

A-Z Food-Saving and Storage Tips and Tricks

Apples

For freshness and quality, store your apples in the fridge. Keeping them in the fridge in a loosely tied plastic bag will help stop them from drying up. Add them to the fruit bowl to bring to room temperature before eating.

There is always one bad apple that spoils the rest, so keep an eye on your fruit.

Separate out fruit which is ripening more quickly than the others.

If apples have areas that are browning, simply cut them off, and grate the remaining apple into salads or cut into wedges and give them to your children as a snack.

Apples are good with pickles and chutneys or when eaten with cheese.

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 apple cake or apple sauce.

If you have a glut of ripening apples, cut them into quarters, core and peel them. To prevent apples turning brown while you are peeling them, squeeze the juice of half a lemon into a bowl of water and drop the pieces of apple into it. Drain, quickly pack the apples in freezer bags or plastic 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 them in a saucepan with a little water, lemon juice and caster sugar (maybe some cinnamon too). Cook gently for about 15 minutes, stirring regularly. Then whisk or blend them smooth. It can make a lovely dessert with whipped cream or ice-cream.

When making jam, add one or two apples to the mixture. The pectin in apples helps the jam to set.

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Avocado

If you buy avocados hard, ripen them on your kitchen windowsill. They are ready when they 'just give' as you squeeze them; their texture should feel like butter at room temperature. To speed up the ripening process, you can put them into a paper bag (or dark drawer) with a banana. Fruit, especially bananas, produce ethylene gas naturally as they ripen. Ethylene residues on the bananas will help the avocado or other fruit to ripen quickly.

Blend over-ripe avocado flesh with milk, yoghurt and a touch of maple syrup or sugar for a lovely green, smooth-tasting smoothie.

Lemon juice helps to stop cut avocados from turning brown. Also, if you place the avocado stone into a bowl of guacamole or salsa, this will keep the dip fresh and green for at least two hours. (Remove the stone before serving though!) Ripe avocado can even be spread onto toast instead of butter!

Keep the half avocado with the stone still in place and put on a plate in the fridge. You should be able to use the avocado the following day without it going off.

Bagels

Slice fresh bagels and freeze in plastic bags. When you want to eat one, put it directly into a toaster. They pop up golden and delicious!

Banana

Always keep bananas separate from other fruits unless you want the other fruit to ripen quickly.

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Bananas 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.

Beansprouts

Keep them submerged in water in a container and refrigerate. They last well for at least a week and do not go slimy. Change the water daily.

Freeze them in an airtight container. Add to stir-fries or soups. This works perfectly.

Bicarbonate Of Soda (Baking Soda)

To keep the fridge smelling sweet, put half a tub of bi-carbonate of soda that is past its 'best before' date in the fridge.

Biscuits

Store biscuits in an airtight container. Most sweet biscuits can be frozen.

Bread

To keep bread and rolls fresh and soft, keep them in a fairly cool, dark and dry place like a bread bin or cupboard.

Only store your bread and rolls in the fridge if the weather is really hot, but do not forget to bring them out of the fridge about an hour before you use them so they soften up again.

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Once a loaf is opened, fold the wrapper under the loaf or re-tie it. For rolls, use a food clip to reseal the pack.

Keep the end crust in place on top of the loaf slices to keep the next slice fresh. If you buy a lot of bread, or it takes you a while to use up a pack, consider freezing some of the bread or rolls either on the day you buy them or at any time up to the 'best before' date.

To make it easier to separate bread slices after freezing, bang your fresh loaf on a work surface before you put it in the freezer. You can keep bread and rolls frozen indefinitely from a food safety perspective, but for best taste, try to use them within three months.

Clean your bread bin or cupboard regularly to get rid of mould spores. Old bread makes great breadcrumbs; you can freeze them to use for crumble toppings, stuffing, thickenings for sauces, coatings (with egg and breadcrumbs), etc. Before twisting the plastic bag closed, suck out all the air (insert a straw into the opening, close the bag around it and suck the air out through the straw to create a vacuum in the bag). The bread will last a few days longer.

To refresh stale bread rolls or loaves, soak the bread under running water. When completely soaked, reheat in a moderate oven until crisp and golden on the outside and light in the middle.

Use the crusts from a loaf. Toast one side, spread garlic butter on the other and toast under the grill. Cut into fingers and serve.

For bread that is a little stale, place it in the microwave on full power for about 10 seconds (depending on the power of the microwave), and it will soften up nicely – not quite fresh but the next best thing.

Cut leftover bread into cubes, toss in olive oil and a little garlic, herbs and chilli powder. Freeze on a tray and transfer into bags/boxes when frozen. You have an instant crouton mix; these are wonderful when shallow-fried in oil straight from the freezer or for the more health conscious, baked in the oven. Add to any soup or salad. Frozen sliced bread is always useful. Simply pop a frozen slice directly into the toaster for a little longer than normal.

Never eat bread once mould is present.

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Broccoli

Broccoli stored in the fridge in a loosely tied plastic bag retains its freshness and quality for longer than storing it open in a vegetable rack at room temperature.

If your broccoli is a bit soft, cut a thick slice off the bottom of the stalk, put it in a glass with water and leave it in the fridge overnight to crisp up.

If you have lots of cooked broccoli left over, add a little skimmed milk and puree.

Serve as a sauce for fish or chicken. It tastes creamy and is not fattening.

Do not discard the stalks; they are the best bit! Peel the stalks, cut lengthways and cook with the florets or eat raw.

Cake

If your cake sinks after baking, remove the centre with a pastry cutter, fill with fresh fruit and cream and serve as a dessert. If you can, use the centre piece in the same way but a mini-version. Failed English muffins can make a great alternative to bread for bread and butter pudding.

Microwave stale chocolate cake, about 20 seconds for a slice, and it will become delicious hot chocolate fudge cake. This may also work with other types of cake.

To freeze sliced cake, put greaseproof paper between each slice. This lets you to remove a few slices at a time rather than thaw the whole cake.

To freeze a whole cake, wrap it in a double layer of cling film and foil.

Carrots

Carrots stay fresh and hard for even longer by chilling them and keeping them in their packaging or loosely tied in the free vegetable bag they were brought home in.

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Juice your carrots with a touch of ginger and mix with ginger ale, lemonade, lime or coconut milk for an exotic, refreshing, zingy, nutritionally-packed juice. Use them to make carrot cake or muffins.

Put soft carrots in a glass of water in the fridge; they will perk up in no time.

Cauliflower

Covering your cauliflower – either with its own leaves or a plastic bag – stops it from going brown. So buy cauliflowers with their leaves still on and leave them on; they will stay fresh for longer.

Does your cauliflower look like it will not last much longer? Make some tasty cauliflower maktoubah (a Levantine one-pot rice and cauliflower pilaf that is served by flipping the pot's contents upside-down onto a dish).

Celery

If your lovely, crisp celery has gone limp, do not throw it out. Braise it in a stir-fry or add it to your stews and casseroles; it is delicious and nutritious.

Cereal

After opening, store cereals in a good quality airtight container or re-close the cereal bag with a food clip.

Add stale or leftover breakfast cereal crumbs from the bottom of the cereal box to the ingredients when making bread in the bread-maker (reduce the amount of flour accordingly). This adds texture to the bread and, surprisingly, even sweet breakfast cereal does not make the bread sweet.

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Cheese

Hard cheese should be stored in an airtight container in the fridge or use a bag clip to seal the packaging. Blue cheese can be wrapped in tin foil.

Too much Feta cheese at home? Storing feta cheese in water saturated with salt or in olive oil keeps it well for quite a long time. To preserve it for longer, you can also freeze it. Freezing may cause a change in its texture and a slight loss in flavor, but the flavor can be adjusted and it will still be great to use.

To freeze, remove it from the salted water/oil, pat lightly with a paper towel, cut into smaller blocks (so you can thaw just the amount you need later), double wrap each block individually in plastic wrap and place them in a freezer bag (remove all the air from inside it before sealing tight). Label and date the bag and store it in the freezer.

To use, thaw the desired amount in the fridge, without removing the wrapping so it does not dry out. Taste the cheese when completely thawed; if it has lost some of its flavour, place it in a salted water solution for a few hours to restore some of its characteristic flavour. The cheese's texture may be more crumbly, so it is best used as a crumbled topping or in cooked dishes that are heated through. Use within a few days of thawing for best results. Never re-freeze feta cheese that has already been frozen and thawed.

Fresh parmesan can be expensive. To make it last longer, grate the whole wedge of parmesan into a container and place in the freezer; it will last for ages! It is delicious sprinkled over pasta when serving or added to cheese sauce.

Keep parmesan rinds in a freezer bag, then drop one into a pot of soup to add another depth of flavour. Fish it out before serving or leave it in if you prefer.

Cheese is often cheaper in larger pieces, so take advantage of the offer but do not waste any. Cheese can be grated and frozen.

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Chestnuts

Keep frozen and dried chestnuts in the freezer ready to chop coarsely into stir-fries and stuffing. Dried chestnuts are better preserved in the freezer than in the cupboard.

Chicken

After using all the meat from a chicken, boil the bones in water. Strip any remaining meat on the bones and use the water and meat as stock for soups, stews, etc.

Cut chicken breasts into strips, lay them out on a tray and put the tray in the freezer (open freeze).

Once frozen, you can pack the strips in bags and then use as many as you need each time. They can be quickly added to stir-fries and cooked without having to be thawed.

Chillies

You usually need to buy a whole pack of chillies even though you may only need one. Remove seeds from the chillies and chop finely. Then add the same number of crushed garlic cloves. Pop them in a plastic bag and then in a plastic airtight container and freeze. Spoon out a small quantity as required.

Alternatively, freeze chillies as whole. You can cut them really easily when frozen and add to your cooking. The benefit is you are less likely to get spice on your fingers when you are cutting them frozen.

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Coconut Milk

If you have any leftover coconut milk, you can freeze it in ice-cube trays. Once frozen, transfer to freezer bags. It will last for up to three months.

Condiments

Get the last drops of your sauce out of the bottle by adding a few drops of vinegar. It can be used as is or added to savoury dishes.

Sweetcorn

Excess fresh corn can be cut into mini cobs and frozen in freezer bags until they are ready to pop into a saucepan with boiling water for cooking.

Alternatively, slice off the kernels and freeze in mini portions ready to be sprinkled onto pizza or used in salads.

Cream

Whip any leftover cream before you freeze it to prevent it from becoming clumpy when it is thawed.

If you have over-whipped the cream, rescue it by adding a little un-whipped cream or milk and a pinch of sugar.

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Cucumbers

Put the stalk end of a cucumber in a small container of water and place it in the fridge door. They last much longer like this.

Dried Fruit

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

Looking for ideas to use up the batch of old dried fruits and nuts in your kitchen cupboard? Make some appetizing khushaf – a traditional Arab dried fruit and nut compote – as shown in our video under “Leftover Recipes”.

[<http://negaderha.savolaworld.com/demo/en/recipes/leftover/al-khushaf>]

Eggs

Eggs should be kept at a constant temperature below 20°C. Most modern supermarkets are kept below 20°C so retailers do not 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.

Providing eggs are cooked thoroughly, they can be eaten a day or two after their ‘best before’ date.

Eggs can be frozen successfully, but separately. For whites, make sure you label how many there are in each container. Leave whites to thaw naturally. They are ideal for making meringues; allow 50g caster sugar per white and proceed as normal.

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Fish

Thoroughly mush up a leftover fish pie and make into fish-cake sized shapes. Dip in beaten egg and coat with breadcrumbs (made using stale bread). Cook by frying or brush with a little oil and bake in the oven. It is tasty with frozen vegetables for a quick meal!

Most fish can be flaked and added to scrambled eggs, tossed into spicy rice dishes or made into a paste by adding herbs and mayonnaise or cream cheese for a dip. For making fish stock, ask the fishmonger to fillet the fish and also to give you the bones, etc. You can use the shells of prawns and shellfish. Boil the bones/shells in a little water, then strain through a fine strainer or a piece of muslin to make excellent stock.

Fruit

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

If your fruit is about to go off or is over ripe, put it in a saucepan with a couple of teaspoons of lemon juice and sugar. Heat slowly until the fruit 'pops' and the liquid reduces. You will then have your own jam or fruit compote.

Ginger

Fresh ginger often ends up wrinkled and dry in the salad drawer of the fridge. The best way to store it is to cut it into manageable chunks and then peel it. Put the chunks into a polythene bag and freeze them. Ginger is much easier to grate from frozen than it is from fresh.

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Grapes

Store grapes in the packaging you bought them in and refrigerate for freshness. Remove from the fridge and bring to room temperature before eating.

If you buy a big bunch of grapes and find you cannot eat them all, wash and freeze the leftovers. You can use the frozen grapes to decorate ice cream, act as tasty ice cubes, blend them into smoothies or just eat them as they are. They taste like mini ice lollies/popsicles!

Greek Yoghurt

You can use plain Greek yoghurt instead of butter and milk in mashed potato, and then use the remainder to thicken curry. Alternatively, use it to make a flavored yoghurt dessert with fresh fruits of your choice.

Herbs

Instead of putting your coriander in the salad drawer, half-fill an old jar with cold water, put in the coriander and cover with a (recycled!) plastic bag held with an elastic band. Keep it in the door of your fridge. Change the water every few days and it will store well.

Fresh parsley, cleaned, washed and dried well will last for more than 10 days in a tightly closed plastic box between layers of paper towel.

Herbs with softer leaves, such as tarragon and basil, tend to discolour. Do not throw them away but make a lovely scented oil. Finely chop the basil or tarragon and add to a bottle of olive oil. Keep it in the fridge for a few days to allow the herbs to infuse the oil then sieve and discard the herbs. Pour the oil back into the bottle and use the lovely herb scented oil for dressing and flavouring fish, chicken and cheese dishes.

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It is 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. Store the frozen cubes into a freezer bag.

Holidays

A couple of days before your holidays, stop buying groceries. Vegetables (tomatoes, mushrooms, onions, peppers) that could otherwise go to waste can be chopped and cooked, then frozen ready for use in a pasta sauce on your return. Making some extra servings of whatever you are having for dinner and then freezing them makes cooking easier the first couple of days you are back. Just defrost! Leftover slices of bread can also be frozen ready for making toast on your return, as can a pint of milk for a cup of tea.

Jam

The last drops of jam in the jar can add a lovely sweet complement to your gravy. Rinse the remnants with warm water and add to the gravy pan.

Juice

Make ice lollies/popsicles from leftover smoothies, apple juice or orange juice. You can buy plastic popsicle trays to use in the freezer.

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Kiwi

Store kiwi fruits in the fridge for freshness. Keeping them in the fridge in a loosely tied plastic bag will also help stop them from over-ripening. Move to the fruit bowl to bring to room temperature before eating.

Leftovers

If you have a food processor or hand-blender, any leftover casserole or cooked vegetables can be made into a soup with stored cupboard ingredients. Cooked vegetables work best with a stock cube and a small amount of spaghetti or vermicelli broken up into small pieces, which can be cooked until soft in the stock before adding the blended vegetables. Casseroles are good with concentrated tomato puree. Curry works well; it has a strong flavour and you really only need to add water.

If you have a few odd pieces of fruit which need to be eaten up, slice them into bowls for your children and smother with custard. Children love hunting for the buried treasure!

Keep leftover beef and lamb. Mince it up and make a cottage or shepherd's pie with it. If you are left with some roasted meat or boiled potatoes, make some potato pies (fatayer batata – an Arab savoury comprising finger food pies stuffed with a filling of choice, e.g., meat, spinach, cheese, potatoes).

Lemons

Keep lemons in the fridge, in a loosely tied plastic bag, for freshness. Bring to room temperature to use them.

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Buy lemons when they are on offer and chop them into wedges for drinks and freeze them. As well as using them in cold drinks, use them to make a cup of hot water with a cinnamon stick – a refreshing drink when you are trying to cut down on tea/coffee and increase water intake.

Juice lemons and freeze the juice in an ice-cube tray, then freeze the skins. They are much easier to zest with a grater when frozen.

Roll citrus fruit on a hard surface with your hand. This makes them easier to squeeze when cut. Alternatively, put the fruit into the microwave, on high power, for 10 seconds to release the juices.

Lemon rind can be transformed into a delicious dessert!

Lettuce

When you get your lettuce home, remove it from the plastic wrapping, then wash and drain. Take a clean kitchen towel and soak it under a cold tap, then wring it out. Discard any leaves from the lettuce which are slightly brown and wrap the lettuce in the kitchen towel. Place in the fridge. You will find that this will keep the lettuce fresh for an amazing amount of time!

When you buy an iceberg lettuce, break it up with your hands and store it in the fridge in a bowl of cold water. It will stay fresh and crispy for much longer than normal. If your lettuce is looking too limp to serve, place the leaves in a bowl of cold water with a peeled, sliced potato and soon it will be as good as new! Just rinse, dry and serve that same day.

Keep salad leaves in a paper bag, or in a plastic bag with a strip of kitchen roll. Keeps them moist, but not soggy!

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If you have leftover salad, cover with a damp piece of paper towel before covering with cling film or putting in a sealed container. This really prolongs the life of the salad leaves. This also works well with salad bags, which when left in the bag tend to become moist and go limp or brown very quickly.

If your green vegetables and salad leaves are not looking fresh, soak them in cold water for 30 minutes to freshen them up.

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 and fresh for longer.

Lunch Made Easy

When making curries, cook enough to freeze and put into sandwich boxes to take to work; this cuts down sandwich-making time and reduces waste.

Sandwiches can often be frozen (as long as they are something suitable that you could normally freeze – e.g., cheese and pickle or meat and mustard but not salad!) If you freeze in lunch-size sandwich bags, you have ready-made packed lunches to grab when you are in a hurry before work. They will have thawed by lunchtime!

Melon

Melons stay fresh for up to a week longer if kept in the fridge. Move to the fruit bowl prior to eating if preferred.

Melon can be a great addition to your breakfast in the morning or as an afternoon or evening snack. Simply chop the melon into pieces and place them in an airtight container in the fridge. They should last up to five days.

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Milk

Use up milk to make fabulous scones. Whip up a batch of scone mix and freeze it in scone-sized portions until you are ready to use them.

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

Mince

When making anything with mince you can add any leftover vegetables – such as carrot, grated potato or lentils – to bulk it out. Make the meal produce more servings and make use of those leftover foods.

Mushrooms

When buying loose mushrooms, keep them in paper bags and store in the fridge for freshness. They last much longer chilled than if kept out of the fridge.

If you buy large boxes of mushrooms, you can keep them fresher for longer by covering them with a kitchen towel folded into layers and tucking it quite tightly inside the box, like a snug blanket. Then keep the mushrooms in the bottom of the fridge and do not forget to tuck the rest back in every time you take some out. Also do not forget to re-use the plastic boxes to store other vegetables.

If your mushrooms are looking a bit wrinkled, chop them and toss them in some melted butter and freeze. These are great on pizzas, in stews and casseroles.

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Nuts

Nuts contain a high percentage of oil and can become rotten quite quickly, especially in warm weather. They can be stored for up to a month at room temperature but ideally place in an airtight container and store in the fridge for up to six months. Check the information on the packet for specific storage instructions.

Onions

You can almost always get cheap bags of smaller onions in the supermarkets, and they are often the perfect size which means you do not have bits of onions lying round going to waste.

Onions freeze well and it is just as easy to chop up three as one and freeze. If you are in a hurry, it is a great help and no smelly hands or chopping board to wash.

Oranges

Store oranges in the fridge. Oranges retain their freshness and quality for much longer in the fridge than at room temperature, and keeping them in the fridge in a loosely tied plastic bag will also help stop them from over-ripening and drying up. Add to the fruit bowl to bring to room temperature to taste their true sweetness.

Watch how to rescue ripe oranges in our Orange Jam recipe! Enjoy watching this video and many more under "Leftover Recipes".

[<http://negaderha.savolaworld.com/demo/en/recipes/leftover/orange-jam>]

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Pasta

Cooked too much pasta? Waste no more. Simply rinse the cooked pasta in a strainer (this gets rid of the starch and cools the pasta). Then put meal-sized portions into freezer bags and place into the freezer. To cook, simply place the frozen pasta into boiling water and cook for a few minutes; or even quicker, reheat in the microwave.

Why not use leftover pasta to make a delicious pudding? Place cooked pasta in a greased oven dish, beat two eggs well, add double cream and strawberry jam and pour evenly onto the pasta. Place in the oven on 180°C for 40 minutes, then put under a hot grill for a few minutes until golden brown. Serve with ice cream or whipped cream. Yummy!

Leftover cooked pasta should be cooled quickly and then stored in the fridge for up to two days.

Pears

For freshness and quality, store pears in the fridge. These nutritious fruits can last much longer if kept in the fridge rather than at room temperature, and keeping them in the fridge in a loosely tied plastic bag will help stop them from drying up. Add to the fruit bowl to bring to room temperature prior to eating, although some pears may need longer in the fruit bowl to ripen up.

Peppers

Store peppers in the fridge in a loosely tied plastic bag to keep them fresher for longer.

If you are only using part of a green or red pepper, leave the stem, seeds and skin intact, the pepper will store much longer than when you remove them.

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Dice the tops and bottoms for use in spaghetti sauce, for example. Slice or dice the remainder. Freeze them in one pepper portions which make it easier to follow recipes. So simple and cheap!

Pesto

You can freeze pesto by the teaspoon in ice cube trays. You can then use them as you need them and add them to dishes even when they are still frozen.

Mix leftover pesto with butter and freeze in individual portions. Use the pesto butter on steak, chicken, lamb etc. Mix some garlic into it as well for a great tasting butter and spread on a toasted baguette.

Pineapples

Pineapples should ideally be stored in a cool place but not in the fridge.

Save leftover pineapple (fresh or tinned) in the freezer. Use it defrosted in fruit salads and add frozen to other fruit and blend for a great smoothie! Children also like it as ice cubes in their drinks.

Pitta Bread

Pitta bread can be warmed or toasted straight from the freezer. Use straight away for hot fillings or leave to cool for a sandwich.

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Pizza Dougha

Make enough dough for two pizzas. Use half to make a pizza for dinner and freeze the other half in a ball in a sealed sandwich bag. When ready to use the dough, just get it out and let it defrost in the fridge for a few hours. Add topping and cook.

Potatoes

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

For storing cooked potatoes, cool them as quickly as possible after cooking, ideally within 12- hours, and then store in the fridge for up to two days.

A useful freezing tip is to freeze the potatoes on a baking tray, so they are not touching each other, and when they are solid, pop them in a plastic bag. This stops them sticking together so you do not have to defrost them all at once.

When potatoes are exposed to either artificial or natural light, they can develop a green colour due to chemical changes. These may make those green bits of the potato unsuitable to eat, but this can be avoided by simply cutting them out. It is safe to cook potatoes that have sprouted but they may not keep well and are more likely to blacken when cooked. Whatever your choice, always remove the sprouts before using.

Keep hold of potato peelings, sprinkle with salt, pepper, chilli or whatever flavour you like and pop them in the oven. Free crispy chips the children will love!

Thinly slice leftover boiled potatoes and add to omelets.

Use leftover potatoes to thicken soups.

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If you have a few potatoes that you need to use, boil them up and make mashed potato and freeze it in portions. So next time you are in a rush, you have them on standby. They are guaranteed to be crispy and golden if you parboil and freeze potatoes for later, and you can cook directly from frozen.

Freeze leftover mashed potato in bags and use it for shepherd's pie topping. Alternatively, make potato patties by adding cooked, shredded turkey, chicken or fish and a little bit of flour to the mashed potatoes and shallow-frying them.

Radishes

Remove the leaves and put them in a jar of cold water in the fridge. This keeps them fresh for weeks.

Rice

To avoid food poisoning from rice, the following guidelines should be adhered to: Ideally eat straight after cooking. If not, cool as quickly as possible, ideally within one hour. To do this, drain the rice in a strainer, rinse with cold water then tip into a large shallow container. Once cold, cover and keep it in the fridge for no longer than one day before reheating. Ensure the rice is piping hot before serving.

Roast

If you do not have time to make a shepherd's pie from your leftover roast, mince 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 or sambusa.

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Salsa

Use leftover salsa as the base layer of pizza toppings, in tortilla filling or as a nacho dip. Freeze leftover salsa in small containers that have just the amount you want in each. When you need salsa, you can defrost it in seconds in the microwave.

Salt

Adding a few grains of rice to your salt shaker will stop it from getting damp.

Sauces

Freeze any leftover sauces, such as tomato or pesto, for another time ready to add to pasta for a quick meal.

Spinach

Save the stalks from your spinach leaves and stir-fry them with soy sauce, sesame seeds and a touch of sesame oil. Make sure they are still a bit crunchy when you take them out of the pan. It makes a delicious side dish.

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.

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If you grow your own spinach – or even if you happen to buy a lot for a good price – wash it, cut off the stalks and steam for 23- minutes. Divide it into plastic bags or containers and freeze. It can be frozen for 12- months and is easy to add to any pasta dish, mince, stew, soup, etc.

Spreads

If you want to use up the very last drop of jam/ marmalade/conserves, pour a cup of chilled milk into the bottle, close the lid tight and shake the bottle vigorously. Great tasting milk-shake is ready!

Turn jam jars, marmalade, pesto or anything in a jar upside down (remembering to tighten the lid!). When you next go to use it, the contents will have gathered in the lid making it easier to use the whole lot.

Stock

If you have roasted a chicken, boil the meat up for a couple of hours with two or three pints of water, a few chopped celery stalks, onions, carrots, a bunch of parsley and bay leaf to make chicken stock. Measure into pint portions and freeze to use whenever you need them.

After roasting meat or chicken pour the liquid off into small margarine tubs, leave to cool and allow the fat to rise to the top, and then freeze until needed. Microwave for 30 seconds and the layer of fat can then be easily lifted off and used in soups, etc.

A-Z Food-Saving and Storage Tips and Tricks

Strawberries

Store strawberries in the packaging you bought them in and refrigerate for freshness. Remove them from the fridge and bring to room temperature before eating.

If you have a glut of strawberries and want to freeze them, lay them out individually on a tray and put it in the freezer. When the strawberries are firm, put them into bags. Another way of storing them is to blend them in a food processor or blender with 23- tablespoons of caster sugar and then freeze. Put them through a strainer if you want to remove the fine seeds. They are not the best fruits for freezing, because they break down and become mush when defrosted, but they can be used in ice creams, trifles and soufflés.

Wash strawberries and place individually in an ice cube tray. Freeze. Use instead of ice cubes in water, lemonade, or other drinks and munch them when the glass is empty!

Sugar

If you have rock-hard brown sugar or crystallised honey/syrup, put it in a microwaveable bowl for about 30 seconds on a high setting in the microwave. This will bring them back to their normal state.

Swede

After removing the skin, slice and cut into chips, but do not put into water. Pop into a plastic bag and freeze. Can be cooked from frozen.

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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 spaghetti sauce or soups and stews. Just put the whole frozen tomatoes into the pan at the point when you would add the canned tomatoes.

Do not try to defrost them separately as they turn to mush.

Check the "Leftover Recipes" section to learn our super-easy Dried Tomato recipe and many others on using ripe tomatoes.

[<http://negaderha.savolaworld.com/demo/en/recipes/leftover/dried-tomatoes>]

Tortilla Wraps

Keep wraps in the freezer. They can be defrosted individually under a grill within 30 seconds, long enough to assemble the ingredients. They do not go soggy and they are useful on days when you run out of bread.

Vegetables

(Also refer to individual vegetables listed here.)

Put soft carrots and cucumber in a glass of water in the fridge – they will perk up in no time.

Peel and chop carrots, onions etc., bag them and freeze. When needed, just take out as much as you need and reseal. No more soggy vegetables at the bottom of your vegetable box.

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Watercress



Try to buy watercress in bunches and to keep it fresh, put the stems in a jar of water (like a bunch of flowers) and store in the fridge.

Watermelon



If you have watermelon leftover, 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



Add leftover yoghurt to fruit smoothies and juices, or to a cake or scone mixture instead of milk.

Frozen yoghurt makes a lovely dessert. If you have a big family-sized pot of yoghurt to use up, mix it with any over-ripe fruit, such as banana and strawberries. Then pour into ice lolly moulds/popsicle trays and freeze.