

## Freezing Vegetables

Always select the best and freshest vegetables for any method of food preservation. If possible, harvest the morning of freezing or the evening before when it was cool. Prepare vegetables quickly to avoid loss of quality, or store them in the refrigerator if there is going to be a delay. Wash; sort under cool, running water; peel; trim; pit; or cut into pieces as directed or needed.

Prepare vegetables for freezing by blanching. Blanching is the process of immersing food in boiling water for a short period of time, then cooling it quickly to stop cooking. This short heat treatment stops the enzymes that can cause undesirable changes in the food after it is frozen. Without proper blanching, most vegetables will lose nutritive value and undergo changes in color, flavor, and texture.

### Follow these guidelines:

- Put water in a large saucepan with a tight lid and bring to boil.
- Allow 1 gallon of water for each pound of vegetables, except leafy greens, which require 2 gallons per pound.
- Place a small quantity of vegetables in a basket or strainer and immerse in boiling water.
- Cover the saucepan and boil for the length of time required. Begin timing as soon as the vegetables are placed in the water.
- Lift vegetables out of the water and cool immediately under cold, running water or in ice water. Cool for about the same length of time as blanching.
- When cool, drain, pack into containers, and freeze.

To go deeper, find the full curriculum at [Shop4-H.org/Freezing](http://Shop4-H.org/Freezing)

### Guidelines for freezing vegetables

VEGETABLE	PREPARATION	BLANCHING AND FREEZING
Beans, snap	Wash, snip off ends, cut or break into pieces, or slice lengthwise.	Blanch 3 minutes, cool, pack, and freeze.
Beets	Select beets less than 3 inches across and remove tops. Wash and cook until tender (small 25–30 minutes, medium 45–50 minutes).	Cool, pack, and freeze; may be sliced or diced before freezing.
Carrots	Remove tops, wash, scrape, dice, or slice ¼ inch thick.	Blanch 2 minutes, cool, pack, and freeze.
Corn, cut off the cob	Husk, remove silk, and wash.	Blanch ears 4–5 minutes, cool, cut off cob, then pack and freeze.
Onions	Peel, wash, and chop.	Blanch 1½ minutes, cool, pack, and freeze. May also be frozen unblanched.
Peas, edible pod	Wash, remove ends and strings.	Blanch small pods 1 minute, large 1–2 minutes; cool, pack, and freeze.
Peppers, sweet	Wash, cut out stem, remove seeds, halve, slice, or dice.	Blanch halved peppers 3 minutes, sliced or diced 2 minutes; cool, pack, and freeze. May also be frozen unblanched.
Tomatoes	Remove stem ends, peel and quarter, cook until tender. Best if pureed or minced.	Cool by setting pan in cold water, pack and freeze.
Zucchini	Wash and slice small, tender squash.	Blanch ¼-inch pieces 3 minutes, 1½-inch pieces 6 minutes; cool, pack, and freeze.