

Food for Thought

August 2020

How to Freeze Summer Fruit

Summer fruit — think berries, peaches, and nectarines — are some of the easiest produce to preserve and store for later. You will enjoy having local summer fruit on hand during the long winter months to add to breakfast cereals, smoothies or snacks. Follow these easy steps to safely freeze fruit:



Start with clean hands and a clean work surface.

Berries:

- Sort through berries to remove any that are moldy or squished.
- Wash fruit thoroughly, then pat dry with a towel or spin in a salad spinner to remove excess water. This will prevent the fruit from clumping together in the freezer.
- Remove tops/hulls from berries

Stone fruit: includes cherries, peaches, nectarines, etc.

- Wash the fruit thoroughly and dry well with a towel.
- Remove pits
- Remove any brown spots
- Cut the fruit into sixths.

Arrange and freeze the fruit:

- Arrange berries or slices on a large baking sheet and freeze until solid. This method helps to make sure the fruit will not stick together during freezing.

Pack the fruit

- Once frozen, pack the fruit into freezer-grade containers and use them within 8-12 months.
- Use containers that are moisture-resistant and that will not crack when frozen. Good examples are freezer-grade plastic bags and rigid freezer containers or freezer jars.
 - Plastic freezer bags are made specifically to be moisture resistant and are a heavier plastic than standard reclosable plastic bags.
 - Plastic rigid containers are made to be crack-resistant, can be reused, and can be stacked on top of each other and can save space in your freezer. Rigid containers are not plastic containers like the ones yogurt or cottage cheese come in.
 - Covers for rigid containers should fit tightly.
 - Glass jars should be made for freezing and canning. Choose wide-mouth jars to make filling them easier.
- Be sure to label your containers with the content and date of freezing before storing them in your freezer.



Fruit Salad

2 cups strawberries

1 cup grapes

6 ounces non-fat lemon yogurt

1 cup blueberries

1 can (8 ounces) pineapple chunks

1. Drain juice from pineapple. Cut grapes and strawberries into halves.
2. Combine strawberries, blueberries, grapes, and pineapple chunks in a large bowl.
3. Drizzle yogurt over fruit. Toss lightly to coat.

Fruit Pizza

1 English Muffin (try whole grain)

2 Tablespoons reduced fat or fat-free cream cheese

2 Tablespoons sliced strawberries

2 Tablespoons blueberries

2 Tablespoons crushed pineapple



1. Split open the English muffin and toast the halves until lightly browned.
2. Spread cream cheese on both halves.
3. Divide the fruit between the two muffin halves and arrange on top of cream cheese.
4. These are best when served immediately. Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

Options:

- Use any combination of fruit for topping the pizza, such as apples, raisins, pears, or peaches.
- No cream cheese? Try peanut butter or sunflower seed butter.
- Sprinkle with nuts or seeds for added crunch.
- Make your own whipped cream cheese for easy spreading. Use an electric hand mixer to gradually beat 4 tablespoons of milk into 8 ounces of cream cheese. To make it fruit flavored, add any chopped, soft fruit (fresh, canned, or frozen) while beating. Store in a covered container in the refrigerator.

Sources: <https://extension.umaine.edu/food-health/2018/07/18/eat-well-summer-2018/>; <https://www.foodhero.org/recipes/healthy-recipes> retrieved 07/30/20

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