial	See “best before date” or 2 – 3 weeks after opening, whichever comes first	

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FOOD	FRIDGE	FREEZER
Soups	See “best before date”	2 – 3 months
Soy or almond fortified beverages, opened	5 – 7 days	
Tofu cakes, unopened	See “best before date”	3 months
Tofu cakes, opened (changing water daily)	5 days	
Vegan meat alternatives, unopened	See “best before date”	4 months
Vegan meat alternatives, opened	4 days	4 months

## FRESH FRUITS

- Fruits are safe at room temperatures, but after ripening they will mould and spoil quickly. Store ripe fruit in the refrigerator or fruit can be frozen following these [directions](#). Storage life of most home **frozen fruit is 6 – 12 months**, depending on the fruit.

FRUIT	SHELF	FRIDGE
Apples		1 month
Apricots, uncovered	Until ripe	5 days
Avocados	Until ripe	2 – 5 days (ripe)
Bananas	Until ripe	2 days (ripe)
Blueberries	n/a	7 – 10 days
Cherries	n/a	3 days
Cranberries	n/a	1 – 2 weeks
Grapefruit	n/a	2 weeks
Grapes	n/a	5 days
Kiwifruit	Until ripe	1 – 2 weeks (ripe)
Lemons, limes	1 week	1 – 2 weeks
Mangoes	Until ripe	3 days (ripe)
Melons		
Most types	Until ripe	3 days once cut (ripe)
Watermelon, whole	Few days	1 week (ripe)
Nectarines	Until ripe	3 – 4 days (ripe)
Oranges	1 week	1 – 2 weeks
Papaya	Until ripe	1 week (ripe)
Peaches	Until ripe	3 – 4 days
Pears	Until ripe	3 – 7 days (ripe)
Pineapple		2 – 3 days
Plums	Until ripe	5 days (ripe)
Raspberries		2 days
Rhubarb		3 days
Strawberries		2 days
Tangerines		1 week

## FRESH VEGETABLES

- Dense, raw vegetables, such as potatoes and onions, may be stored at cool room temperatures. Other vegetables should be refrigerated for quality and food safety. Most vegetables can be frozen following these [directions](#). Storage life of most home **frozen vegetables is 10 – 12 months**. If necessary, after opening transfer these foods to an air-tight bag or container. For freezing, package in a freezer bag or freezer container.

VEGETABLE	SHELF	FRIDGE
Artichokes, sprinkled with water		1 week

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VEGETABLE	SHELF	FRIDGE
Asparagus, wrapped in damp towel or standing in water		4 – 5 days
Beans, green and wax		5 days
Beets, tops cut to 1 in.		1 – 2 weeks
Broccoli		3 – 5 days
Brussels sprouts		3 – 5 days
Cabbage, green & red		2 weeks
Carrots, mature		3 – 4 weeks
Carrots, baby		2 weeks
Cauliflower		5 – 7 days
Celery, covered		2 weeks
Corn on the cob, husked		3 days
Corn on the cob, unhusked		1 – 2 days
Cucumbers		5 – 7 days
Eggplant		3 – 5 days
Garlic, whole	1 month	2 weeks
Ginger root		2 weeks
Greens		
Lettuce varieties		1 week
Spinach, others		2 – 4 days
Greens, bagged, precut		See “best before date”
Herbs, fresh		4 – 7 days
Mushrooms, in paper bag		3 – 5 days
Onions		
Green, leeks		1 week
Dry	3 weeks	1 month
Sweet	1 week	3 weeks
Parsnips		1 week
Peas		3 – 5 days
Peppers		
Sweet		1 week
Hot		1 – 2 weeks
Potatoes		
New		1 week
Mature	1 month	
Sweet potatoes/yams	2 – 3 weeks	
Pumpkins	1 – 2 weeks	
Radishes		1 week
Rutabagas	1 week	2 weeks
Sprouts		3 – 4 days
Squash		
Summer, (soft shell) zucchini		1 week
Winter (hard shell)	1 week	2 weeks
Tomatoes	Until ripe	2 – 3 days (ripe)
Turnips		2 weeks

### SHELF STABLE FOODS

→ Some foods must be refrigerated after opening, so check the label. Do not buy open packages of food, or cans of food that bulge at the ends, leak or are badly dented. Store shelf stable foods in a clean, dry, cool place.

FOOD	UNOPENED IN PANTRY	OPENED IN PANTRY	OPENED IN FRIDGE
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FOOD	UNOPENED IN PANTRY	OPENED IN PANTRY	OPENED IN FRIDGE
Antipasto	1 – 2 years	n/a	90 days
Baby food	See “best before date”	n/a	2 – 3 days
Baby formula			
Concentrated liquid	See “best before date”	n/a	48 hours
Powder	See “best before date”	1 month	
Prepared or ready to serve	See “best before date”	n/a	48 hours
Baking ingredients			
Baking powder	12 months	6 months	
Baking soda	12 months	6 months	
Cornmeal	6 – 12 months		12 months
Cornstarch	18 months	18 months	
Cream of tartar	48 months	48 months	
Extracts, vanilla, lemon, etc.	2 – 3 years	12 months	
Flour			
White	6 – 12 months	6 – 8 months	
Whole wheat	3 months		6 – 8 months
Frosting, canned	See “best before date”		2 week
Mixes			
Cake, tea biscuit	See “best before date”		
Pancake	See “best before date”		
Yeast, dry	See “best before date”		
Bread crumbs, dry	6 months		
Broth, tetra pak	See “best before date”	N/A	3 – 4 days
Canned foods, low acid	2 – 5 years		3 – 4 days
Canned foods, high acid	12 – 18 months		5 – 7 days
Canned fish & shellfish	12 months		2 days
Cereals			
Ready-to-eat	6 – 8 months	3 months	
Rolled oats	6 – 10 months	6 – 10 months	
Granola	6 months		
Wheat germ			1 year after production date
Cheese, processed spread	See “best when used by date”		See “best when used by date”
Chocolate, baking squares, dark	See “best when used by date”	See “best when used by date”	
Chocolate, baking squares, white	See “best when used by date”	See “best when used by date”	
Chocolate chips	See “best before date”	See “best before date”	
Chocolate syrup	See “best before date”		6 months
Cocoa	10 – 12 months		
Coconut, shredded	12 months	6 – 8 months	6 – 8 months
Coconut milk	See “best before date”	n/a	3 – 4 days (remove from can)
Coffee			
Beans, non-vacuum bag	1 – 3 weeks		3 months (freezer)
Ground	2 – 4 weeks	2 weeks	
Instant	12 months		

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FOOD	UNOPENED IN PANTRY	OPENED IN PANTRY	OPENED IN FRIDGE
Coffee whitener	9 months	6 months	
<b>Condiments</b>			
Asian sauces	12 months or see "best before date"		1 – 2 months
Barbecue sauce	12 months or see "best before date"	1 month	4 – 6 months
Curry Paste	See "best before date"	n/a	3 months
Horseradish in a jar	12 months or see "best before date"	n/a	3 – 4 months
Hot sauce	See "best before date"		24 months
Ketchup	18 months		3 months
Mayonnaise, commercial	See "best before date"		6 – 8 weeks
Mustard	12 months		12 months
Olives, black & green	12 – 18 months		2 – 3 weeks
Pesto	See "best before date"	n/a	7 – 10 days
Pickles	12 months		1 – 2 months
Salsa	12 months		3 weeks
Sauerkraut	1 – 2 years	n/a	1 – 2 weeks
Worcestershire sauce		12 months	
Cookies, packaged	See "best before date"		
Crackers	See "best before date"		
Cranberry sauce			3 weeks
Dried beans, peas, lentils	12 months	12 months	
Fruit, dried	6 months	6 months	
Garlic, minced or chopped	See "best before date"	n/a	3 months
Gelatin, all types	See "best before date"		2 – 3 days
Herbs, dried	6 – 12 months		
Honey, pasteurized	12 months		
Jams & jellies	12 months		6 months
Juice boxes	See "best before date"		5 days
Marshmallows, marshmallow cream	2 – 4 months		1 month
<b>Milk, shelf stable</b>			
Buttermilk powder	6 months		1 month
Condensed, Evaporated	9 – 12 months		4 – 5 days
Skim milk powder	6 months	3 months	1 week (reconstituted)
UHT	See "best before date"		7 days
Molasses	1 year	6 months	
Mushrooms, dried	6 months		3 – 6 months
<b>Nuts</b>			
In shell	4 months		
Nuts, unsalted			9 – 12 months
Nuts, salted			6 – 8 months
<b>Oils</b>			
Canola	12 months	6 – 9 months	12 months
Coconut oil	See "best before date" or 18 months	See "best before date" or 18 months	n/a
Corn oil	12 months	6 – 9 months	10 – 12 months

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FOOD	UNOPENED IN PANTRY	OPENED IN PANTRY	OPENED IN FRIDGE
Flaxseed oil	n/a	n/a	3 months unopened; 3 weeks opened
Grapeseed	12 months	6 – 8 months	12 months
Olive oil	9 – 12 months	6 – 7 months	12 months
Peanut oil	12 months	6 – 7 months	12 months
Pumpkin oil	7 months	2 – 3 months	4 – 6 months
Safflower oil	12 months	9 months	18 months
Salad dressings, commercial	See “best before date”		See “best before date” or 3 months
Sesame oil	12 months	8 – 9 months	16 months
Solid vegetable shortenings	6 months	6 months	6 months
Soybean oil	12 months	6 – 9 months	12 months
Sunflower oil	9 months	3 – 6 months	6 – 8 months
Vegetable oil sprays	2 years	2 years	n/a
Walnut oil	7 months	3 – 4 months	6 – 8 months
Pasta	Several years (< 5 years)		
Peanut butter	6 – 9 months	2 – 3 months	
Pectin, powdered or liquid	See “best before date”		
Pie filling, pudding mix	See “best before date”		2 days
Popcorn, un-popped	1 – 2 years		
Rice			
White	Several years (< 5 years)		
Wild	1 year	1 year	
Brown	6 months		
Flavoured	6 months		
Sauces & gravy mixes	6 – 12 months		
Soup mixes	12 months		
Soup, tetra pak	See “best before date”	N/A	3 – 4 days
Soy drink	See “best before date”		5 – 10 days
Spices, whole	3 years		
Spices, ground	1 – 2 years		
Sugar			
Brown	4 months		
Confectioners	18 months		
Granulated	2 years		
Artificial sweetener	2 years		
Syrups – corn, table	12 months	12 months	
Syrups – maple			12 months
Tahini	12 – 18 months	90 – 120 days	
Tea, bags	12 – 18 months		
Tea, loose	2 years		
Tomato & pasta sauce, cans, jars	12 months	n/a	5 days
Tomatoes, sun dried			12 months
Tomatoes, sun dried, in oil, opened			4 months
Vinegar	2 years	1 year	

**Cook's Note:**

- Use the **2 Hour Rule** both at home and while shopping. The 2 Hour Rule states that all **perishable foods must be refrigerated or frozen within 2 hours** of purchase or preparation. If the weather is hot, more than 27°C (80°F), reduce that time to 1 hour and use a cooler for perishable foods while shopping. Any perishable foods that have been left at room temperature for longer than these times should be discarded.
- Refrigerate cooked foods as soon as possible after a meal. Once the foods have cooled, cover with lids or plastic food wrap. Use them quickly, or freeze them, as they have a short shelf life. **Most leftovers should be used within 2 – 4 days; combination foods and foods that contain dairy, seafood or fish should be used within 1 – 2 days.** If you have any doubts about the safety of a leftover food, throw it out.

The food storage information contained in this document was researched and compiled from manufacturer specifications, the University of Georgia and North Dakota State food storage guidelines, and from the former Food Safety Information Society (FSIS).