

Homemade Baby Food

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Rice Cereal 4-6 months+

Vitamins: A, C, B1, B2, Niacin, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium, Iron

¼ cup rice powder (brown rice ground in blender or food processor) (Short grains cook up softer than longer grains)

1 cup water

1. Bring liquid to boil in saucepan. Add the rice powder while stirring constantly.
2. Simmer for 10 minutes, whisking constantly, mix in formula or breast milk and fruits if desired.
3. Serve Warm.

Oatmeal Cereal 6-8 months+

Vitamins: A, C, B1, B2, Niacin, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium, Iron

¼ cup ground oats (do NOT use instant or Quick Cook) (ground in blender or food processor)

¾ - 1 cup water

1. Bring liquid to boil in saucepan. Add the oatmeal powder while stirring constantly.
2. Simmer for 10 minutes, whisking constantly, mix in formula or breast milk and fruits if desired.
3. Serve Warm.

Barley Cereal 6-8 months+

Vitamins: A, C, B1, B2, Niacin, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium, Iron

¼ cup ground barley (barley ground in blender or food processor)

1 cup water

1. Bring liquid to boil in saucepan. Add the barley powder while stirring constantly.
2. Simmer for 10 minutes, whisking constantly, mix in formula or breast milk and fruits if desired.
3. Serve Warm.

Can Homemade Baby Cereal be Stored in the Refrigerator?

Homemade Baby Cereal may be stored in the refrigerator for up to 72 hours maximum. As with thawing frozen homemade baby cereal, you may find the texture changes. Simply warm the baby cereal and then add liquid of your choice, as needed, to reconstitute to a texture your baby prefers.

Can Homemade Baby Cereals be Frozen?

Yes, you may freeze homemade cereal. You would use the ice cube tray method (or whatever method of freezing you currently use) as you would for other baby food purees. It tends to be easier to grind and then store the uncooked grains and simply cook a day's worth as you go. It often happens that when you thaw the cereal, it becomes rubbery and does not reconstitute well.

Storing Grains You Have Ground for Homemade Baby Cereal:

Grains that you have ground should be stored in an airtight container in a dry area of your cupboard or in the refrigerator. Whole grains may be stored for several months in a cool dry place. If the temperature becomes extremely warm in your home, you may wish to store the grains in the refrigerator.

Milled whole grains, such as rice flour, whole wheat flour, oat flour and the like, should be stored in an air tight container and preferably in your refrigerator. You can store them in a cool dry place however ensure that you check on the status of the grains if you use them infrequently! Since these are whole grain flours, the natural oils that come from the grain may become rancid without refrigeration. When purchasing any type of milled whole grain, it's always best to buy smaller quantities to ensure that your whole grains are used prior to them going rancid.

The same "rules" apply for rice powder or oat powder, barley powder etc. that you have ground (milled) for your homemade baby cereal. You should store it in an air tight container, in a cool dry place but preferably in the refrigerator if your home is warm.

Apricot Puree(using dried un-sulphured apricots) 6-8months+

Vitamins: A, C, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Calcium

1. 1 pound dried apricots
2. 2 c. white grape juice or apple juice.

Plain water is ok but the puree may be a bit bitter. Some babies actually like a bitter taste however. Consider using ½ water or ½ juice if you disagree with the juices or if baby cannot have juice. You can always mix in another fruit such as peaches or bananas and leave out the juice entirely!

3. Bring liquid and fruit to a boil and simmer for 15 minutes.
4. Reserve any left over liquid to use for the puree
5. Place into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing.
6. Add the reserved liquid as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin puree or
7. Add cereal (if desired) to thicken up
8. Note: puree will not freeze solid, but into slightly soft/slightly frozen cubes.

Apples/Applesauce (Use Gala, Braeburn, Rome or Macs) (4)6 months+

Vitamins: A, C, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Magnesium, Calcium

1. Peel, core and cut apple into slices/chunks
2. Place slices or chunks into a pan with just enough water to slightly cover apples
3. Boil/steam until tender; be sure to check on the water level and stir

Apples may be mashed with a potato masher to achieve a smooth applesauce consistency. If your masher will not achieve a puree type of consistency, then follow steps 5 - 7

5. Reserve any left over water to use for thinning out the apples
6. Place into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing.
7. Add the reserved water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin puree
8. Add cereal (if desired) to thicken up the

Ask your pediatrician about adding some cinnamon for new tastes!

HINT! You may also buy an "Adult" jar of Natural applesauce from your local grocers! Make sure you buy Natural Applesauce however! Read the labels if you are unsure. The only ingredients should be apples and water or just apples! A few companies may add ascorbic acid (vitamin C) or citric acid to their Natural Applesauce; this is fine!

Baked Apples 6-8months+

1. Core apple and leave peel on
2. Place a wee bit of butter (if baby is ready for or has had dairy) on the inside of the cored apple (sprinkle a bit of cinnamon in the apple if your desire and if baby is ready for or has had cinnamon)
3. Place in a pan with just enough water to slightly cover apples – about an inch of water
4. Bake in a 400-degree oven for 30 minutes or until tender; be sure to check on the water level.
5. Once baked, either cut apple into little bits and serve as a finger food or mash as directed above in the Apples/Applesauce recipe

Avocado (4)6 months+

Vitamins: A, C, Niacin, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Iron, Magnesium, Calcium

1. Peel and take out the pit of a ripe avocado - do not cook
2. Cut "meat" out and mash with a fork
3. There should be no need to use a machine as just like bananas, avocados have a very soft consistency and texture. Avocados do not need to be cooked.

How to Select an Avocado - When selecting an Avocado, you want a dark green colour with bumpy texture. The fruit should be firm yet yielding when gently pushed. When an avocado is sliced in half, the flesh colour should be a green that gently transforms into a buttery yellow around the pit. Visit our Avocado Topic for more recipes and information

Bananas (4)6 months+

Vitamins: A, C, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Selenium, Magnesium, Calcium

1. Peel ripe bananas - do not cook
2. Place banana in a food processor/food mill or blender and puree
3. You can also mash the banana in a bowl using a regular fork – heat in microwave for 25 seconds prior to mashing for extra softness
4. Add formula/breast milk or water to thin or add cereal (if desired) to thicken up.

Bananas and banana puree may be frozen. Using a bit of lemon juice will help to prevent the browning of a banana (and most other fruits) when freezing it. It is the citric acid or the ascorbic acid that aids in the preservation of fruits. The exposure to oxygen and the enzymes in a banana (and most other fruits) are what cause it to go from green to yellow, and then brown to black, as it ripens. A blackish or brownish banana is not necessarily rotten or bad. Whole bananas (still in the peel) can be frozen, and then defrosted and mashed.

Blueberries* 8-10 months+

Vitamins: A, C, K, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Sodium, Phosphorus, Iron, Magnesium, Calcium

1. 1/2 pint of blueberries (fresh or frozen)
2. 4 c. water
3. Bring water to a boil. Add blueberries and simmer for 15 minutes until soft.
4. Reserve liquid and use a slotted spoon to transfer blueberries to blender/processor/mixer and puree.
5. If needed, add some of the liquid to blueberries.
6. Add cereal (if desired) to thicken up

*You can save the liquid to serve as juice or to blend in with cereals etc..

Cherries 8 months+

Vitamins: A, C, K, Folate, Niacin

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium, Iron

1/2 pound fresh cherries

1 cup water

1. Wash, clean and pit the cherries. Be sure to remove the stems!
2. Drop the cherries into a saucepan with 1 cup of water.
3. Bring to a boil and simmer for 20 minutes until the juices run freely and the cherries become soft.
4. Allow to cool and then puree in a blender or food processor.

You may freeze cherries but they must be pitted first! Unpitted cherries take on a flavor like almond when frozen. You may freeze them cut in half, diced or stewed. As with any other fruit, the fruit may remain in the freezer longer if it is frozen in it's near original state. Freezing changes the cellular structure of fruits as does cutting peeling etc. Frozen whole or halved cherries will last longer than stewed or diced cherries.

Pit cherries by inserting the tip of a vegetable peeler in the stem-end of the fruit; rotate around the pit and scoop it out. You may then cut the cherries into small dices or blend them up in a food processor or blender. Be sure to carefully watch your older baby when offering cherries as finger food. You may want to squish the cherry dices to help baby mash and chew the cherries.

Cranberries 8-10months+

Vitamins: A, C, B1, B2, Niacin

Minerals: Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium, Iron

1 16 oz. package cranberries (fresh or frozen)

1 cup of water

1. Add water to a pot and bring to a boil - add cranberries and return to a boil - lower heat and simmer on low until cranberries "pop"; approx. 15 minutes. Continue cooking until skins peel away from the berry.
2. Strain cranberries through a sieve or small weave mesh strainer.
3. Transfer to your preferred blender or food processor and puree until cranberries acquire the texture appropriate for your infant.

This puree may be very tart and you may wish to add a spice or apple juice to help cut the tartness of the cranberry. Some infants absolutely love tart flavors! Don't shy away from offering cranberry sauce/puree because you think your baby may dislike tart flavors!

Kiwi 8-10 months+*

Vitamins: A, C, K, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium

1. Peel ripe kiwi
2. Puree or mash with a fork - add cereal (if desired) to thicken and achieve a smooth, thin consistency.

Kiwi does not need to be cooked and it should not need to be de-seeded as it is typically introduced at an age where baby can tolerate raw fruits and a bit of texture.

*Kiwi is high in Vitamin C and is also acidic, you may wish to wait to introduce it when baby is 10 months or older.

Melons (cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon) 8-10 months+

Vitamins: A, C, K, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium

1. 1/4 cup sliced, soft, seedless melon, rind removed
2. Puree or mash with a fork - add cereal (if desired) to thicken up the melon achieve a smooth, thin consistency.

**Melon does not need to be cooked as it is typically introduced at an age where baby can tolerate raw fruits. Melon may be steamed to tender and then mashed if you prefer without harming it.

Mango* Creamy Puree 6-8months+

Vitamins: A (1262 IU in one cup!), C, E, K, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium

If your infant is currently not eating yogurt and/or you do not wish to use any juice, simply peel, de-seed and mash the mango with some water until the proper consistency for Your Infant is achieved.

1 Ripe Mango

Plain or Vanilla Yogurt OR

Water, Apple or Pear Juice

Preparation Directions:

Peel, De-seed and Mash Mango until smooth

Add Yogurt or Water or Juice until the proper consistency for Your Infant is achieved.

*Mango does not need to be cooked as it is typically introduced at an age where baby can tolerate raw fruits. Mango may be steamed to tender and then mashed if you prefer without harming it.

You may use mango as a great Baby Finger Foods! Simply peel, de-seed and then cut into dices or chunks that are manageable for your baby! You may wish to coat the mango pieces with "cheerio dust", wheat germ or another cereal "dust" to help baby easily pick up the bits!

Peaches 6-8months+

Vitamins: A, C, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium

Steam or Bake or Blanch Peaches - these methods work for nectarines, plums and pears as well. We HIGHLY recommend giving baked peaches a try at least once! You will find they are more tasty when baked. Why not try baking for all fruits?

Steam Peaches - Method 1

1. Scrub fruit clean and carve an X into 1 side of the fruit
2. Place X side down in a pan with an inch of water
3. Bring water to a boil and steam until soft and tender
4. Peel skin from fruit and remove pits and/or seeds
5. move to step #6 below

Steam Peaches - Method 2

1. Peel fruit
2. Pit the peach
3. Cut the peach into dices
4. Steam until soft and tender then
5. move to step #6

Bake

1. Halve the fruit and place "open" side down in a pan filled with 1 inch of water
2. Bake at 400F until soft and tender and/or puckering of the skin appears.
3. Peel skin from fruit and remove pits and/or seeds (you may also leave the skin on your baked peaches - the skin may simply melt into the fruit!)
4. move to step #6

"Blanch"

1. Bring 3 or 4 cups of water to a rolling boil
2. Add cleansed peaches or nectarines to the boiling water and boil the fruit for 3-5 minutes
3. Remove fruit to a bowl of cold water, allow to cool for 2 minutes
4. Slip off the skins and then take out the pit
5. move to step #6

Moving to Step 6

6. Reserve any left over water to use for thinning out the fruits
7. Peel off skin if you have not done this already. Place fruit(s) into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing.
8. Add the reserved water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin puree
9. Add cereal (if desired) to thicken up.

Pear (4)6 months+

Vitamins: A, C, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium

Peel and cut into chunks so as to avoid the little seed portion. Steam gently until tender;

Place in a blender/food processor and puree until smooth. You may be able to just use a fork too!

Use the leftover cooking water if needed but Pears tend to be very runny and watery without adding liquid.

Add some baby cereal to thicken if needed.

Plums 6-8months+

Vitamins: A, C, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium

Peel, pit and cut into chunks

Steam until tender in a scant amount of water.

Puree using the leftover cooking liquid. You may need to mix in another fruit as plum purée has a tendency to be rather tart and/or bitter

Papaya 6-8months+

Vitamins: A, C, , B1, B2, Niacin, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Calcium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Iron

To prepare a papaya (ensure it is fully ripened!), peel, de-seed and then mash into a consistency your baby will tolerate.

Some parents who have infants with sensitive tummies will give fruits a gentle steaming to help break down the sugars and fibers for easier digestion. If you feel this is the case for your infant, chunk the papaya and then steam for 5-10 minutes until very soft.

Prunes 6-8months+

Vitamins: A, C, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium

1. Soak dried prunes in warm water until they plump up or steam gently.
2. Once plump and tender, toss into food processor or blender and begin to puree.
3. Add liquid without sparing any. Prunes tend to become a pasty gluey consistency when pureed and the more water you add, the easier it is to puree to a texture your baby will tolerate.

Pumpkin 6-8months+

Vitamins: A (12230 IU in 1 cup!), C, K, Folate, Niacin

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium, Iron

1. Cut sugar pumpkin (the kind meant to be baked and eaten!) in half, scoop out seeds
2. Place an inch of water in a baking pan, then place the halves "face" down in the pan. Check on water level while baking
3. Bake in a 375-425 F degree oven for 40 minutes to 1 hour, or until the "shell/skin" puckers and halves feel soft then scoop squash "meat" out of the shell
4. Place pumpkin "meat" into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing.
5. Add water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency.
6. You can also peel the pumpkin, scoop out the seeds and then cut into chunks and boil/steam until tender (like when boiling potatoes for mashed potatoes) then follow steps 4 and 5.

HINT! You may also buy a can of pumpkin from your local grocers! Make sure you buy Pumpkin and NOT Pumpkin Pie mix however.

Strawberry 12 months+

Vitamins: A, C, B1, B2, K, Folate, Niacin

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium, Iron

2 cups fresh strawberries

1. Wash strawberries and remove leaves and stems
2. Slice strawberries in half
3. Mash or puree as needed for your baby!

Asparagus 8-10 months+

Vitamins: A, C, Niacin, Folate, B1, B6, E, K

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium, Iron

Prep the asparagus by holding one asparagus spear with one hand in the middle of the spear and the other hand at the stem. Bend the spear until it snaps. Toss out the lower end that snapped off. Repeat until all your asparagus is "snapped".

1. Wash asparagus under cool water.
2. Place asparagus, "flower" side up into a steamer basket.
3. Steam asparagus until very tender and mushy or baby food puree.
3. Puree the asparagus when finished steaming. Place into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing.
4. Add water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency.

Hint: Your baby's urine may change to a very bitter smell and quite possibly change colour due to the asparagus!

Beans - Green (4)6-8 months+ (this method may be used for Peas as well)*

Vitamins: A, C, K, Niacin, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Sodium, Phosphorus, Iron, Magnesium, Calcium

1. If using Fresh Beans, snap the ends off the beans and wash the beans. If using Fresh Peas, open the pods and scrape out the peas from the pod. If using frozen of either Peas or Green Beans, cook according to package directions.
2. Place fresh beans into a steamer basket in a pan with a just enough water to slightly show through in the basket.
3. Steam until very tender; be sure to check on the water level.
4. Reserve any left over water to use for thinning out the beans.
5. Place into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing. It is best to use the setting that makes the finest liquid purees - green bean and pea skins are rather difficult to completely puree. ***Using a blender rather than a food processor or stick mixer might be better as well. ***
6. Add the reserved water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency
7. You may wish to push the green beans (or peas) through a sieve or mesh strainer to get rid of any remaining skins. 1. If using Fresh Beans, snap the ends off the beans and wash the beans. If using Fresh Peas, open the pods and scrape out the peas from the pod. If using frozen of either Peas or Green Beans, cook according to package directions.

Beans/Legumes - Dried (lentils, split peas, black beans, etc.) 8-10 months+

Vitamins: A, C, Niacin, Folate, Thiamin, Riboflavin

Minerals: Potassium, Sodium, Calcium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Iron

1. Purchase the beans at your food shop
2. Follow basic cooking directions on the package – many choose not to soak the beans and the beans cook fine
3. Reserve any left over water to use for thinning out the beans if you wish to puree them
4. Place into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing.
5. Add the reserved water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin puree
6. Add veggies such as carrots, squash etc if desired.

***You may also wish to use a homemade chicken or vegetable stock to cook the beans in. Ensure that no salt is added to the stock! ***

Broccoli 8-10 months+ (same method for Cauliflower)

Vitamins: A (4533 IU), C, E, K, Niacin, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Sodium, Selenium, Phosphorous, Iron, Magnesium, Calcium

1. Wash broccoli under cool water.
2. Chop stems and florets into small pieces; using just the florets will many times yield a smoother puree. Steam until tender.
3. Place into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing.
4. Add water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency

Beets 8-10 months+

Vitamins: A, C, Niacin, Folate, Pantothenic Acid, B6

Minerals: Potassium, Sodium, Calcium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Iron

The medium sized beets are more tender and tasty than the large beets. Many recommend completely bypassing beets if they are over 3-4 inches in diameter. With beets, bigger is not better! Choose unbruised or otherwise unblemished beets. Beets come in all types of colors including red, yellow and of course, that well known purple color! When possible, buy beets that still have their green leafy tops attached as they will remain more fresh! Don't look at the dirt on beets as a negative, seldom will you find nicely washed and shiny beets in your grocery store.

To store beets, cut off the greens and then place in an airtight container or a freezer bag and put them in the "veggie crisper" or the far back of your refrigerator. Beets will remain fresh for about 1 week as long as they are kept cold.

1. Wash then peel the beets (be sure to cut off the tops!) and then cut the beets into small chunks
2. Place chunks into a steamer pan with just enough water visible through the steamer basket. You may also boil them in a scant amount of water if you prefer.
3. Steam until tender
4. Do not reserve any left over water to use for thinning out the beets as Nitrates may seep into the cooking water
5. Place into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing. We find a food processor works best to make a really nice textured beet puree!
6. Add water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency

Carrots 6-8months+

Vitamins: A (19,152 IU), C, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Sodium, Phosphorous, Iron, Magnesium, Calcium

1. Peel carrots and cut into small chunks
2. Place chunks into a steamer pan with just enough water visible through the steamer basket
3. Steam until tender
4. Do not reserve any left over water to use for thinning out the carrots if baby is under 8 months old as Nitrates may seep into the cooking water
5. Place into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing.
6. Add water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency

1. Peel carrots and cut length-wise into thick slivers.
2. Oil a glass casserole dish with Olive Oil and then place the carrots into the glass casserole dish.

3. Bake carrots at 350F for approximately 45 minutes or until carrots have turned fork tender and have changed to a dark orange.
4. Puree, adding water as needed, and serve or freeze. You can also cut the carrots into little bits and serve as finger food. Or, freeze the carrot dices in a freezer bag. This will allow you to serve up some "fast food" - baked carrots for finger foods!

Cauliflower 8-10 months+

Vitamins: A, C, Niacin, Folate, Thiamine, Pantothenic Acid, B6

Minerals: Potassium, Sodium, Calcium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Iron

1. Wash cauliflower under cool water.
2. Peel away the green leaves to get to the "flower"
3. Chop the "flower" into small pieces; using just the florets will many times yield a smoother puree. Steam until tender.
4. Place into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing.
5. Add water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency.

Corn 10-12 months+

Vitamins: A, C, Niacin, Folate, Pantothenic Acid, B6

Minerals: Potassium, Sodium, Calcium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Iron

1. Husk and boil corn on the cob until tender
 2. Shave off corn from the stalk
 3. Place into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing. Use a sieve if needed to get rid of the hulls from the nibbles.
 4. Add water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency
- OR
5. Cook frozen corn (watch for salt) according to package directions
 6. Follow Steps 3 and 4

Eggplant 8-10 months+

Vitamins: A, C, Niacin, Folate, Thiamin, Pantothenic Acid, K

Minerals: Potassium, Sodium, Calcium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Iron

1. Wash and peel eggplant.
2. Cut into 1 inch pieces and steam until tender and mushy.
3. OR slice eggplant in quarters and bake in a 375 degree oven for approx. 30 minutes or until tender.
4. Place into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing.
5. Add water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency

Parsnips 6-8 months+

Vitamins: A, C, Niacin, Folate, Thiamine, Pantothenic Acid, K

Minerals: Potassium, Sodium, Calcium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Iron

1. Wash and peel parsnips.
2. Slice into 1 inch pieces and steam until tender and mushy.
3. or peel parsnips then cut them lengthwise, in half. Lay parsnips on tinfoil and drizzle olive oil over them. Close up the tinfoil and then bake in a 400F degree oven for approx. 30 minutes or until tender.
4. Place cooked parsnips into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing. *Chop or mash if your baby likes texture.*

5. Add water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency
6. You may also serve the roasted or steamed parsnips as a finger food

Peas (green) 6-8months+ (this method may be used for Green Beans as well)*

Vitamins: A (4533 IU), C, Niacin, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Sodium, Selenium, Phosphorous, Iron, Magnesium, Calcium, Zinc

1. If using Fresh Peas, open the pods and scrape out the peas from the pod. If using frozen type of either Peas or Green Beans, cook according to package directions.
2. Place fresh peas into a steamer basket in a pan with a just enough water to slightly show through in the basket.
3. Steam until very tender; be sure to check on the water level.
4. Reserve any left over water to use for thinning out the peas.
5. Place into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing. It is best to use the setting that makes the finest liquid purees - green bean and pea skins are rather difficult to completely puree. Using a blender rather than a food processor or stick mixer might be better as well.
6. Add the reserved water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency
7. You may wish to push the peas (or green beans) through a sieve or mesh strainer to get rid of any remaining skins

* Why can't I get peas and green beans to puree smooth?

If you are using a Food Processor, try the Blender. The Blender seems to work the best for getting Peas into a more fine puree! Peas and green beans are very hard to get pureed into a very fine, smooth consistency. You can put them in a strainer and work out the "skins" if using fresh or you can use frozen for a smoother consistency and minimal effort to work out the "skins".

You may also use beans/legumes (kidney beans, lentils, split peas etc..) if your doctor says it is ok for baby's age.

Please keep in mind that you will never be able to achieve the consistency equal to that of the baby food that comes in jars!

Some parents choose to leave green beans and peas for later introduction, when baby enjoys texture and is able to eat them as Baby Finger Foods

Potato (White) 8-10 months+

Vitamins: A, C, Pantothenic Acid, Niacin, Riboflavin, Thiamine, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium, Iron, Zinc

1. Peel potatoes and cut into small chunks
 2. OR bake in the oven
 3. Place chunks into a pan with just enough water to slightly cover potato
 4. Boil until tender, be sure to check on the water level.
 5. Reserve any left over water to use for thinning out the potatoes
 6. Place into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing.
 7. Keep a close watch on the potatoes while you are pureeing as they may turn into "wallpaper paste" if pureed too much
 8. Add the reserved water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency.
- You may also use breast milk or formula to make the puree if you wish.

Squash (winter)(4)6 months+

Vitamins: A, Folate

Minerals: Calcium, Iron, Potassium

1. Cut acorn, hubbard, or butternut squash in half, scoop out seeds
2. Place an inch of water in a baking pan, then place squash halves "face" down in the pan. Check on water level while baking
3. Bake in a 400 degree oven for 40 minutes or until the "shell/skin" puckers and halves feel soft then scoop squash "meat" out of the shell
4. Place squash "meat" into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing.
5. Add water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency.
6. You can also peel the squash, scoop out the seeds and then cut into chunks and boil/steam until tender (like when boiling potatoes for mashed potatoes) then follow steps 4 and 5

Squash (summer) 6-8months+

Vitamins: A, Folate

Minerals: Calcium, Potassium

1. Choose yellow squash or zucchini that are somewhat small in diameter, as these are the most tender.
2. Wash squash thoroughly and cut into small slices or chunks. Do not remove skins.

(*You may remove skins however an infant over the age of 8 months old should be able to digest squash puree with skins on)

3. Steam until tender then place into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing.
4. Add water as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency

Yams/Sweet Potato (4)6 months+

Vitamins: A (24,877 mg), C, Pantothenic Acid, Niacin, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Sodium, Selenium, Phosphorous, Magnesium, Calcium, Iron, Manganese, Zinc

1. Wash and poke holes in sweet potato with fork then wrap sweet potatoes in tin foil - do not peel for baking/microwaving. (you can also do this in the microwave - only use plastic wrap and cook for 8 minutes on high or until tender)
2. Place in a 400 degree oven and bake for 30 minutes or until soft
3. OR
4. Peel sweet potatoes and cut into small chunks
5. Place chunks into a pan with just enough water to slightly cover potato
6. "Steam" boil until tender, be sure to check on the water level.
7. Reserve any left over water to use for thinning out the sweet potatoes
8. If you have baked your sweet potato, remove skins and use liquid from your preferred source
9. Place sweet potato into your choice of appliance for pureeing and begin pureeing.
10. Add the reserved water or other liquid as necessary to achieve a smooth, thin consistency

Spinach - Steamed** 10 months+ (May be used for Kale and Collards also)

Vitamins: A, C, Pantothenic Acid, Niacin, Riboflavin, Thiamine, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium, Iron, Selenium

1. Thoroughly cleanse fresh spinach and pick out damaged leaves
2. Steam in a pot with a steamer basket insert (water should just peek through the holes of the basket).
3. Leaves will shrink and appear wilted when done.

(DO NOT USE COOKING WATER TO PUREE!)

4. Drain and puree spinach in blender or food processor,
5. Add fresh water until mixture is of the desired consistency.

**Nitrate risk! Do not serve homemade spinach to an infant under 10 months old! Spinach puree MUST be immediately eaten, frozen or stored in the refrigerator! Studies done on spinach and nitrates in particular have shown that with improper storage and preparation, the nitrate levels may actually increase. Proper preparation and immediate use or storing via freezer method will help eliminate this risk in leafy vegetables

Spinach - Sautéed ** 10 months+ (May be used for Kale and Collards also)

1. Thoroughly cleanse fresh spinach and pick out damaged leaves
2. Heat olive oil in a frying pan
3. Place spinach in the pan with the heated olive oil and sauté until tender.
Leaves will shrink and appear wilted when done.
4. Puree spinach in blender or food processor,
5. Add fresh water until mixture is of the desired consistency.

Add some spices such as garlic cloves or powder, basil or onion powder if baby is able to have these spices.

Beef, Pork or Veal Purée (Basic)

Vitamins: A, C, B1, B2, Niacin, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium, Iron

1 cup cold and cooked boneless beef, pork or veal - chopped into chunks no bigger than 1 inch
1/4 c cooking juice or plain water

Place meat chunks in blender or food processor and puree until a powdery mix is formed. Slowly add water and puree further until a smooth consistency is created. Add as much liquid as needed to make a consistency appropriate for your baby! You may add veggies or fruits to this puree as you like.

Chicken or Turkey Purée (Basic)

Vitamins: A, C, B1, B2, Niacin, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium, Iron

1 cup cold and cooked boneless chicken or turkey - chopped into no bigger than 1 inch pieces
1/4 c cooking juice or plain water

Place chicken or turkey chunks in blender or food processor and puree until a powdery mix is formed. Slowly add water and puree further until a smooth consistency is created. Add as much liquid as needed to make a consistency appropriate for your baby! You may add veggies or fruits to this puree as you like.

Fish Purée (Basic) 10-12 months

Vitamins: A, C, B1, B2, Niacin, Folate

Minerals: Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium, Iron

1 cup cooked boneless white fish
1/4 c or plain water

Place fish in blender or food processor and slowly add liquid while pureeing until a smooth consistency is created. Add as much liquid as needed to make a consistency appropriate for your baby!

Egg 8-10 months – Egg Yolks Only, 12 months – whole eggs

Vitamins: A, D, E, B12, Choline, folic acid, B3, Biotin, Inositol, Niacin, B6, Riboflavin, Thiamin

Minerals: Calcium, Sodium, Potassium, Phosphorus, Magnesium, Iron, Zinc

1. Hard-boil an egg
2. Peel shell away and cut in half
3. Scrape or pop out the yolk
4. Mash the yolk and mix in formula, breastmilk, yogurt, applesauce or whatever you choose that is appropriate for your baby.

1. Crack an egg and separate the white from the yolk (you may use the shell for this or use an egg-separator)
 2. Warm olive oil or butter in a frying pan
 3. Scramble the yolk in a bowl with formula, breastmilk, juice or whole milk and transfer to frying pan
 4. Cook over medium heat, scrambling constantly, until thoroughly cooked
- ** You may also add items such as pureed (or small diced & soft cooked) broccoli, carrots, peas etc...makes great finger food!

FREEZING TIMES FOR HOMEMADE BABY PURÉE MEAT CUBES

Baby Food Cubes May Be Safely Kept in the Freezer for 3 Months. It is preferable, but not an absolute must, to use the cubes within 1 month however. Meats are more unstable when frozen so it is best to use Meat Purées as soon as possible!

SELECTING MEATS FOR YOUR BABY

Chicken - Breasts (higher in protein and lower in fat), Thighs/legs (higher in iron and higher in fat)

Beef - Eye of Round roast, Top Sirloin, Lean Fresh Ground beef

Pork - Tenderloins, Pork Loin Roast (boneless - center cut), Center cut Pork Chops

Turkey – Breasts, Thighs, Legs, Ground Turkey (note the same rules applies for white/dark meat with turkey as chicken)

Veal – any cut will suffice

Ham – while really pork, Ham is not the same as eating Pork Tenderloin for ex. A fresh home baked ham is the best. Check all labels for Sodium Nitrite and Salt content prior to purchasing!

Cooking & Puréeing Meats for Baby

Baking is the preferred method and retains the most nutrients.

You can boil/poach or use a crock-pot but *be aware that when any food sits in water or its own juices, nutrients leach into the liquid.

If you do not use the liquid, the nutrients along with the liquid will get tossed out down the drain.

Puréeing Meats for Baby (most tried and true method for the least amount of "grittiness")

Make sure the cooked meat is COLD and is in no bigger than 1-2 inch chunks when you puree. Grind up the meat first until it is almost like a clumpy powder. Add water, formula, or breast milk or the natural cooking juices as the liquid and continue to puree

Add fruits and veggies if you wish

Tofu

Cut tofu into small bite-sized cubes and dust it with crushed cheerios, wheat germ or crushed graham crackers.

Blend it up with a banana and wheat germ and serve by spoon. (You may blend it with any type of fruit(s) like apples, strawberries, blueberries or pears.)

Mash tofu with cottage cheese and seasoning to make a sandwich spread.

HOMEMADE BABY FOOD TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Blender and/or Food Processor: Pureeing, blending, mashing

Stick Mixer: Pureeing smaller jobs or "on-the-go" meals

Grinder: Pureeing smaller jobs or "on-the-go" meals

Ice Cube Trays (or Storage Containers for freezing): Freezing food cubes

Freezer bags: Storing the frozen food cubes from the ice tray.

Strainer/Colander: Holding and draining cooked fruits and vegetables

Small Holed Strainer/Fine Mesh Strainer: Pushing more textured foods through to make a more fine and smooth purée (Good for separating green bean and pea skins from purée)

Steamer Basket: Steaming fruits and vegetable

Masher: Mashing vegetables and fruits when baby gradates to a thicker or more chunky texture (i.e. Potato Masher)

Sharpie or Permanent Marker: Label freezer bags with food cube type and date prepared and frozen

Yes!! The above items are ALL you will need! Easy Peasy!

NOTE: For every type of machine you may use to puree, the secret seems to be in how much food you put in the container baskets to begin with. No appliance will do a good job if over stuffed! Fill the containers less than half way full and add a scant amount of liquid to begin with.

How To Make A Baby Food Purée

1. Start by cooking the vegetable/fruit either by steaming, baking, microwaving or boiling. Steaming maintains the most nutrients. Steaming, baking and boiling all allow for big batches of foods to be made at one time. Microwave if you have a small appliance or for when you plan to puree only a full ice tray of food. Many parents prefer to not use a microwave; we suggest that you steam or bake as the preferred cooking method! Read all about the various Cooking Methods and Baby Food.
2. Take the cooked vegetable or fruit and remove them into the machine you have decided to use for pureeing.
3. Set aside the liquid that the vegetable/fruits were cooked in. This will be the liquid you add to make the puree. (Do not use reserved water from carrots or other high nitrate veggies for a baby under 7 months old! Read more about Nitrates) You may also thin with Formula, Breast Milk or Plain Water. Adding this liquid also helps to preserve any nutrients that may have leached into the water during cooking.
4. Set your machine to puree or grind and begin to mash the vegetables or fruits.
5. As you are pureeing or blending, add the liquid or plain water. You may use formula or breast milk if you so desire. These liquids give a little nutritional boost and add a familiar taste for baby. Pureeing without adding any liquids is also a good idea. Many parents prefer to thin their foods before they will serve them to their babies. We tend to prefer this as well!

NOTE: For every type of machine you may use to puree, the secret seems to be in how much food you put in the container baskets to begin with. No appliance will do a good job if over stuffed! Fill the containers less than half way full and add a scant amount of liquid to begin with.

Stage "1" for the thin watery puree's that make baby's first solids

Use a Blender, a good Hand/Wand/Stick Mixer, a Vita-Mix or a Food Processor.

Use the "liquefy" and/or "purée" settings.

Stage "2" for more thick puree's as baby moves onto more texture

A Blender, a good Hand/Wand/Stick Mixer, a Vita-Mix , a Food Mill/Grinder, a "Ricer", a Potato Masher or a Food Processor should take you through this stage as well. Adjust the settings on your machine to "blend", "mix" and "purée" using more of a pulse than a continual whir.

Stage "3" and beyond for chunky, thick puree's and "table foods"

A Blender, a Vita-Mix, a Food Mill/Grinder, a "Ricer" , a Potato Masher or a Food Processor should take you through this stage as well. Adjust the settings on your chosen appliance to "grind", "mix" and/or "chop", again you should use more of a pulse than a continual whir.

How To Freeze the Baby Food Purée

1. Once you have a nice liquid puree you will then transfer the puree into ice cube trays for freezing/storage.
2. Fill each cube with the puree, as though you were filling the tray with water to make ice cubes.
3. Cover the tray with plastic wrap (foil may be used however is not recommended as shards of the foil may be left on/in the food cubes) and put it in the freezer.

Repeat this process until you have filled all the trays and no puree remains.

4. Each cube is equal to approximately 1 ounce of food, or a 1/8 cup.
5. Once the cubes of puree have set and are frozen, take the trays out of the freezer and transfer the cubes into freezer bags.
6. Be sure to label the bag with the date of preparation as well as the type of food. The baby food cubes should be used within a month of freezing.
7. When it is time to feed baby, simply take out the number of food cubes needed and thaw and then reheat.

The ice cube tray method offers you many advantages.

Each cube is approximately 1+ ounces, allowing you to have an idea of the amount of food your baby is consuming. There is minimal waste as you use only 1 cube at a time and will not have to toss away much food; such as you toss away when using commercial foods. Another advantage is that you probably have ice cube trays on hand and will not need to go out and buy them. Once the purees have been frozen in the trays, you simply pop out the cubes and use as needed. Using this method also allows you to make several trays at a time so your time spent in the kitchen making baby food is decreased. You may transfer the baby food cubes into freezer bags, freeing up your trays for the next batch of food as well as freeing up some freezer space.

How do I freeze bananas/other fruits and stop browning?

Using a bit of lemon juice will help to prevent the browning of a banana (and most other fruits) when freezing it. It is the citric acid or the ascorbic acid that aids in the preservation of fruits.

The exposure to oxygen and the enzymes in a banana (and most other fruits) are what cause it to go from green to yellow, and then brown to black, as it ripens. A blackish or brownish banana is not necessarily rotten or bad.

What is the Best Way to Re-Heat or Thaw the Homemade Baby Food Cubes?

Microwave Thawing of Baby Food Purées -

If you are using a microwave to thaw or reheat baby food cubes, be sure to stir food to ensure no hot-pockets are left to burn baby!

Many parents do not like to use the microwave for a variety of reasons. It is up to you to decide if heating or thawing your baby food cubes in the microwave is right for you and your baby.

We do not make any statements concerning the use of the microwave as the research is simply too conflicting and much of it is not reputable.

For cooking, we prefer to bake when possible (for optimal nutrient retention) and steam when possible!

Refrigerator Thawing of Homemade Baby Food Cubes -

If you do not wish to use a microwave to thaw your baby food cubes, you may thaw your baby food cubes in the refrigerator over night (ensure that the cubes remain a closed container and not in an uncovered bowl).

Submersion Thawing of Baby Food Cubes -

You may also place the cubes in a small bowl and then place the bowl in a larger bowl filled with hot water. Thawing baby food cubes using this "submersion method" should take between 10-20 minutes.

Thawing food on your kitchen counter is never recommended as bacteria or other contaminants may get into the food.

****Please keep in mind that reheating baby food cubes is NOT necessary. Baby food cubes may be served at room temperature once they have been thawed! Many babies enjoy room temperature foods!**

You should not feed your baby from the container and then re-store the container that baby has been fed from!

Saliva may contaminate the food and bacteria may evolve. Always take the portions you will serve from the container and transfer to a feeding bowl.

Storing Baby Food Purée in the Refrigerator

It is recommended that fresh pureed homemade baby food be stored no longer than 48 hours in the refrigerator. This limit ensures that bacteria growth in the puree is kept to a minimum and that the food does not take on the "taste of the fridge"! This "rule" applies for veggies, fruits, meats etc.

If you do not plan to freeze your homemade baby food, we would suggest that you make the puree on a day to day, or every other day, basis. For example, one sweet potato may be baked and then you may freeze one half without pureeing it and then puree the other half. This method will help cut down "waste" and also allow for food safety.

Experts say that it takes an infant between 15-21 instances of trying a food before a true like or dislike is established. If you are just beginning to introduce solid foods, you really will not be able to determine if your baby has a true dislike for a food until much later. Freezing purées allows you to go back and try a "rejected" food over again. Even if you will be strictly following the 3-4 day wait rule, we still recommend freezing baby food purees for optimal food safety!

If you do make small batches and store in the refrigerator, please keep in mind that you should not feed your baby from the container and then re-store. Saliva may contaminate the food and bacteria may evolve. Always take the portions you will serve from the container and transfer to a feeding bowl.

When Should the Purée be put into the Freezer or Refrigerator?

While the professional food jury is still a bit divided, the most highly recommend food safety advice on storing foods from the majority of food sources is this:

Refrigerate or freeze perishable foods promptly!! Harmful bacteria can grow rapidly if foods aren't properly cooled. Refrigerate or freeze perishable foods within two hours of purchasing or preparing them.

If the room temperature is above 90 F, refrigerate perishable foods within one hour. Freeze ground meat, poultry, fish and shellfish if you don't expect to eat it within two days, and freeze other beef, veal, lamb or pork within three to five days.

Some say that immediately transferring HOT foods to the freezer is NOT good because that hot food will affect the temperature of the foods around it and quite possibly the temperature of the whole freezer. We recommend transferring the food you have cooked to the fridge and then to package for freezer storage within 2-3 hours.

You may safely leave prepared foods in the fridge for up to 48 hours (72 MAX) so it is up to you whether you want to immediately move your foods to the freezer.

Should I add liquid to thin the purees BEFORE or AFTER I freeze the purees? What should I use?

You may thin your purees either before or after freezing them. Using the cooking water to thin purees is really great as you will be adding back in any nutrients that may have leached out. For some vegetables like carrots, you should not use the cooking water to thin the purees!

Formula and/or breast milk are great for thinning out purees as they not only add nutrients, they add the familiar taste that your baby is accustomed to! It really is an individual choice and is dependent on what you will be using as your liquid (previously frozen breast milk for example should never be re-frozen!). Many parents find it easier to thin their purees first and then freeze. When baby moves on to more texture, it may be easier to simply freeze the purees and then thin upon thawing if needed.

Salt and sugar are never needed when making baby food. Omit these items, preferably at ALL times, in your baby's meals!

How long will food cubes keep in the freezer & refrigerator?

Many authoritative guidelines will say that most fruits and veggies will keep from 8 to 12 months in the freezer. This is mostly true of foods that are frozen in their natural state. This is also assuming that the freezer remains at a constant sub-zero temperature. Storing foods in a deep freezer is best should you wish to keep frozen foods for that time frame.

You have to remember that when certain books give freezer time guidelines, they rely on the typical guidelines for fruits/veggies that have NOT been cooked and turned into purees!

Due to the amount of water crystals that tend to build up with baby food purees, and due to the fact that nutrients may leach/evaporate upon thawing because of the water crystals, it is more prudent to use your frozen baby foods cubes as soon as possible - 3 months of storage tops. We always recommend using within 1 month if at all possible!

Baby food cubes are safe to remain in the freezer from 3 to 6 months. Using baby food cubes within 1 month to 3 months is really more prudent.

Don't be alarmed if you see ice crystals forming on your baby food cubes. As mentioned earlier, this is NOT freezer burn rather it is the excess liquid used to make the puree that rises and freezes at the top of the cubes.

"Can I safely use frozen vegetables or fruits to make baby food purees and refreeze them?"

One of the most commonly asked question is "Can I safely use frozen vegetables or fruits to make baby food purees and refreeze them?". YES! You can refreeze frozen veggies & fruits! We have no idea why some book(s) may say that it is not OK to do. There are no studies or research to show that refreezing is negative and/or may adversely affect health. We can only surmise that those books are geared to promoting the consumption of only fresh, organic foods and they ask that you shun anything that may be frozen or "conventional". The caveat is that you must cook the foods prior to refreezing them.

Using frozen fruits and vegetables is the second best option to using fresh foods. The process of flash-freezing (foods being frozen at a very low temperature and frozen very quickly) actually preserves and allows for optimal nutrient retention.

Picked at the peak of freshness, a vast majority of frozen veggies are flash frozen either right in the fields or in the warehouse close by. "Fresh" veggies may sit around in trucks and warehouses and criss-cross the country before it even makes it to your table.

The fact is, cooking foods deplete more nutrients than does freezing foods. Contrary to myth, Freezing foods (fruits and vegetables in particular) does NOT deplete 100% of that food's vitamins and minerals. The process of freezing, if kept at a constant 0 degree temp does not contribute to a TOTAL loss of nutrients - if it did, then the majority of the population would be malnourished as we rely on and eat a large amount of frozen foods.

If you ever forget what the "rule" is, remember this example : you can take out a roast that was frozen uncooked & raw, thaw it, cook it and then freeze the leftovers for another meal. Once you have thawed the leftovers, you should never re-freeze the leftover-leftovers!

The package says not to refreeze!

You should ALWAYS cook a thawed product prior to re-freezing it! Cooking a thawed product will allow you to then re-freeze it for one cycle.

Frozen veggies are NOT cooked when packaged and so they must be cooked prior to eating. Please be sure to read the label of your frozen veggie bags as some brands of frozen veggies do come pre-cooked. You would not want to refreeze these!

What is the "rule" for freezing Meat Purees or Meat Combinations?

Meat Purees and Meat "Dinners" that you have mixed may be frozen just as you would fruits or veggies or combinations.

It is safe to freeze meats that have been frozen when raw and uncooked, thawed, cooked and then puréed.

You should not freeze meat purees from meats that have been frozen when raw, thawed, cooked and then frozen and thawed again.

If you ever forget what the "rule" is, remember that you can take out a raw frozen roast, thaw it, cook it and then freeze the leftovers for another meal.

Once you have thawed the leftovers, you must use them within 48 hours; you should never re-freeze the leftover-leftovers!

Pureed Baby Foods That Freeze Well and Not So Well.

You may have better, or worse, luck with freezing your homemade baby food cubes.

Homemade Baby Food is most easily stored in your freezer.

It is best to keep the cubes as far into the freezer as possible.

Try not to store your homemade baby food cubes on the door to avoid the warming that may occur when the freezer door opens.

Puréed foods that we find freeze well (browning is not indicative of rot but of natural oxidization - that is unless you have used rotten fruit to begin with!)	Puréed foods that we find do not freeze very well
Apples (may turn brown - freeze in slices for a nice teething reliever in a baby safe feeder)	Apricots (may not freeze solid and texture may be altered, otherwise ok)
Avocados (may turn brown when pureed, otherwise ok - best frozen in halves with a bit of lemon juice)	Citrus such as Orange, Tangerine or Grapefruit
Bananas (may turn brown when pureed, otherwise ok - freeze bananas whole in their jackets for less waste - cut in half, wrap then freeze)	Dairy products (may freeze yogurt - texture and color may change, otherwise ok)
Banana mixed with other fruits	Eggs (cook whole egg or just yolk and then freeze without pureeing!)
Blueberries	Melon (may become watery and taste/texture may change - ok to freeze if not puréed)
Broccoli	Grapes (freeze whole or halved)
Cauliflower	Potatoes - White (difficult to reconstitute when frozen in puréed form otherwise ok to freeze - may thaw and heat up with a mealy texture)
Carrots	Prunes (may not freeze solid and texture may be altered, otherwise ok)
Corn	Rice (difficult to reconstitute when frozen in puréed form otherwise ok to freeze)
Green Beans	Mangos (great in chunked form - watery and gritty when in pureed form)
Meats	Meats may become gritty when thawed otherwise they are fine!
Nectarines (may turn brown and taste may change - mixed results)	
Noodles - freeze "whole"	Noodles - do not freeze well when pureed!

Peaches	Papaya (great in chunked form - watery and gritty when in pureed form)
Pears (may turn brown and taste may change - mixed results - freeze in slices then mash for best bet)	
Peas	
Plums (may turn brownish and taste may change - mixed results)	
Rice (freeze it without pureeing and then puree when thawed for a nice taste/texture)	Tofu (color changes and texture becomes spongy - still ok to eat however)
Squash - Acorn, Butternut, Winter	Squash - Zucchini & Summer (yellow) (may turn extremely watery when thawed and some taste may suffer)
Sweet Potato	



Freezing Fruit Basics

Guide E-321

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You can enjoy the taste of summer fruit during fall and winter months if you pick and freeze the fruit when it's young and tender. Freezing is an economical, simple way to preserve large quantities of fruit.

PREPARING FRUIT FOR FREEZING

Bacterial contamination can occur during fruit preparation. Clean equipment and all working surfaces before use. Wash hands thoroughly before starting and after touching any unclean area. Wash fruit thoroughly removing soil and debris.

Only prepare as much fruit as can be handled in a time period that doesn't result in degradation of the fruit. Wash fruit rapidly in several changes of cool tap water. Lift fruit out to prevent soil from being re-deposited. In addition to removing surface soil, the cold water firms the fruit and reduces loss of vitamin rich juices. Many fruits are peeled before further processing by submerging fruit in boiling water for 30–45 seconds and cool immediately in ice water. Skins should come off easily. Drain and towel dry. Cut fruit and remove pits or seeds. To prevent darkening, treat white and light colored fruit (apples, pears, peaches, nectarines, apricots) by dipping in a solution of ascorbic acid. Available in powdered form and often mixed with sugar, ascorbic acid can be purchased from pharmacies and supermarkets along with other food preservation equipment and supplies. Various brands are available and instructions for their use with various fruits are printed on the package. Although unsweetened pineapple juice, citric acid and lemon juice are also used as anti-darkening treatments, they are less effective. Apples and rhubarb can be blanched for 2 minutes to prevent darkening.

FREEZING PROCESS

Oxidation (rancidity) can occur during freezer storage causing off flavors through exposure of frozen product to air. Using high quality plastic bags or containers designed for freezing can prevent rancid flavor development as well as protect against freezer burn which is a result of moisture loss.

The process of freezing involves freezing the water in the cellular spaces of fruit tissue. As this water freezes it expands forming ice crystals that rupture cell walls resulting in softer texture once fruit is thawed. To reduce cellular damage chill and freeze fruit quickly so that the ice crystals formed are smaller.

Packaged fruit should be frozen in a freezer set at -10°F for at least 24 hours before freezing large quantities of food. Freeze only the amount of food that can be frozen within a 24 hour period (2-3 lbs per cubic foot of freezer space).

When freezing large quantities of food, packaged fruit should be chilled to less than 40°F in a refrigerator then transferred to the freezer. This will speed up the freezing process and will maintain eating quality of the frozen fruit. Properly frozen and stored products should be used within one year. Label containers with food name and date processed.

Fruit to be used in cooked dishes (such as pies and sweetened spreads) and small berries may be tray frozen. Simply place the prepared fruit on a cookie sheet and freeze until solid. Place frozen fruit into freezer containers, label and date.

SUGAR PACK

Sugar packing works well with juicy fruit such as peaches or cut strawberries as it discourages darkening. Mix prepared fruit with sugar and ascorbic acid. A good rule of thumb is $1/2$ to $2/3$ cups of sugar to each quart of prepared fruit. Gently stir until fruit is coated and sugar is dissolved. Pack fruit into freezer containers and freeze.

SYRUP PACK

Syrup packing preserves fruit with the firmest texture such as pears or apples. Prepare desired syrup (see below) and chill completely in the refrigerator prior to preparing the fruit. If using freezer bags, support them in a bowl while filling. Spoon fruit into the container and cover with chilled syrup. Allow room for expansion: 3/4 inch below closure in pints; 1–2 inches or more in larger sizes. Remove air and seal.

Freezer Syrups With Sugar and Honey

Syrup	Water	Sugar	Honey*
Light	4 cups	2 cups	----
	3 cups	----	1 cup
Medium	4 cups	3 cups	----
	2 cups	----	2 cups
Heavy	4 cups	4 1/2 cups	----

*Honey is sometimes substituted for sugar because of its flavor, but it is not more nutritious. Honey should not be given to infants under one year of age as it may contain botulism spores, which are not destroyed in immature intestinal tracts.

ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

Artificial sweeteners, both aspartame and saccharin, work well when freezing fruit. However, they don't prevent darkening or increase thickness of freezing syrups. Fruit freezes harder and thaws more slowly. Many prefer to use artificial sweeteners just before serving. Follow directions on the artificial sweetener for amounts needed when freezing fruit. Fruit may also be packed in water but it will be less firm when thawed. Overripe fruit may be frozen as a puree. Peaches should be gently cooked to release juices. Add ascorbic or citric acid to uncooked light-colored purees to preserve color. Use fruit purees as a topping on ice cream or other desserts. Use frozen fruits within 8–12 months for best taste.

INDIVIDUALLY QUICK FROZEN (IQF)

Berries and other delicate fruits store better when individually quick frozen. Once frozen, fruit can be packaged then stored in a freezer. A major advantage of this process is that the fruit pieces do not clump and individual pieces can be removed without thawing the entire package. Dry ice is used for this process and is available at many grocery stores and local ice making facilities. Caution: Insulated mitts or gloves should be worn when handling dry ice since it will cause freezer burn upon contact with skin.

Follow these steps for IQF fruit: Place fruit pieces into a large stainless steel bowl. While dry ice is in the package, break up block with a hammer. Wearing insulated gloves carefully un-wrap dry ice and pour pieces into bowl. Gently stir with a stainless steel spoon until fruit is evenly covered with dry ice. Cover bowl loosely with a clean towel and place bowl into a refrigerator. After 30 minutes remove bowl from refrigerator using insulated gloves or mitts. Using stainless steel spoon transfer frozen fruit into a labeled sealable container. Store packaged IQF fruit promptly in freezer.

FREEZER CONTAINERS

Choose containers that are moisture-vapor resistant; durable and leak proof; resistant to oil, grease or water; nonabsorbent of off flavors or odors; resistant to cracking at low temperatures; and easy to seal and mark with contents and date. Suitable containers include wide-mouth glass jars that can be used for both freezing and canned foods, rigid plastic containers and flexible plastic bags. Tighten lids on glass jars after the product is frozen to prevent breakage due to inadequate head space.

Square containers use freezer space more economically than round ones. Lids should fit securely or be sealed with freezer tape. Label contents with special instructions such as the amount of sugar or lemon juice used, the name of the fruit, and date of preservation. Use a freezer pen which won't run or fade when exposed to moisture. This information is especially important if fruit will be used in jams or other recipes later.

THAWING AND PREPARING FRUITS TO EAT

Growth of spoilage organisms can continue during freezer storage especially when the freezing process is slow, or when the temperature rises above 0°F.

Open package just before serving and serve while slightly frozen. Allow for any sugar added at the time of freezing when using frozen fruit in cooked recipes. Freshly made jellies, jams, marmalades and preserves from frozen berries are superior in flavor, color and texture to those made from fresh berries as the juices are fully released by the freezing process.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FREEZING FRUITS

Apples	Peel, core, slice. Best if blanched 2 minutes, rinsed in ice water, drained, then sugar-packed or syrup-packed with medium syrup. For pies Place apple slices in boiling water for 2 minutes and cool in ice water. Make filling when defrosted using any recipe desired.	Grape Juice	Heat grapes and then press or strain juice through cloth bag. Sweeten to taste with sugar. Pour into container and freeze.
Applesauce	To each quart of apples add 1/3 cup water and 1/4 tsp ascorbic acid. Cook until tender, puree and add 1/4 cup sugar to 4 cup hot puree. Stir until dissolved. Cool and pack into freezer containers.	Melons	Remove seeds, peel and cut melon into cubes or slices. Best packed in light syrup. Serve slightly frozen.
Apricots	Not necessary to peel, but submerge fruit in boiling water for 1/2 minute to keep peel from toughening; remove pits and treat for discoloration. Dry-pack or use medium syrup.	Peaches/ Nectarines	Remove skins from peaches by submerging in boiling water for 30–45 seconds and cool immediately in ice water. Skins should come off easily. Drain, remove pit and cut. It is unnecessary to peel nectarines, but dip nectarines in boiling water for 30 seconds to prevent skin from toughening. Treat with ascorbic acid to prevent darkening. Can be dry-frozen, but best in medium syrup. Serve slightly frozen.
Bananas	Puree; add 1/8 tsp ascorbic or citric acid or 1 tbsps. lemon juice per cup.	Pears	Peel, core and cut. Best if lightly cooked in boiling medium syrup for 1 minute. Cool before packing pears and syrup into freezer container.
Berries (except strawberries)	Wash carefully in cool tap water. Drain. Dry-pack, sugar pack or freeze in medium syrup. Soft berries such as raspberries and blackberries freeze best in syrup. Use dry packed berries partially frozen.	Pineapple	Peel, core, cut or crush before packing fruit. Juice will accumulate, even without sugar. May also be packed with light syrup. Serve slightly frozen.
Cherries	Sour: Wash in cool tap water, stem and pit. Mix one part sugar to four parts fruit or freeze in a heavy syrup. Sweet: Wash, stem and pit. (Un-pitted frozen cherries will have a slight almond-like flavor.) Treat light-colored cherries, such as Royal Anne, with ascorbic acid to prevent darkening. Tray freeze sweet cherries; sugar-pack or syrup-pack tart cherries in medium syrup.	Plums	Washed plums can be frozen without further preparation. Tray freeze, then dry-pack. Eat slightly frozen. May also be sugar-packed or frozen in medium syrup.
Figs	Wash. Peel if desired. Use a light or medium syrup. Add either 1/2 cup of lemon juice or 3/4 tsp. ascorbic acid to one quart of freezer syrup for a better product. Pack foods into containers, cover with cold syrup and freeze.	Pomegranates	Select completely ripe pomegranates. Wash, cut in half and place cut side down. Break shell with a blunt instrument to open section walls and release juice. Pack juice and pulp into containers. Cover with a cold light syrup, leave head space, freeze.
Grapes	Remove seeds. Dry-pack or pack in a syrup made from frozen lemonade (6 oz.) concentrate mixed with 12 oz. water.	Rhubarb	Wash, discard leaves and cut stalks into 1-inch pieces. Treat with ascorbic acid to prevent darkening. May also be sugar packed or blanched 2 minutes and packed in medium syrup.
		Strawberries	Gently wash berries in several changes of cool tap water and drain. Remove caps and drain berries. May be sugar packed or packed with a medium syrup. May also be tray frozen with no sugar. Puree very ripe strawberries. For each two cups of puree fruit, add 1/4 cup sugar and 1 tsp. lemon juice.

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