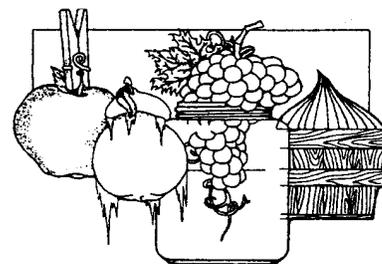


Quality for Keeps



Information for those who produce and preserve food

Home-baked delights from freezer to table

Winter holidays traditionally include gathering friends and family together to enjoy food. Since those holidays place many demands on time, many people purchase prepared foods to save time. As an option, consider freezing favorite baked goods for that next gathering.

Many products can be prepared ahead and frozen. Other foods such as meringues, egg white frosting, milk sauces, sour cream toppings, and custards do not freeze well. Most baked products can be made ahead and frozen after they are cooled.

Yeast breads. Baked yeast breads, rolls, and coffee cakes keep frozen for six to eight months. Reheat in foil in a 300°F oven, 10 minutes for rolls and 15 minutes for larger items.

To freeze unbaked yeast breads, use recipes designed to be frozen. Use frozen unbaked yeast rolls within one month. Recipes for bread dough, rolls, coffee cake and sticky buns can be found at the Fleishmann's yeast website at <http://breadworld.com/default.aspx>, or the Red Star Yeast site at <http://www.redstaryeast.com>. Type the word *freeze* in the search box.

Quick breads. Quick breads, such as banana, fruit, or nut breads also freeze well. Cool quick breads completely, and then package in freezer wrap, foil, or freezer bags. Store in the freezer up to four months.

Thaw at room temperature, or wrap in foil and heat at 400°F. To prevent crumbling, cut the breads while partially frozen.

Cakes. Angel food, sponge, chiffon, and shortened cakes and cupcakes freeze well. Freeze unfrosted, and ice after thawing. If a frosted cake is desired, confectioner's sugar or fudge frosting freeze best.

Thaw unfrosted cakes in foil in a 300° oven for 10 to 20 minutes, or at room temperature in one to two hours. Thaw frosted cakes in the refrigerator. Angel food cake will keep up to six months, but use other types of cakes within two to three months.

Pies. Freeze pastry or crumb pie crusts for six to eight months. Add the filling and bake the pies while the crust is still frozen, or bake unfilled crusts at 475° until light brown. Filled pies can be frozen baked or unbaked. Pre-baked fruit, mince, or nut pies will keep in the freezer for three to four months. Prepare and bake as usual. Cool and place pies in the freezer until frozen; then wrap tightly in freezer proof bags or containers. To use, thaw at room temperature for 15 minutes before reheating at 350°F for 30 minutes.

To freeze unbaked fruit, mince, or nut pies, steam or blanch and cool light colored fruits before adding to filling. Add one tablespoon of extra flour or tapioca, or ½ tablespoon of cornstarch to the filling during preparation if freezing unbaked pies.

Do not cut steam vents in the top crust until pies are ready to bake. Freeze the assembled pies before wrapping for storage.

When ready to bake, cut vent holes and place on a cookie sheet in a 450°F oven for 20 minutes; then reduce the heat to 375°F and bake until the top crust is brown. Unbaked pumpkin pie can be assembled in the usual way, frozen, then wrapped and placed in the freezer up to four to five weeks.

Cookies. Freeze baked cookies for six months. For best quality, place freezer paper between the layers of cookies in an airtight container. Thaw cookies for 15 to 20 minutes in their wrapping.

Cookie dough can be frozen for six months in a roll, in bulk, or as drop cookies. Freeze individual dropped cookie dough before packaging for storage. Bake rolled refrigerator cookies, drop, or shaped cookies without thawing at 400°F for approximately 10 minutes. Bulk dough should be thawed in the refrigerator, until soft enough to form and bake as usual.

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Don't discard it—freeze it

A lot of food is thrown away every year in the U.S.. Think about freezing small amounts of food to enjoy later.

Eggs. Sometimes a recipe calls for the egg whites or the egg yolks and the other part of the egg is discarded. Save the egg whites to make an angel food cake, or beautiful meringue later. Gently mix the egg whites; do not whip. Strain through a sieve. Leave ½-inch headspace in the container, then seal and freeze. Two tablespoons of the egg-white mixture equal one egg white in a recipe.

Save the egg yolks to make an extra rich custard, sponge cake, or egg noodles. Stir the egg yolks gently. Add either salt or sugar to keep the yolks from getting grainy in the freezer. For each cup of egg yolks stir in 1-1/2 tablespoons of sugar or corn syrup if the yolks will be used for desserts, or a ½ teaspoon of salt, if the yolks will be used in main dishes. Strain through a sieve, then package, allowing ½-inch headspace. Seal the container and freeze. One tablespoon of the yolk mixture equals one egg yolk.

Whipped cream. Cream that is sweetened and whipped freezes better than un-whipped cream. Place dollops of whipped cream on a baking sheet and freeze to make individual sweetened whipped cream garnishes. Once solidly frozen, remove dollops and store in the freezer in freezer containers. Use within one to two months.

Butter. Prepared butter patties, or molded butter curls, will keep frozen for six to nine months.

Chill until the butter shapes are cold and firm, then wrap the butter tightly in aluminum foil, transparent film or freezer paper, or seal in moisture-vapor resistant containers.

Bananas. Refrigerate extra bananas to slow down the ripening process, but expect the peeling to turn dark.

To freeze bananas, peel the bananas and mash them. For each cup of mashed bananas add ½ teaspoon of ascorbic acid, and package in moisture-vapor resistant container; seal and freeze. Thaw and use frozen banana puree in quick breads, cakes, muffins, and pancakes for a delicious treat.

Cranberries. Fresh cranberries will soon be in the stores. Buy and freeze extra cranberries to use when fresh cranberries are unavailable. Wash and drain the cranberries. Tray freeze them on a jelly-roll pan before packaging.

To dry pack the berries, place them in a container and leave ½-inch headspace; seal and freeze.

To syrup pack the berries, make a syrup using equal cups of sugar and warm water; chill. Cover the cranberries with syrup and leave ½-inch headspace for pints, or 1-inch headspace for quarts; seal and freeze.

Pesto. Keep in the refrigerator for only three days or less. To keep it longer, freeze in glass freezer jars, or plastic freezer containers, leaving ½-inch headspace.

Green tomatoes. Any firm green tomatoes left in the garden, can be frozen. Wash, core, and slice the tomatoes 1/4-inch thick.

To prepare slices for frying, place freezer wrap between the layers of tomatoes, leave a ½-inch head space; seal and freeze.

Fresh herbs. Though normally dried, herbs can also be frozen. Use frozen herbs like fresh herbs for seasoning cooked dishes, (frozen herbs will be too limp to use as a garnish). Before freezing, wash, drain, and gently dry the herbs with a paper towel. Wrap a few sprigs or leaves in freezer wrap and place in a freezer bag; seal and freeze.

Melon. Freeze extra watermelon, cantaloupe, honeydew or Crenshaw melon. The melon has to be ripe and firm-fleshed with the seeds and rind removed. Cut into chunks, slices, or balls. Place the melon into a freezer container, leaving ½-inch headspace; seal and freeze.

For a syrup pack, mix 1¾ cups of sugar with 4 cups of warm water; chill. Place the melon in a freezer container and cover with the chilled syrup. Leave a ½-inch head space for pints and 1-inch headspace for quarts; seal and freeze.



Store canning supplies wisely

With frost on the pumpkin, many home food preservers are storing canning equipment until spring. Before packing up, take time to give them a little tender loving care!

Before storing the pressure canner, clean the vent and safety valve. To clean the vent, draw a clean string or narrow strip of cloth through the opening. Check to make sure the safety valve is free of debris and operates freely. Clean the valve by removing, if possible, or following the manufacturer's instructions.

Clean the gasket. If needed, new gaskets can be ordered from the canner manufacturer, or found at hardware stores. Some canners do not have gaskets and use a metal to metal seal instead.

Plan to have the dial gauge tested in the early spring. Do this well in advance of the canning season, so that if the gauge tests off more than 1 pound of pressure at 5, 10, or 15 pounds, it can be replaced.

Do not immerse canner lids with dial gauges in water while cleaning. The darkened surface on the inside of an aluminum canner can be cleaned by filling it above the darkened line with a mixture of 1 tablespoon cream of tartar to each quart of water. Place the canner on the stove, heat water to a boil, and boil covered until the dark deposits disappear. Empty the canner and wash it with hot soapy water, rinse and dry. *(Hint: Reduce deposits from hard water by adding 1 tablespoon of white vinegar to the water in the canner while processing jars).*

Store the canner with crumpled clean paper towels in the bottom and around the rack. This will help absorb moisture and odors. Place the lid upside down on the canner. **Never store a canner with the lid on and sealed.**

Once your canner is properly stored, take time to inventory jars and two-piece lids. If properly used and stored, jars can last indefinitely. Check jars for any

chips or breaks; wash and store in a safe place. Wash and dry the screwbands completely and put them away in a dry place. Bands can be used over and over, unless they rust. The flat lid is used only once and then discarded after the jar of food is opened.

Source: <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/>.

Dear Readers:

This is the final issue of QFK for the season. Please help us meet your needs better by filling out the enclosed survey. We appreciate your comments and suggestions for future topics.

Remember we're available year round to answer your food safety questions, just call your local extension office.

Sincerely,

Mary & Judy

Cranberry Conserve

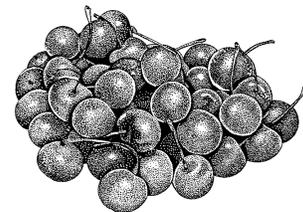
- 1 unpeeled, finely chopped orange
- 1 cup water
- 3 cups sugar
- 1 quart cranberries, washed
- ½ cup seedless raisins
- ½ cup chopped nuts

Yield: About 4 half-pint jars

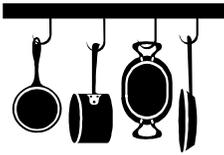
Procedure: Combine orange and water; cook rapidly until peel is tender, (about 20 minutes). Add cranberries, sugar and raisins. Bring slowly to boiling, stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves. Cook rapidly, almost to the jelling point of 220°F, (about 8 minutes). As mixture thickens, stir frequently to prevent sticking. Add nuts during the last 5 minutes of cooking.

Pour hot conserve into hot, half-pint jars, leaving ¼-inch headspace. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel; apply two-piece metal canning lids. Process the jars in a boiling water canner for 10 minutes at 1,000 feet, or for 15 minutes at altitudes of 1,000 to 6,000 feet.

Source: the National Center for Home Food Preservation at <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/>.



THE RECIPE BOX



Cranberry Orange Chutney

- 24 ounces fresh whole cranberries
- 2 cups chopped white onion
- 2 cups golden raisins
- 1½ cups white sugar
- 1½ cups packed brown sugar
- 2 cups white distilled vinegar (5%)
- 1 cup orange juice
- 4 teaspoons peeled, grated fresh ginger
- 3 sticks cinnamon

Yield: About 8 half-pint jars.

Procedure: Wash and rinse half-pint canning jars; keep hot until ready to use. Prepare lids according to manufacturer's directions. Rinse cranberries well. Combine all ingredients in a large Dutch oven. Bring to a boil over high heat; reduce heat and simmer gently for 15 minutes or until cranberries are tender. Stir often to prevent scorching. Remove cinnamon sticks and discard. Fill the hot chutney into clean, hot half-pint jars, leaving ½-inch headspace. Remove air bubbles and adjust headspace if needed. Wipe rims of jars with a dampened clean paper towel; apply two-piece metal canning lids. Process in a boiling water canner for 10 minutes at an altitude of 1,000 feet or less, or 15 minutes at altitudes of 1,001 to 6,000 feet. Let cool, undisturbed, 12-24 hours and check for seals.

Notes: Other dried spices can be added to taste (for example, cloves, dry mustard, cayenne pepper). Add or adjust spices during the simmering period. This product produces an almost jellied chutney due to the natural cranberry pectins. Cranberries can be home-canned whole, as a sauce, and as a salsa. If you wish to have cranberries to enjoy after the holidays, wash and drain the berries and pack into containers leaving ½-inch headspace. Seal, label and store in the freezer for up to a year.

Source: the National Center for Home Food Preservation at <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/>.

Quality for Keeps, published monthly, April through October, is made available to residents of East Central and Southeast Missouri by their Extension Councils. Contact your county Extension office to subscribe or visit our website <http://missouri.extension.edu/franklin>. Questions may be directed to:

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