

FREEZING VEGETABLES

Read our canning and freezing basics. Wash fresh vegetables with cool, clear tap water; scrub firm vegetables with a clean produce brush to remove any dirt.

Vegetable	Preparation	Freezing
Asparagus	Allow 2½ to 4½ pounds per quart. Wash; scrape off scales. Break off woody bases where spears snap easily; wash again. Sort by thickness. Leave whole or cut into 1-inch lengths.	Blanch small spears for 2 minutes, medium for 3 minutes, and large for 4 minutes; cool quickly by plunging into ice water; drain. Fill containers; shake down, leaving no headspace.
Beans: green, Italian, snap, or wax	Allow 1½ to 2½ pounds per quart. Wash; remove ends and strings. Leave whole or cut into 1-inch pieces.	Blanch for 3 minutes; cool quickly by plunging into ice water; drain. Fill containers; shake down, leaving a ½-inch headspace.*
Beets	Allow 3 pounds (without tops) per quart. Trim off beet tops, leaving 1 inch of stem and roots, to reduce bleeding of color. Scrub well.	Cook unpeeled beets in boiling water until tender. (Allow 25 to 30 minutes for small beets, 45 to 50 minutes for medium beets.) Cool quickly by plunging into ice water; drain. Peel; remove stem and roots. Cut into slices or cubes. Fill containers, leaving a ½-inch headspace.*
Carrots	Use 1- to 1¼-inch-diameter carrots (larger carrots might be too fibrous). Allow 2 to 3 pounds per quart. Wash, trim, peel, and rinse again. Leave tiny ones whole; slice or dice the remainder.	Blanch tiny whole carrots for 5 minutes and cut-up carrots for 2 minutes; cool quickly by plunging into ice water; drain. Pack tightly into containers, leaving a ½-inch headspace.*
Corn, whole kernel	Allow 4 to 5 pounds per quart. Remove husks. Scrub with a vegetable brush to remove silks. Wash and drain.	Cover ears with boiling water; return to boiling and boil 4 minutes. Cool by plunging into ice water; drain. Cut corn from cobs at two-thirds depth of kernels; do not scrape. Fill containers, leaving a ½-inch headspace.*
Peas: English or green	Allow 2 to 2½ pounds per pint. Wash, shell, rinse, and drain.	Blanch 1½ minutes; cool quickly by plunging into ice water; drain. Fill containers, shaking down and leaving a ½-inch headspace.*
Peppers, hot	Select firm jalapeño or other chile peppers; wash. Halve large peppers. Remove stems, seeds, and membranes. Place, cut sides down, on a foil-lined baking sheet. Bake in a 425°F oven for 20 to 25 minutes or until skins are bubbly and brown. Cover peppers or wrap in foil and let stand about 15 minutes or until cool. Pull the skin off gently and slowly using a paring knife.	Package in freezer containers, leaving no headspace.*
Peppers, sweet	Select firm green, bright red, or yellow peppers; wash. Remove stems, seeds, and membranes. Place, cut sides down, on a foil-lined baking sheet. Bake in a 425°F oven for 20 to 25 minutes or until skins are bubbly and brown. Cover peppers or wrap in foil and let stand about 15 minutes or until cool. Pull the skin off gently and slowly using a paring knife.	Quarter large pepper pieces or cut into strips. Fill containers, leaving a ½-inch headspace.* Or spread peppers in a single layer on a baking sheet; freeze until firm. Fill containers, shaking to pack closely and leaving no headspace.

*CHECKING HEADSPACE

The space between the top of the food and the container rim is the headspace. Leaving the correct amount is essential.

CANNING: Headspace allows a vacuum to form and the jar to seal. Use a ruler to make sure you have the amount specified in each recipe.

FREEZING: Headspace provides room for food to expand as it freezes. When using unsweetened (dry) pack, leave a 1/2-inch headspace unless otherwise directed. When using water, sugar, or syrup pack in freezer containers with wide tops, leave a 1/2-inch headspace for pints and a 1-inch headspace for quarts. For narrow-top containers, don't fill above the "shoulder."