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Storing Fresh  
Fruit &  
Vegetables

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FOOD CONSTRUED



The advice given in this book is based on my own opinions and experiences. Readers are advised to use their own judgement when storing food, and should not consume any food that appears to have spoiled.

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# Introduction

What are the best ways of storing fruits and vegetables? The storage methods and conditions you choose can help food stay fresh longer, taste better, and you will waste less food and money.

## **STORAGE COMPATIBILITY:**

It may sound strange, but the combination of fruits and vegetables in a storage area can be just as important as the temperature and the humidity of the storage area.

Some fruits and vegetables should not be stored together. There are two reasons. Firstly, the strong odor of some produce may be absorbed by other items. For example, the smell of onions will be absorbed by potatoes and apples, affecting their taste. Secondly, some ripening fruit will give off a gas called ethylene. This gas will cause vegetables and other fruit to rot at a higher rate. Some fruits give off ethylene gas at a much higher rate than others. Apples for instance, have a high rate of ethylene production, while oranges have a very low rate of ethylene production.

It should be noted, that in some cases the ethylene gas can be beneficial. For example, if you have some fruit that is not quite ripe, storing it with an apple will speed the ripening.

## **STORAGE TEMPERATURES:**

It is hard to get ideal storage temperature for everything. However, most people should be able to create three temperature zones that will cover most fruits and vegetables.

**(1) Cool and Dry (50°F to 60°F or 10°C to 15°C, 60% relative humidity).**

- Your basement is probably cool and dry. These conditions are best suited for storing things like winter squash.

**2) Cold and Dry (32°F to 40°F or 0°C to 4°C, 65% relative humidity)**

- This is your refrigerator. It could also be an insulated garage in a Canadian winter. Onions and garlic like to be stored under cold, dry conditions.

**3) Cold and Moist (32°F to 40°F or 0°C to 4°C, 95% relative humidity)**

- The air in a refrigerator can be very dry, and creating a moist environment can be challenging. Placing your produce in a perforated plastic bag will help increase the humidity. These are the storage conditions required by most fruit and many tender vegetables.



# Fruit



Fruit can be quite delicate and incorrect storage may cause damage. Before storing your fruit, you need to understand that there are really three types of fruit:

- fruit that ripens at room temperature and then needs to be refrigerated,
- fruit that must be refrigerated immediately, and
- fruit that should not be refrigerated.

# Apples

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Apples, like to be kept cold and moist. Store them in the refrigerator in a perforated plastic bag so that they retain their moisture.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Apples may be stored for 1 to 8 months.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Apples produce ethylene gas at a high rate, and so can adversely affect produce that is ethylene sensitive if they are stored together. Examples include broccoli, kiwi, lettuce and tomatoes.

Apples themselves are sensitive to ethylene and shouldn't be stored with high ethylene producers such as peaches, pears, or avocados.

Apples can also be adversely affected by odor. Don't store onions and garlic with your apples.



# Bananas

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

The first thing to know when storing bananas is that they are usually harvested while still green.

Bananas should be stored at room temperature to allow the ripening process to complete.

Do not store bananas in the refrigerator when they are green. This will stop the ripening process and it cannot be restarted.

Although you shouldn't store green bananas in the refrigerator, ripe bananas can be stored in the refrigerator or even frozen if they are ripening faster than you can eat them. The skin will turn dark brown, but the fruit won't be affected. Note that frozen bananas can be used to make really delicious smoothies.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Store bananas for 5 to 7 days.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Bananas are highly ethylene sensitive, so if you want to speed up the ripening process, store them with an apple.

## **OPTIONS FOR BANANAS THAT ARE TOO RIPE:**

If your bananas are getting old and too ripe to eat, they are perfect for using in baked goods. Banana bread is a personal favourite.

## **BANANA BREAD**

This old fashioned banana bread recipe makes a wonderful snack. It is easy to make and a great way to use bananas that are getting too ripe.

### **INGREDIENTS:**

- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1/2 sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 mashed bananas
- 1 tbsp vinegar
- 1/2 cup milk



### **DIRECTIONS:**

1. Shift together flour, baking soda and salt.
2. Cream shortening. Blend in sugar and eggs until fluffy.
3. Add vinegar to the milk.
4. Add flour mixture alternately with bananas and milk, beating well after each addition.
5. Turn into a greased loaf pan.
6. Bake at 350°F for 60 to 70 minutes.



# Berries

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Storing berries can be tricky. Strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, currants, blackberries, and gooseberries) are highly perishable.

The following steps will help:

- Sort through your fruit. Remove any damaged berries or debris.
- Store berries in the refrigerator in a perforated plastic bag.
- Don't wash berries before storing them. Wash berries in a colander under running water just before using them.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Berries will last in the refrigerator for 7 to 10 days.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Berries generally have a low sensitivity to ethylene<sup>1</sup>. This means berries can usually be stored with other fruit.

# Citrus



## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Storing citrus fruit actually depends on the specific type of citrus you have.

Hardier citrus such as lemons, oranges, limes, and grapefruit can be stored at room temperature for about a week. To store these fruits longer, they need to be stored in the refrigerator in a perforated plastic bag.

Fragile citrus fruit such as mandarin oranges or tangerines should be stored in a cool location. Storing them in the cold will damage the fruit.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Store citrus at room temperature for 5 to 7 days.

In the refrigerator, hardier citrus (oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit) can be stored for 2 to 3 weeks.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Most citrus has a low or very low rate of ethylene production. This means citrus can be stored with foods that are sensitive to the gas. However most citrus fruits have a medium sensitivity to ethylene and exposure can cause them to mold faster.

# Grapes

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Grapes should be kept moist and stored in the Refrigerator. The ideal temperature for storing grapes is 32°F to 35°F (0°C to 2°C). One method of preventing moisture loss is to keep your grapes loosely wrapped in plastic. However, too much moisture will also damage grapes. Never wash grapes before storing them.

When you are ready to eat the grapes, hold them under cool running water to rinse them. Drain, dry, and enjoy.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Grapes can easily be stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. You can store grapes in a bowl on the counter for about a week.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Grapes produce very little ethylene, but they are very sensitive to it. It is best to not store grapes with high ethylene producers like apples, kiwi, or pears.

## **LONGER TERM STORAGE:**

Grapes are also excellent frozen. Wash the grapes and spread on a cookie sheet. When frozen put grapes in freezer bag and return to freezer. Eat them frozen like a popsicle, or thaw them and make fruit cocktail. They can also be added to salads. The thawed grapes don't really get mushy, but they are wet and it isn't like eating fresh grapes anymore.

# Melons



## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

All melons are susceptible to damage from the cold at temperatures below 50°F (10°C). Store melons in a cool and dry place such as your basement.

## **WATERMELONS:**

Wipe watermelons clean with a damp cloth before storing.

Watermelons are highly sensitive to ethylene, and shouldn't be stored with high ethylene producers such as apples or cantaloupe.

Watermelons can be stored for 2 to 3 weeks.

### **Tip:**

How do you know when a watermelon is ripe? When the ground spot (the light portion that touches the ground) has turned a creamy yellow colour.

## **CANTALOUPE AND HONEYDEW MELONS:**

Like Watermelons, honeydew melons are highly sensitive to ethylene, and shouldn't be stored with high ethylene producers. Cantaloupes are actually high ethylene producers, so these melons should not be stored together.

Musk melons (cantaloupe) and honeydew melons can be stored for 7 to 10 days.

# Pears



## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Storing pears will actually help to ripen them. Pears don't ripen while on the tree. If pears are left on the tree to ripen, they will ripen from the inside out, making the center mushy by the time the outside is ready to eat.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

In order to reach their optimum eating quality, pears need a period of cold storage (34°F to 38°F or 1°C to 3°C for a couple of weeks) followed by room temperature storage for 3 to 4 days. Pears that have been sold at a supermarket may have already been through a period cold storage during transport.

Once ripe, pears should be eaten or stored in the refrigerator for no more than 2 or 3 days.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Pears are highly ethylene sensitive. It may be possible to speed the ripening process by storing pears with an apple. Pears are also high ethylene producers so they should not be stored with other foods that are sensitive. Mushrooms, cucumbers, and watermelon are examples of ethylene sensitive foods.

Pears lose moisture quickly. Wrapping individual pears in newspaper will prolong the time they can be stored after they are ripe.

# Stone Fruit

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Apricots, cherries, peaches, plums and nectarines are all highly perishable. Care must be taken when storing stone fruit so that freshness and flavor are preserved. These fruits all continue to ripen after being picked. If you have fruit that is not quite ripe, store it at room temperature until it reaches its peak. If the fruit is stored at cooler temperatures (36°F to 50°F) before it is ripe, it will become mushy and lose flavor. Once the fruit is ripe, store it in the refrigerator.

### Tips for Storing Stone Fruits

- Do not stack fruit more than 2 layers deep
- Avoid plastic bags as moisture build up can result in mold

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

These fruits can generally be kept for only 1 to 2 weeks.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Cherries are not very sensitive to ethylene, but apricots, peaches, plums, and nectarines are all highly sensitive. Do not store these fruits with high ethylene producers such as apples or kiwis.



# Vegetables



Should you ever store potatoes and onions together?

Storage compatibility combined with unfavourable storage conditions can result in flavour loss or worse. Strong flavours and smells can be passed to vegetables stored nearby. Textures can be damaged, becoming fibrous and woody or limp and wilted.

On the other hand, proper storage can actually improve the taste of some foods.



# Asparagus

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## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Storing asparagus can be tricky because it is very sensitive to its environment.

Asparagus is sensitive to the cold and can become damaged at temperatures at or below 32°F (0°C). On the other hand, prolonged storage at temperatures above 50°F (15°C) will cause the asparagus to get tough.

Place asparagus upright in a jar with about an inch of water. Cover loosely with plastic and store in the refrigerator.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Store asparagus for up to 10 days

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Exposure to ethylene gas can cause asparagus to become tough.

# Beans

## **FRESH BEANS**

### **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Fresh beans are highly perishable. They need to be stored in a cold moist environment to prevent them from wilting or drying out. The easiest thing to do is to store your beans in the refrigerator crisper in a plastic container or a perforated plastic bag.

### **Tips:**

- Don't trim the beans before storing.
- Don't wash beans before storing
- Before using the green beans, wash them under running water.
- Trim the ends of the beans by snapping them off or cutting them with a knife.

### **STORAGE DURATION:**

Fresh beans can generally be kept for 8 to 12 days.



## **DRY BEANS:**

### **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Dried beans should be stored in dry, dark, cool locations. Glass jars are great for storing beans. Ideally, they should be kept off the floor and out of reach of rodents or other pests.

Exposure to oxygen can cause the beans to turn rancid. To prevent this, remove all of the air if you are storing beans in plastic bags. If you are using glass or plastic jars, you can buy oxygen absorbing packets to place in each jar.

### **STORAGE DURATION:**

Dry beans such as kidney beans, navy beans, and pinto beans are very easy to store, and can be kept for years.

# Beets

## **BEET ROOTS:**

### **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

The beet roots can be stored in a plastic bag wrapped tightly around the beets. Make sure to squeeze out as much air as possible. Removing the tops from beets will greatly extend their storage life. Leave about 2 inches of stem to prevent the beets from “bleeding”.

Don't wash beets before storing them.

### **STORAGE DURATION:**

Store the beet roots in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks.

## **BEET TOPS:**

### **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Beet tops should also be stored in the refrigerator. Store using a perforated plastic bag.

### **STORAGE DURATION:**

The beet tops can be kept for about 4 days.

## **NOTES:**

Beets are versatile vegetables and there are many ways in which they can be preserved if you cannot use them while they are fresh. Beets can be canned, pickled, frozen or even dried.

# Broccoli

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Washing before storing broccoli may lead to bacterial head rot. Broccoli that is not refrigerated becomes fibrous and woody.

Store unwashed heads of broccoli in the crisper section of the refrigerator in an open or perforated plastic bag.

Older broccoli may develop strong undesirable flavors. It will also have lower nutrient levels.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

If it is fresh, broccoli can be stored for up to 2 weeks. Still, it is best to try and use it within 3-5 days.

## **BROCCOLI STEMS:**

Don't throw away the broccoli stems. Once the outer fibrous and woody skins have been peeled away (using a vegetable peeler or paring knife), the stalks are actually very good. I've even heard them called the poor man's asparagus.

## **FREEZING BROCCOLI:**

If you cannot use the broccoli while it is at its best, consider freezing it. This isn't always the best option because freezing can actually magnify undesirable qualities such as woody stems. For best results, freeze the broccoli as soon as possible after harvesting. To freeze the broccoli, perform the following steps:

1. Wash and trim (cut off leaves and woody stems) the broccoli.
2. Split the florets and stalks into bite size pieces.
3. Blanch the broccoli by putting it into boiling water for 3 minutes and then quickly chill by dropping it into ice water.
4. Drain off as much water as possible.
5. Put the broccoli into plastic freezer bags and freeze immediately.

# Brussels Sprouts

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

The following tips will help you with storing Brussels Sprouts:

1. Any wilted or yellow leaves should be gently removed before storing Brussels sprouts.
2. Don't wash the Brussels sprouts before storing them.
3. Loosely wrap your Brussels sprouts in a paper towel and then wrap in a plastic bag. Store the plastic bag in the vegetable crisper of your refrigerator.

Storing at room temperature will quickly turn the leaves yellow.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Brussels sprouts can be stored in the refrigerator for about 2 weeks.

If you can accurately control your storage conditions, storing Brussels sprouts at 32°F (0°C) with a relative humidity of 95 to 100%, will allow you to keep them for up to 5 weeks. However, it should be noted that the longer Brussels sprouts are stored, the stronger their flavour becomes. Many people may find the stronger flavour undesirable.

For long term storage, the best option is to blanch and freeze your Brussels sprouts.

**COMPATIBILITY:**

Brussels sprouts produce more ethylene gas than most other leafy green vegetables, but they are still considered to be low producers of ethylene.

On the other hand, Brussels sprouts themselves are quite sensitive to ethylene. When exposed, the leaves will turn yellow and fall off at a faster rate. Therefore, Brussels sprouts should not be stored together with high ethylene producing fruits and vegetables (like apples).



# Cabbage

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

What are the best methods for storing cabbage? The first thing to know is that you should not wash a cabbage before storing it.

Cabbage should be stored in the refrigerator to retain quality and preserve vitamin C content. The best temperature range for cabbage is 41-46°F (5-8°C). Luckily, this is close to the temperature of most refrigerators (32°F to 40°F or 0°C to 4°C).

Ideally, you should wrap your cabbage in plastic and store in the crisper section of your refrigerator. The plastic will limit the air flow around the cabbage. It also keeps moisture away from the cabbage. If you don't use plastic, your cabbage will still be okay. The outer leaves may discolour, but you can just remove them.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Cabbages can be stored for up to 3 months. Chinese cabbage won't last quite as long.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Cabbage should never be stored with fruit, especially apples. Some fruit gives off ethylene gas as it ripens. This ethylene gas will cause the cabbage leaves to discolour and fall off.

# Carrots

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Unlike a lot of vegetables, where you want to eat them as fresh as possible, storing carrots is actually a good thing to do. Carrots can actually improve in quality with cold storage. As time goes by, more starch is converted into sugar and the carrots become sweeter.

Wash the carrot roots and remove the tops before storing in the refrigerator in a perforated plastic bag (optional).

If your refrigerator space is limited, you can store carrots in a cool location. One option might be to store them in a bucket filled with damp sand.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Under ideal conditions, carrots can be stored for 7 to 9 months. Typically, you probably wouldn't want to store them for more than 1 or 2 months (or you could make carrot cake).

## **CARROT CAKE WITH CREAM CHEESE FROSTING:**



### **CAKE INGREDIENTS:**

- 3/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 2 large carrots, peeled and grated
- 1/4 cup walnuts, chopped (optional)
- 1/4 cup coconut, shredded (optional)
- 1/2 cup raisins (optional)

### **FROSTING INGREDIENTS:**

- One 80z package cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 tsp vanilla
- 1 1/2 cups powdered (icing) sugar

**CAKE DIRECTIONS:**

Whisk oil and sugar together in a large bowl. Add eggs and beat until mixture is thick and yellow.

In a separate bowl, sift together flour, cinnamon, baking soda, and salt. Add to the oil and sugar mixture, and mix until moistened. Stir in carrots, nuts, coconut, and raisins.

Pour into a greased and floured cake pan. Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes (or until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean).

Cool.

Frost.

**FROSTING DIRECTIONS:**

Cream cream cheese and vanilla. Gradually add sugar. Beat until smooth.

# Cauliflower



## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Cauliflower needs to be stored in a high humidity environment but you don't want too much moisture.

Storing cauliflower in an area with low humidity will cause it to turn brown. Excess moisture in the floret clusters will cause it to spoil more quickly.

Don't wash cauliflower before storing it.

Wrap the cauliflower in a damp cloth or paper towel, and then refrigerate, stem side down, in a perforated plastic bag.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Cauliflower can be stored for 2 to 4 weeks.

Pre-cut cauliflower loses its freshness faster. You could probably keep raw pre-cut cauliflower in a plastic bag for 5 to 7 days.

Leftover cooked cauliflower can be stored for 2 or 3 days.

# Cucumbers

## **SHORT TERM STORAGE (FRESH CUCUMBERS):**

Cucumbers from the supermarket are often waxed to seal in moisture. Cucumbers that have not been waxed can be tightly wrapped in plastic wrap for the same reason.

To store cucumbers, first wipe them clean with a damp cloth.

Cucumbers should be stored in a cool (but not cold) environment. The ideal storage environment would have a temperature of 50°F to 55°F (10°C to 13°C) and a relative humidity of 95%. If cucumbers are stored for long periods at temperatures below 40°F (5°C), they will develop pitting and get soft and mushy. That said, it is still okay to store cucumbers in the vegetable crisper of your refrigerator for a few days.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Cucumbers can be stored for about 2 weeks.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Cucumbers Produce very low amounts of ethylene, but they are very ethylene sensitive. Because of this, cucumbers should never be stored with high ethylene producers like apples, pears, or tomatoes

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## **LONG TERM STORAGE (PICKLING):**

Don't freeze cucumbers. The best long term storage solution for cucumbers is to pickle them. There are particular varieties of cucumber that are best suited to pickling, however, any variety can be pickled. Cucumbers can be pickled by fermenting or with a vinegar solution, then processed in a boiling water bath.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Pickled cucumbers can keep for up to a year.

# Leeks

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Leeks are part of the same family as onions and garlic. They do give off odors that can be absorbed by other foods.

However, unlike onions and garlic, leeks can (and should) be stored in the refrigerator. Before storing leeks, trim any bruised or damaged leaves and roots. Do not wash leeks before storing them in a perforated plastic bag in your refrigerator's vegetable crisper. Storing leeks in plastic helps them hold onto moisture and keep the odor from spreading to other foods.

Ideal conditions for storing leeks are:

- Temperature: 32°F (0°C)
- Relative Humidity: 90-95%

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Leeks can be stored for about 1 week.

Leeks can be frozen. Leeks do not need to be blanched before freezing however, they should be washed and sliced. To maintain the best possible flavour, the leeks should be cooked as soon as they are removed from the freezer. Don't allow them to thaw.

Leeks can be frozen for about 5 months.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Leeks produce very little ethylene and are only moderately sensitive to ethylene produced by other fruits and vegetables. When leeks are exposed to ethylene gas they tend to soften and decay a bit faster.

# Onions

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Onions need to be stored in a cool, dry, and dark location. You might have an area in the basement, or a dark corner in your garage that could be used. The best temperature would be between 40°F (5°C) and 50°F (10°C). If the temperature is too warm, the onions will sprout. It is okay to eat an onion that has sprouted. Just cut out the green parts.

Often onions will be sold in mesh bags. These bags are ideal for storing onions. Alternatively, you could use baskets or paper bags, but you need to ensure the air is free to flow around the onions.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Onions can be stored for 1 to 2 months.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

You should try to avoid storing onions with other fruits and vegetables. Onions can have a strong odor that can be absorbed by other produce (apples and potatoes will pick up the onion smell and taste).

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## **HOW DO YOU STORE GREEN ONIONS?**

Green onions and scallions need to be stored in a perforated plastic bag in the refrigerator. They can be stored for 1 to 2 weeks. Alternatively, you can store green onions in a glass with some water. They will actually continue to grow.



# Parsnips

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Like carrots, parsnips become sweeter with cold storage because more starch is converted to sugar. The following tips for storing parsnips will help you get the best flavor from these vegetables.

Store parsnips in a cool, humid environment. Ideally, parsnips should be stored under the following conditions 1:

- Temperature: 32°F (0°C)
- Relative Humidity: 90-95%

Parsnips can be stored in a perforated plastic bag in the vegetable crisper of your refrigerator. If the green tops are still attached, they should be removed before storing your parsnips. Otherwise, they will draw moisture from the roots.

Do not wash parsnips before storing.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Cooked parsnips can be refrigerated and used within 3 days.

Parsnips can be frozen for long term storage. To freeze parsnips, first wash and peel them. Blanch them in boiling water for 2 minutes and then immediately cool in ice water. Drain the parsnips and pack into freezer bags. Parsnips can be frozen for 8 to 10 months.

Fully cooked parsnip purée may also be frozen for up to 10 months.

Parsnips can be stored for several weeks (up to 4 months).

# Peas

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

There really isn't much to say about storing peas. The best thing to do is eat peas as quickly as possible after they have been picked.

If you need to store peas, keep them in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Peas can be stored in the refrigerator for 2 – 4 days.

Most types of peas can be frozen, canned, or even dried. They will keep for up to 12 months in any of these forms.

# Peppers

## **SELECTION:**

Before storing peppers, you want to make sure you have chosen the best ones. When selecting peppers, choose ones with bright, vivid colors and firm skin. Avoid any with wrinkled, soft or bruised areas.

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Peppers are very sensitive to cold and may be damaged stored at temperatures below 41°F (5°C). However, they will still last about a week stored in the refrigerator. They should be stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator.

Peppers will last longer if they are kept dry. Don't wash the peppers before storing them.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Green bell peppers will usually last longer than red bell peppers.

Chili peppers have a much longer shelf life than sweet bell peppers. You can store unwashed ripe chili peppers in the refrigerator for several weeks.

Store peppers for about 1 week.

# Potatoes

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

First, some things to avoid when storing potatoes:

- Warm temperatures will encourage sprouting in potatoes.
- Light will cause the potatoes to turn green.
- Potatoes stored in dry environment will become withered.

It is best to store potatoes in a cool, dark, well ventilated, and humid location.

If a potato develops sprouts, just remove them with a knife prior to cooking.

If your potatoes have been peeled or cut, and you are not going to cook them immediately, you can soak them in water to prevent them from turning dark.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

If stored at 40°F (4°C) at 95% humidity, potatoes can last between 5 and 10 months.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Potatoes can pick up odors from other items (like onions) stored next to them. For this reason, potatoes need to be stored in isolation.

# Radishes

## **BUYING RADISHES:**

When buying radishes, there are usually two options:

1. Radishes can be found sold in bunches with the tops attached. These are the freshest radishes and can also be more expensive.
2. Pre-packaged radishes are also commonly available. These radishes have a longer shelf life and can be a cheaper option.

Look for radishes that have a firm, brightly colored root and healthy leaves. Avoid radishes that feel spongy or look wilted.

## **PREPARING RADISHES FOR STORAGE:**

Bunched radishes should be stored by first removing the leaves and then wrapping the roots in plastic.

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Radishes are not sensitive to chilling, and should be stored in cold conditions in the refrigerator.

If your radishes are getting old and not quite firm, they can be revived by immersing them in ice water for an hour or two before serving.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Store radishes in the refrigerator for up to 3 weeks.

# Salad Greens

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Lettuce, spinach, swiss chard and other salad greens are highly perishable and wilt easily. However, because different they have different characteristics, different methods are required for storing salad greens.

## **HARDY GREENS:**

Hardier salad greens like Romaine and leaf lettuce, spinach and chard, can be washed and thoroughly dried before storing. If there is too much moisture present during storage, salad greens will get slimy and brown. Store them in the crisper section of the refrigerator, loosely packed in a perforated plastic bag or a damp cloth.

## **DELICATE GREENS:**

More delicate greens such as arugula and water cress should not be washed before storing. If you buy these with the root attached, wrap the roots in a damp paper towel, and then store the whole thing in a perforated plastic bag.

## **Storing Salad Greens**

- Romaine lettuce will keep for 5 to 7 days (maybe up to 10 days),
- Boston and leaf lettuce for 2 to 3 days,
- Delicate greens like arugula and water cress should be used as soon as possible.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Store salad greens away from ethylene-producing fruits like apples, bananas and pears. The ethylene gas will cause the leaves to turn brown.

# Summer Squash

Summer squash refers to members of the squash family that are harvested while they are still immature and the rind is still tender and edible. The summer squash family includes:

- zucchini (or courgette)
- yellow summer squash (yellow zucchini)
- pattypan squash (scallop squash)

Now, anyone who has ever tried to grow their own zucchini knows that you cannot grow just a few. You end up with tonnes of squash! So, what is the best way to store your zucchini or summer squash?

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Because the skins are soft, these types of squash are extremely susceptible to damage while handling. Any bruising can reduce the vitamin (especially vitamin C) content of the squash.

Summer squash varieties should be wiped clean with a damp cloth before storing. Make sure the squash is completely dry and then wrap in a plastic bag, squeezing out as much air as possible.

Store in the vegetable crisper of the refrigerator.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Summer squash can be stored for about 5 days.

# Sweet Corn

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

What are the best methods of storing sweet corn? Really, the best thing to do is buy the freshest corn you can find, and eat it as soon as possible. Half of the sugar in an ear of corn turns to starch within three days of harvest. With some sweeter varieties, this may take a little longer but after about a week, the corn will lose its sweetness.

Corn needs to be refrigerated as quickly as possible after harvest.

The corn should be stored in a perforated plastic bag to prevent moisture loss.

Storage Duration:

Store sweet corn for up to 1 week in the refrigerator.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Do not remove the husks since they will protect the corns flavour. Corn will absorb odors from other items (especially onions).

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## **FREEZING SWEET CORN:**

If you happen to have too much, the best method of storing sweet corn would be to freeze it. Frozen whole corn on the cob can be kept for up to one year. Frozen corn kernels can be kept for two to three months.



# Tomatoes

## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Ripe tomatoes should be stored at room temperatures. Storing tomatoes in the refrigerator will cause them to lose flavour and become soft. If possible, tomatoes should be stored spaced apart from each other, so any fungi that might appear will not instantly spread to rot the other fruits.

Tomatoes that are not quite ripe can be ripened by placing them in a paper bag with an apple or banana. Keep the bag at room temperature and make sure it is not exposed to direct sunlight.

If the tomatoes are green, wrap them individually in newspaper and store them at room temperature in a single layer until they ripen.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Ripe tomatoes will last 4 to 6 days.

Once you cut tomatoes, they need to be stored in the refrigerator and you have one or two more days maximum to eat them.

# Turnips and Rutabagas

Turnips and rutabagas are often confused with one another. If you have trouble telling the difference, these tips may help.

Turnips have white skin and purplish top. It is sometimes called white turnip.

Rutabagas have a thin, pale yellow skin with smooth, waxy leaves. Rutabagas can be called everything from “yellow turnip” to “swede” to “neep”. It is also sometimes even referred to as just a “turnip”.

## **FRESH TURNIPS AND RUTABAGAS:**

### **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

If you happen to have turnips or rutabagas with the tops still attached, they can be stored in a cold (32°F or 0°C) humid environment (your refrigerator). They need to be stored on shelves or in baskets so that there is good air circulation around them.

### **STORAGE DURATION:**

These turnips can be stored for 4 to 6 months.

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## **WAXED TURNIPS AND RUTABAGAS:**

### **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Often stores will sell rutabagas that have been coated with wax. This is done to prevent moisture loss. If they are not coated with wax, wrap them tightly in plastic.

### **STORAGE DURATION:**

Store in the refrigerator for up to 1 month.

# Winter Squash & Pumpkins



## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Before storing winter squash and pumpkins, wipe the shell clean with a damp cloth.

Winter squash likes to be stored under cool (but not cold), dry conditions. For best results, try to store squash and pumpkins at temperatures between 50°F (10°C) and 55°F

(13°C). Ensure there is adequate air circulation around the squash. Store them on shelves and avoid storing them on a cold concrete floor.

When it is time to use your pumpkins, there are many options, including soups, pies, cupcakes, and even toasted pumpkin seeds.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Squash can be stored for 1 to 6 months, depending on the variety.

- Acorn squash - 1 to 2 months
- Butternut squash – 2 to 3 months
- Hubbard squash – 3 to 6 months
- Pumpkins – 2 to 3 months

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

Do not store winter squash or pumpkins with ethylene producing fruits like apples or pears. The ethylene will cause rotting, shortening the shelf life.



# Herbs and Spices



Herbs are a great way to add flavour to your cooking. Of course, they taste the best when they are used moments after harvesting. If you are not lucky enough to have your own herb garden, then you are going to want to store herbs when you bring them home from the grocery store or market. How you store them really depends on the type of herbs you have.

# Herbs



## **SHORT TERM STORAGE:**

### **STORING HERBS IN THE REFRIGERATOR:**

Many herbs can be easily stored in the refrigerator by following a few easy steps:

1. Poke some holes in a zippered plastic bag.
2. Put a dry paper towel in the bag.
3. Fill the bag loosely with dry leaves or stems.
4. Zip the bag 3/4 of the way shut.
5. Keep the bag in the refrigerator crisper drawer for 3 to 5 days.
6. When you are ready to use the herbs, wash and spin dry the leaves.

This method works particularly well for chervil, chives, cilantro, dill, fennel leaves, marjoram, mint, oregano, parsley, rosemary, sage, and thyme.

Never store basil in the refrigerator. Refrigeration ruins basil. The leaves will lose their flavour when stored at temperatures below 50°F. The leaves will turn black at temperatures below 45°F.

The best way to keep basil is to place the freshly picked stems in a glass of water out of direct sunlight. The water needs to be changed everyday. If left in the water long enough, the stems will start to form roots. You can then plant these cuttings to grow a whole new basil plant.

## **LONG TERM STORAGE:**

If you need to store herbs long term, you generally have two options: drying or freezing.

### **DRYING HERBS:**

Dried herbs can be kept and used for up to 12 months. Following these instructions will provide the best results:

1. Gather small bunches of the herb so that the group of stems is about 2 cm (a little less than 1 inch) across.
2. Strip the leaves from the bottom quarter of the stems.
3. Tie a piece of string or twine tightly about 2 cm from the end of the stems.
4. Hang the herbs upside down in a warm, dark, dry, dust free location.
5. When the leaves become dry and crumbly, strip the off the stems and put them in glass jars.

Note that not all herbs are suitable for drying. Basil, dill, parsley, cilantro, fennel and chervil are not suitable for drying.

Herbs that dry well include:

- rosemary
- sage
- oregano
- marjoram
- thyme
- winter savory
- tarragon
- chamomile
- mint

## **FREEZING HERBS:**

Sometimes (especially when you have a lot), freezing herbs is the only option. Basil, dill, parsley, cilantro, fennel and chervil can be frozen using the following method:

1. Place 2 cups of clean leaves (stems removed) into a blender or food processor.
2. Add 1/2 cup olive oil.
3. Process until a loose purée is formed. You may need to add an extra tbsp or two of olive oil.
4. Pour the purée into ice cube trays and freeze.
5. Once they are frozen, pop the cubes out of the tray and wrap them in plastic. Then store them back in the freezer in an airtight container.





# Miscellaneous



Often there are other foods we'll want to store. These foods don't always fit nicely into the fruits or vegetables categories. Garlic and walnuts are two examples.

# Garlic



## **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

When storing garlic, it needs to be kept in a dry, dark location that has ample air circulation.

Never freeze garlic as this will change the texture and the flavour.

## **STORAGE DURATION:**

Whole bulbs of garlic can be stored for several months at room temperature.

Once you start removing cloves from the garlic, its shelf life will start to decrease.

If you have chopped or minced garlic, it can be stored in the refrigerator in an air tight container for 2 to 3 days.

## **COMPATIBILITY:**

It is important to note that although the strong garlic smell will dissipate within a few hours, refrigeration will slow the process. So, the smell will last a bit longer in the refrigerator. Items that absorb odors (like apples) shouldn't be stored near garlic.

# Walnuts

Walnuts contain oil and because of that they can easily turn rancid. Light, moisture and heat will all reduce the shelf life of your walnuts by causing the oils to change structure. Walnuts should smell mildly nutty and have a sweet taste. If they smell bad, they are probably rancid and you should throw them away.

To ensure the best taste, wait to shell or chop walnuts until you're ready to use them.

Walnuts thaw quickly at room temperature and can actually be used straight out of the refrigerator or freezer.

Occasionally we hear of cases where walnuts have been contaminated with bacteria (such as E. Coli). If you suspect this is the case for walnuts you have stored, throw them away. In both the US and Canada, there are government websites that lists all recent food recalls. Make sure that you are not eating anything on these lists.

- [FDA Food Recalls](#)
- [Canadian Food Inspection Agency Food Recalls](#)

## **WALNUTS WITH SHELLS REMOVED:**

### **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Walnuts that have had their shells removed need to be refrigerated or frozen.

### **STORAGE DURATION:**

They can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 6 months.

Walnuts can be stored in the freezer for up to 1 year.

### **COMPATIBILITY:**

When storing walnuts in the refrigerator, you need to keep them in an air-tight container away from other foods. Walnuts easily absorb moisture and odors from other foods, and food with strong odors (fish, onions) can seriously affect the taste of walnuts.

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## **WALNUTS IN THE SHELL:**

### **STORAGE CONDITIONS:**

Walnuts in the shell should be stored in a plastic bag in a cool dry place. Do not store them in the vegetable crisper of your refrigerator because the humidity will cause them to deteriorate much faster.

### **STORAGE DURATION:**

Walnuts in the shell can be stored for up to 3 months.

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## **WALNUT OIL:**

Walnut oil should be stored in a cool, dark place for up to 3 months. To prevent walnut oil from becoming rancid, refrigeration is best.



# Contact Information

If you have any questions or comments about the content of this ebook, please feel free to contact me.

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I'd love to hear from you.

Thanks for reading.