



Storage

Before you shop, check your cupboards and fridge to see what needs to be used up. It helps to have a 'use first' shelf so older food gets eaten quickly. Ideally, we would only buy what we eat between each trip to the grocery store. Since we know this is not always the case, check out these great ways to store your food to keep it fresher for longer.

APPLES

Refrigerating your apples will make them last longer. Only place a couple of apples at a time in your fruit bowl.

AVOCADOS

Store whole avocados at room temperature to ripen, and once they are ripe, refrigerate them. If you want them to ripen faster, place them in a paper bag with an apple or banana. For cut avocados, leave the seed in, wrap tightly in cling wrap and store in the fridge. Placing them in an airtight container also works well. To freeze an avocado, mash or puree the flesh with a little lemon juice and then freeze in a small container, bag or ice cube tray.

BANANAS

Bananas should be kept out of the fridge and away from other fruits. Ethylene gas, released by foods such as apples and pears, causes bananas to ripen faster. Once bananas are ripe, they produce ethylene gas, which ripens other fruit.



BREAD

Bread should be stored in the freezer. Bread often goes mouldy faster than it goes stale. Storing bread in the freezer will stop this from happening and keep your bread fresh. You can toast bread straight from the freezer.



BROCCOLI

Store broccoli in a plastic bag in the fridge, if you are going to eat it within a couple of days. If you need your broccoli to last longer, sprinkle the head of the broccoli with water, wrap it in paper towels and place it in a resealable bag in the fridge. To freeze broccoli, separate it into florets and blanch. Freeze the broccoli pieces on a tray and then transfer to an airtight container or bag once frozen.



CARROTS

Store carrots in an airtight container lined with a paper towel to stop them going limp and black. If you don't have an airtight container that's large enough to fit all of your carrots, wrap your bundle of carrots in a paper towel and store them in a resealable bag. If your carrots have gone limp, they can easily be revived by soaking them in water. If your carrots have gone slimy or black, the only thing they should be feeding is your compost bin, not your family.



ONIONS

Onions should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place away from potatoes. If potatoes and onions are stored next to each other, they will cause each other to sprout. Cut onions can be stored in the fridge, but they can transfer their taste to other foods, such as milk, cheese and butter, so make sure they're in an airtight container.



ORANGES

Store oranges loose in the fridge as they will last much longer. Put them in your fruit bowl before eating, so they can come to room temperature.



POTATOES

Potatoes should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place, like a cupboard. They should be stored away from onions, as they both release moisture which causes them to sprout faster. Unwashed potatoes last longer than clean potatoes. If your potatoes have sprouted, they are still good to eat, just chop the sprouts off. If your potatoes are going green, you need to cut off the green areas. If they have large green areas, discard the potatoes, because the green can indicate natural toxins that may not be destroyed by cooking.

PUMPKINS

The best way to store cut pumpkin is to wrap it tightly in cling wrap and place it in the fridge. It doesn't matter if you leave the seeds in or take them out. If you don't want to use cling wrap, you can wrap the pumpkin in a beeswax cloth, but you will need to take the seeds out first.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT STORING WHOLE PUMPKINS:

- Store in a cool place, such as your garage.
- Store upside down (so the stalk is on the bottom).
- Don't place them directly on the floor — use a piece of cardboard as a mat.
- Stored this way, pumpkins can last up to 3-4 months.



RICE

Store uncooked rice in a sealed container in your pantry. White rice should last indefinitely if stored correctly, while brown rice may go rancid (due to the oils in its outer hull) so should be eaten within 12 months. Store cooked rice in the fridge and eat within a few days, or freeze it and eat it within a couple of months.



STONE FRUIT

If your stone fruit is ripe, store them in the fridge to make them last longer. If they need to ripen, keep them at room temperature.



TOMATOES

Store tomatoes at room temperature — refrigerating them affects their texture and flavour. If they have gone soft, use them for cooking.



YOGURT

Store yogurt in its original container in the fridge. Yogurt may go watery, but this is the natural process of the whey separating from the solids, which happens over time. Give the yogurt a good stir to incorporate the whey and it will be fine to eat again.



CORN

Refrigerate corn in its husk to keep it fresher for longer.

CUCUMBERS

Cucumbers can either be stored in the fridge or at room temperature. If wrapped in plastic, keep the wrapping on the cucumber as it protects the soft skin and prevents dehydration.

EGGPLANT

Don't keep eggplant in the fridge — store it somewhere cool, but not in the fridge. Refrigeration can affect the eggplant's flavour and lead to browning.

LETTUCE

Crispers are the best way to store iceberg lettuce. If you don't have a crisper in your fridge, wrapping your lettuce in paper towels and placing it in a resealable bag works just as well. For loose salad greens like mesclun or baby spinach, take them out of the bag and store them in an airtight container in the fridge. This will stop them going slimy and help them to last longer. If your iceberg lettuce has gone limp, place it in iced water for a couple of minutes to revive it.



CHEESE

The best way to store a block of cheese is to wrap it tightly in its original packaging and place it in a clean cloth cheese bag in the fridge. If you don't have a cloth cheese bag, wrapping the cheese tightly in its original packaging and then wrapping that in cling wrap, a beeswax cloth or a plastic bag also works well.



CHERRIES

Cherries should be ripe when you buy them, so keep them in the fridge to extend their life.



LEMONS AND LIMES

If you are going to use lemons and limes within a week, store them in your fruit bowl. If you want to keep them for longer, store them loose in the fridge. If you have an abundance of lemons, freeze the excess. You can freeze them whole, which means you can grate them for zest when needed and then return them immediately to the freezer. You can also juice them and freeze the juice in an ice cube tray.



NUTS AND SEEDS

Nuts and seeds have a shorter shelf life than you might think, because they contain unsaturated fat, a type of oil which makes them highly prone to going rancid. Storing your nuts in the fridge or freezer minimizes their exposure to light and oxygen and will make them last much longer. If using the nuts for baking, just defrost them and they are good to go. If using in a salad, toast them in a frying pan for a couple of minutes once defrosted to renew their crunch.