

# SAVING THE SEASON



**STORING FOOD** at it's peak of the season can be friendly to your budget and to your palate. Eat locally year round, savor the seasonal flavors, and store the bounty. Use this as a handy guide for processing and storing your produce.

---

Asparagus	Select young, tender stalks with compact tips. Remove or break off tough ends and scales. Wash thoroughly. Blanch medium stalks 4 minutes in boiling water, 5 minutes in steam. Blanch large stalks 5 minutes in boiling water, 6 minutes in steam. Cool and drain dry. Pack without headspace, alternating tips and stem ends of spears.
Beans, green	Select young, tender stringless beans. Wash thoroughly, remove ends, sort for size. Cut into 1- to 2-inch pieces, leave whole, or slice into lengthwise strips. Water blanch 4 minutes. Chill and drain. Dry pack with headspace, or tray pack.
Beets	Select beets 3 inches in diameter or less. Wash; sort for size. Remove tops, leaving 1/2-inch stems. Cook in boiling water until tender: 25-30 minutes for small beets, 45-50 minutes for medium-sized beets. Cool and drain; peel, slice or cube. Dry pack with headspace.
Broccoli	Select tender, dark green stalks. Wash; peel and trim stalks. To remove insects from heads, soak 30 minutes in a solution of 4 teaspoons salt per gallon of water. Rinse and drain. Split lengthwise into pieces not more than 1 1/2 inches across. Blanch in steam 6 minutes or boiling water 4 minutes. Cool and drain. Dry or tray pack without headspace.
Brussel Sprouts	Select green, firm, compact heads. Wash, trim. Soak in salt solution (see broccoli) 30 minutes to drive out insects. Rinse and drain. Water blanch 4-6 minutes depending on size of head. Cool and drain. Dry pack without headspace.
Cabbage	Wash. Trim coarse outer leaves of solid heads. Cut heads into medium or coarse shreds, thin wedges or separate into leaves. Water blanch 2 1/2 minutes. Cool and drain. Dry pack with headspace.
Carrots	Select tender, mild-flavored carrots. Remove tops; wash and peel. Leave whole if small; dice or slice larger carrots 1/4-inch thick. Water blanch whole carrots 6 minutes, diced or sliced carrots 3 minutes. Cool and drain. Dry pack with headspace.
Cauliflower	Choose firm, tender, snow-white heads. Break or cut into pieces 1 inch across. Wash well. Soak 1/2 hour in salt solution (see broccoli) if needed to drive out insects. Rinse and drain. Blanch 4 minutes in boiling water containing 4 teaspoons salt per gallon of water. Cool and drain. Dry pack without headspace.
Corn	Husk, remove silk, wash, and sort for size. Water blanch small ears 8 minutes, medium ears 10 minutes and large ears 12 minutes. Cool and drain. Pack in plastic freezer bags without headspace.
Eggplant	Peel, cut into slices 1/3-inch thick. To preserve color, drop pieces into a solution of 4 teaspoons salt per gallon of water. Water blanch 5 minutes in the same proportions of salt and water. Cool and drain. Tray pack or dry pack in layers separated by sheets of locker paper.

---

# SAVING THE SEASON (CONTINUED)



Greens	Wash young, tender leaves well. Remove tough stems and imperfect parts. Cut in pieces, if desired. Water blanch tender spinach leaves 2 1/2 minutes; beet greens, kale, chard, mustard greens, turnip and mature spinach leaves 3 minutes; and collard greens 4 minutes. Cool and drain. Dry pack with headspace.
Onions	Wash, peel and chop fully mature onions. Water blanch 2 1/2 minutes; cool and drain. Also may freeze without blanching. Tray pack or dry pack with headspace. Use in cooked products. Will keep 3-6 months.
Peas (sugar or snap)	Wash, remove stems, blossom end and any strings. Leave whole. Water blanch 3 1/2 minutes. Cool and drain. Dry pack with headspace, or tray pack.
Peppers	Select firm, crisp, thick-walled peppers. Wash; cut out stems. Cut in half, remove seeds. Cut into strips or rings, if desired. Water blanch halves 4 minutes, slices 3 minutes for tighter packing and use in cooked dishes. Cool and drain. Freeze without blanching for use in salads and as garnishes. Dry pack blanched peppers with headspace.
Potatoes	Wash and peel; remove eyes, bruises, green spots. Cut in 1/4- to 1/2-inch cubes. Water blanch 4-6 minutes. Cool and dry pack with 1/2-inch headspace, or tray pack. For hash browns, cook in jackets until almost done. Peel and grate. Pack and freeze. For French fries, peel and cut in thin strips. Rinse and dry. Dry pack with headspace, or tray pack.
Pumpkins & Winter Squash	Wash; cut into pieces and remove seeds. Cook pieces until soft in boiling water, steam, microwave oven, pressure cooker or 350-400 F oven (cut side down). Cool. Scoop out pulp; mash, blend or put through sieve. Chill thoroughly. Pack with headspace.
Squash	Select young squash with small seeds and tender rind. Wash, cut in 1/2-inch slices. Water blanch 4 minutes. Cool summer and drain. Dry pack with headspace.
Sweet potatoes	Select medium to large mature sweet potatoes that have been air-dried (cured). Sort for size; wash. Cook until almost tender in water, steam, pressure cooker or oven. Cool at room temperature. Peel; cut in halves, slice, or mash. To prevent darkening, dip halves or slices in solution of either 1 tablespoon citric acid or 1/2 cup lemon juice per quart of water for 5 minutes. For mashed sweet potatoes, mix 2 tablespoons orange or lemon juice with each quart. Dry pack with headspace
Tomatoes	Wash ripe, blemish-free tomatoes. Scald 2-3 minutes to loosen skins; peel and core. Cut into pieces and freeze or simmer 10-20 minutes until tender. Cool and dry pack with 1/2-inch headspace.
Turnips (Parsnips & Rutabaga)	Select tender, firm, mild-flavored small to medium turnips or parsnips. Wash, peel, cut into 1/2-inch cubes parsnips Water blanch 3 minutes. Cool and drain. Dry pack with headspace