

Shelf Stable Foods

Before opening, shelf-stable foods should be safe unless the can or packaging has been damaged. After opening, store products in tightly closed containers. The storage of many shelf-stable items at room temperature is a quality issue -- unless the product is contaminated (bugs in flour, for example). Some foods must be refrigerated after opening, such as tuna or chili.

Shelf-stable foods	Unopened on shelf	Opened, refrigerated	Opened on shelf
Baby food, jars or cans			
Fruits & vegetables	2 months after date	2-3 days	
Meats & eggs	2 months after date	1 day	
Cereal, dry mixes	Use-by date		2 months
Formula	Use-by date	1-2 days	
Bacon Bits, imitation	4 months		4 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 and bread mixes	12-18 months		Pkg. use-by date
Cornmeal, regular degerminated	6-12 months	12 months	
stone ground or blue	1 month	2-3 months	
Cornstarch	18 months		18 months
Flour, white	6-12 months		6-8 months
Flour, whole wheat	1 month	6-8 months	
Frosting, canned	10 months	1 week	
Frosting mixes	12 months		3 months
Beans, dried	12 months		12 months
Canned goods, low acid	2-5 years	3-4 days	
(such as meat, poultry, fish, gravy, stew, soups, beans, carrots, corn, pasta, peas, potatoes, spinach)			
Canned goods, high acid	12-18 months	5-7 days	
(such as juices, fruit, pickles, sauerbraut, tomato, soup, and foods in vinegar-based sauce)			
Cereal, ready-to-eat	6-12 months		3 months
cook before eating (oatmeal, etc.)	12 months		6-12 months
Chocolate, unsweetened, semi-sweet, solid	18-24 months		1 year
Chocolate syrup	2 years	6 months	
Cocoa and cocoa mixes	indefinitely		1 year
Coffee			
Whole beans, non-vacuum bag	1-3 weeks	3-4 months frozen	
Ground, in cans	2 years	2 weeks	
Instant, jars and tins	12 months		2-3 months
Condiments			
Barbecue sauce, bottled	12 months	4 months	1 month
Catsup, tomato; cocktail sauce 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	1 year	1-2 months
Olives, black and green	12 -18 months	2 weeks	
Pickles	12 months	1-2 months	
Salad dressings, commercial, bottled	10-12 months	3 months	
Salsa, picante and taco sauces	12 months	1 month	
Cookies, packaged	2 months	8-12 months frozen	4 weeks
Crackers	8 months	freeze or refig 3-4 months	1 month
Diet powder mixes	6 months		3 months
Extracts, vanilla, lemon, etc.	3 years		1 year
Fruits, dried	6 months	6 months	
Garlic, chopped, commercial jars	18 months	Refrigerate; use by date on jar	
Gelatin, flavored	18 months		Use all or reseal for 3-4 months
Gelatin, unflavored	3 years		Use all or reseal for 3-4 months

Gravy, jars & cans	2-5 years	1-2 days	
dry gravy mixes	2 years		Mix entire packet
Herbs, dried	1-2 years		Store in cool dark place 1 year.
Honey	12 months		12 months
Jams, jellies, preserves	12 months	6 months	
Juice, boxes	4-6 months	8-12 days	
Lentils, dried	12 months		12 months
Maple syrup, pure genuine	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	6 months		4-6 months
walnut, macadamia, other nut oils	6 months	4 months	
vegetable oil sprays	2 years		1 year
Nuts, jars or cans	12 months	4-6 months, Freeze 9-12 months	
Pasta, dry, made 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 package date		1 mo.
Popcorn , dry kernels in jar	2 years		1 year
commercially popped in bags	2-3 months		1-2 weeks
Microwave packets	12 months		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	2 years		1 year
brown	1 year	6 months	
flavored or herb mixes	6 months		Use entire amt.
Sauce mixes, non dairy (spaghetti, taco, etc.)	2 years		Use entire amt.
cream sauces with milk solids	1 year		
Shortening, solid	8 months		3 months
Soda such as carbonated cola drinks, mixers:			
Diet sodas, bottles or cans	3 months after date	2-3 days	
Regular sodas, bottles	3 months after date	2-3 days	
Regular sodas, cans	9 months after date	n.a.	
Soup mixes	12 months		Use entire amt.
Spices , whole	2-4 years		Included in total
ground	2-3 years		Included in total
Paprika, red pepper, chili powder	2 years	Store in refrig.	
Sugar , brown	4 months		Sugar never spoils
Granulated	2 years		
Confectioners	18 months		
Sugar substitutes	2 years		
Syrup, pancake, maple & other	12 months		12 months
Tapioca	12 months		12 months
Tea, bags	18 months		12 months
Loose/Instant	2 years		6-12 months
Toaster pastries, fruit filled	6 months		Keep foil packets sealed
non-fruit fillings	9 months		
Tomatoes, sun dried, packed in oil	12 months	6-12 months	
packed in cellophane	9 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

Frozen Foods

When shopping, place frozen foods in the cart last, immediately before checking out. Take the foods directly home and place in freezer. For storage of meat and poultry purchased frozen, see refrigerated foods chart.

Frozen item	Freezer	In 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 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	Not applicable
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	7 days
Sherbert, sorbet	2-4 months	Not applicable
Shrimp, shellfish	12 months	1-2 days
Topping, whipped	6 months	2 weeks
TV dinners, entrees, breakfast	3 months	Do not defrost. Cook frozen.
Vegetables	8 months	3-4 days

Bakery Items

Bakery items containing custards, meat or vegetables, and frostings made of cream cheese, whipped cream or eggs must be kept refrigerated. Bread products not containing these ingredients are safe at room temperature, but eventually they will mold and become unsafe to eat.

Bakery item	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*	1-2 days	7 days	2 months
Chiffon, sponge	1-2 days	7 days	2 months
Chocolate	1-2 days	7 days	4 months
Fruit cake	1 month	6 months	12 months
Made from mix	3-4 days	7 days	4 months
Pound cake	3-4 days	7 days	6 months
Cheesecake	No	7 days	2-3 months
Cookies, bakery or homemade	2-3 weeks	2 months	8-12 months
Croissants, butter	1 day	7 days	2 months
Doughnuts, glazed or cake	1-2 days	7 days	1 month
Dairy, cream-filled	No	3-4 days	No
Muffins	No	3-4 days	No
Pastries, Danish	1-2 days	7 days	2 months
Pies, cream	No	3-4 days	2 months
Chiffon	No	1-2 days	No
Fruit	1-2 days	7 days	No
Mincemeat	1-2 days	7 days	8 months
Pecan	2 hours	3-4 days	8 months
Pumpkin	2 hours	3-4 days	1-2 months
Quiche	3-4 days	7 days	1-2 months
Rolls, yeast, baked	Pkg. date	7 days	2 months
filled, meat or vegetables	2 hours	3-4 days	2 months

*Refrigerate any cake with frosting made of cream cheese, butter cream, whipped cream or eggs.

Produce and Vegetables

Raw fruits are safe at room temperature, but after ripening, will mold and rot quickly. For best quality, store ripe fruit in the refrigerator or prepare and freeze.

Fruits	Shelf	Refrigerator	Freezer
Apples	1-2 days	3 weeks	Cooked, 8 mos.
Apricots	Until ripe	2-3 days	No
Avocados	Until ripe	3-4 days	No
Bananas	Until ripe	2 days, skin will blacken	whole peeled, 1 month
Berries, cherries	No	1-2 days	4 months
Citrus fruit	10 days	1-2 weeks	No
Coconuts, fruits	1 week	2-3 weeks	Shredded, 6 months
Grapes	1 day	1 week	Whole, 1 mo.
Kiwi fruit	Until ripe	3-4 days	No
Melons	1-2 days	3-4 days	Balls, 1 mo.
Papaya, mango	3-5 days	1 week	No
Peaches, nectarines	Until ripe	3-4 days	Sliced, lemon juice & sugar, 2 months
Pears, plums	3-5 days	3-4 days	No
Vegetable	Shelf	Raw, refrigerated	Blanched, cooked or frozen
Artichokes, whole	1-2 days	1-2 weeks	No
Asparagus	No	3-4 days	8 months
Beans, green or wax	No	3-4 days	8 months
Beets	1 day	7-10 days	6-8 months
Cabbage	No	1-2 weeks	10-12 months
Carrots, parsnips	No	2 weeks	10-12 months
Celery	No	1-2 weeks	10-12 months
Cucumbers	No	4-5 days	No
Eggplant	1 day	3-4 days	6-8 months
Garlic, ginger root	2 days	1-2 weeks	1 month
Greens	No	1-2 days	10-12 months
Herbs, fresh	No	7-10 days	1-2 months
Leeks	No	1-2 weeks	10-12 months
Lettuce, iceberg	No	1-2 weeks	No
Lettuce, leaf	No	3-7 days	No
Mushrooms	No	2-3 days	10-12 months
Okra	No	2-3 days	10-12 months
Onions, dry	2-3 weeks	2 months	10-12 months
Spring or green	No	1-2 weeks	
Peppers, bell or chili	No	4-5 days	6-8 months
Potatoes	1-2 months	1-2 weeks	Cooked and mashed, 10-12 months
Rutabagas	1 week	2 weeks	8-10 months
Spinach	No	1-2 days	10-12 months
Squash, summer	No	4-5 days	10-12 months
Winter	1 week	2 weeks	
Turnips	No	2 weeks	8-10 months
Tomatoes	Until ripe	2-3 days	2 months

Refrigerated Foods

Refrigerate foods to maintain quality as well as to keep them safe. Some bacteria grow and multiply -- although very slowly -- at refrigerated temperatures. There is a limit to the time various foods will stay fresh and safe in a refrigerator. Food kept continuously frozen at 0° F will always be safe but the quality suffers with lengthy freezer storage.

Product	Refrigerated	Frozen
Beverages, fruit		
	3 weeks unopened	
Juice in cartons, fruit drinks, punch	7-10 days open	8-12 months
Condiments		
Refrigerated pesto, salsa	Date on carton; 3 days after opening	1-2 months
Sour cream-based dip	2 weeks	Doesn't freeze well
Dairy products		
Butter	1-3 months	6-9 months
Buttermilk	7-14 days	3 months
Cheese, hard (such as cheddar, Swiss)	6 months unopened; 3-4 weeks opened	6 months
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 months	Do not freeze
Whipped, sweetened	1 day	1-2 months
Aerosol can, real whipped cream	3-4 weeks	Do not freeze
Aerosol can, non-dairy topping	3 months	Do not freeze
Cream, Half and Half	3-4 days	4 months
Egg, substitutes, liquid		
unopened	10 days	Manufacturer says "Do not freeze"
opened	3 days	Manufacturer says "Do not freeze"
Eggnog, commercial	3-5 days	6 months
Eggs, in shell	3-5 weeks	Do not freeze
Raw whites	2-4 days	12 months
Raw yolks	2-4 days	Doesn't freeze well
Hard cooked	1 week	Doesn't freeze well
Margarine	4-5 months	12 months
Milk	7 days	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
Deli foods		
Entrees, cold or hot	3-4 days	2-3 months
Store-sliced lunch meats	3-5 days	1-2 months
Salads	3-5 days	Do not freeze
Dough		
Tube cans of biscuits, rolls, pizza dough,	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
Fish		
Lean fish (cod, flounder, haddock, sole, etc)	1-2 days	6 months
Fatty fish (bluefish, mackerel, salmon, etc.)	1-2 days	2-3 months
Caviar, non-pasteurized (fresh)	6 months unopened; 2 days after opening	Do not freeze
Caviar, pasteurized, vacuum-packaged	1 year unopened; 2 days after opening	Do not freeze
Cooked fish	3-4 days	4-6 months
Smoked fish	14 days or date on vacuum pkg.	2 months in vacuum pkg.
Shellfish		
Shrimp, scallops, crayfish, squid	1-2 days	3-6 months
Shucked clams, mussels and oysters	1-2 days	3-6 months
Live clams, mussels, crab, lobster and oysters	2-3 days	2-3 months
Cooked shellfish	3-4 days	3 months
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	7 days	1 month
Corned beef, in pouch with pickling juices	5-7 days	1 month
Ham, canned ("keep refig." label)	6-9 months	Not in can
Ham, fully cooked, whole	7 days	1-2 months
Ham, fully cooked, slices or halves	3-4 days	1-2 months
Ham, cooked before eating	7 days	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	7 days	1-2 months
Sausage, hard, dry (pepperoni), sliced	2-3 weeks	1-2 months
Pasta, fresh	1-2 days or use-by date on package	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