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# homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE

MONDAY, AUGUST 2, 1942

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SUBJECT: "FREEZING THE FAMILY'S FOOD SUPPLY." Information from frozen food experts of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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Nobody knows better than you that it takes a lot of food to feed a family for just one year. You the housewife, are the family's food expert. You buy the food, plan and cook the meals, and do the canning, preserving and so on. You deal with food every day. So you should know--

But do you know--have you ever counted up how many pounds of food a family eats in a year, a properly fed family like yours, of course? Did you ever picture what one year's supply of food would look like all piled up together?

That pile would have at least a ton of food for Father, and another ton for each of the hard-working boys in the family. That's what it takes to feed an active man or boy for 12 months--at least a ton of food. Even the five-year-old in the family eats around 1300 pounds of food a year. As for you yourself, busy and active as you are these days, you'll account for over 1700 pounds. Altogether that yearly pile of food for a family of five will weigh about 8500 pounds.

And this is the season when many of those pounds have to be preserved in some way so they'll keep for the rest of the year. This matter of preserving food becomes more important to every American housewife as the war continues. In the past you've been able to find all the canned food you wanted at any time of year on the grocer's shelves. Or you've always been able to can your own home-raised food if you wanted to. But war has changed the canning picture as you know. Today you need to inform yourself on other good ways of putting up food. You need to learn all you can as fast as you can about putting up food by freezing, by drying, by curing and pickling.



It's good insurance against wartime shortages and shipping difficulties to know different ways to put up food. You have probably learned in past years about canning and making jelly, jam and preserves. Now you will be wise to learn about other kinds of preserving. You may not need to use these other methods yet. But now is the time to get ready for the future when you may need this information in a hurry.

Today let's consider preserving by freezing. Maybe you have a freezer locker plant in your community and have been storing food there for years. If so, you know that freezing is the easiest way to put up food and gives products most nearly like the fresh. But experts are still discovering facts about freezing, so, even if you're an old hand at it, keep checking on the latest methods.

Right at the start you need to plan to make best use of your freezer locker space. Most lockers can hold at one time about 200 pounds of meat, or a little over a hundred pounds of fruits and vegetables. But if you manage to put in as you take out, you can make that locker care for perhaps 500 to a thousand pounds of food in a year. Of course, those should be the foods that best deserve locker space—the foods best adapted to freezing, the finest and best quality foods, the fruits and vegetables fully ripe and most flavorful yet never overripe.

The frozen foods that have proved most popular through the years are beefsteak, pork chops, green peas, asparagus and strawberries. That group may well take first place on your locker list. Close seconds are beef roasts, pork loin, frying chickens, lima beans, corn, berries, cherries and peaches. Those 13 foods have proved themselves extra "lucky" for freezing. Other fruits that freeze well are apricots and nectarines, all kinds of berries, cherries, guavas, figs, mangoes and some varieties of plums and prunes. Fruits which do not freeze well are whole apples, pears, grapes and some plums. But juice or strained pulp of almost any fruit will freeze successfully for use in beverages, ices and ice cream, and other desserts. By the way, all berries but strawberries will freeze successfully with no sweetening.



Other fruits you can freeze with sugar sirup, dry sugar, corn sirup or honey.

As for the vegetables, beside the favorites for freezing--peas, asparagus, lima beans and corn, the successful freezers include broccoli, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, snap beans, green scybeans, okra, sweet pepper and spinach. Cabbage, beets and carrots also freeze successfully, but because they are well adapted for storage in cellars and outside pits, they should not as a general rule take up space in a freezer locker. The vegetables which do not freeze successfully are colery, cucumbers, onions, lettuce, tomatoes, and potatoes, either sweet or white. By the way, certain varieties freeze better than others. Ask your State college or your county agent to give you a list of good freezing varieties for your locality.

All vegetables, but not fruits, have to be blanched in boiling water before freezing. This is to stop the action of the enzymes in the vegetables that gradually cause a change in color and flavor while they are frozen.

No matter how fine the quality of the food you put in your freezer locker, it won't stay live without moisture-proof wrapping. Ordinary paper won't do. Vapor-proof plastic film made for the purpose is satisfactory. You can also use waxed fiber cups, waxed bags and specially waxed paper, tight glass jars and tins.

Check to be sure the locker plant has facilities for freezing your food fast so that fast-growing mold and bacteria have no chance to grow. See whether the plant has shelf coils or plates, a fan to speed up air flow, and then a temperature around minus 10 degrees Fahrenheit for the freezing of the food. Family size packages should freeze in 6 to 8 hours. After freezing, the food should go into a temperature close to zero Fahrenheit.

Storage of zero is safe storage. These are just a few notes on preserving food by freezing. You can get further information from your State college or the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

