

Preserve the Fruits (and Vegetables) of the Season

Wouldn't some home-grown corn, beans, rhubarb or strawberries taste good next January?

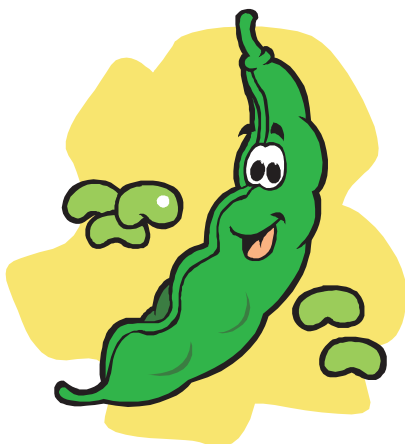
We have a limited time to enjoy locally grown fresh produce. Enjoy the fruits and vegetables of the season now – and preserve some to enjoy later, too.

While you're too late to start a garden this year, shop for good buys on delicious seasonal fruits and vegetables at the grocery store or at farmers markets. Maybe you are lucky and have friends or relatives with extra fruits and vegetables to share with you.

Save Money

Gardening and food preservation can pay off by promoting a healthier diet. Depending on the equipment you already have, you could save some money by preserving food at home.

According to seed companies, for every \$1 spent on seeds, you can get \$10 worth of fresh produce. Of course, that depends on a good season and proper tending.



Preserve Food Properly

Canning and freezing are examples of food preservation. Canning requires the largest investment in equipment and supplies, such as a canner, jars and lids.



If you have freezer space, freezing is easy to do and it requires little special equipment other than a stove, large kettle and metal basket. To freeze foods properly, remember these tips:

- Choose containers made for freezer storage, such as freezer bags or plastic freezer containers. Good freezer containers keep moisture in and air out.
- Blanch, or heat treat, as directed. Blanching is scalding vegetables or fruits in steam or boiling water for a short time. If you do not blanch, vegetables may discolor, toughen or develop off-colors or off-flavors during frozen storage.
- Label containers with contents and date.
- For best quality, use frozen vegetables within 12 months.

For more information about food preservation, contact your local Extension office or visit www.ag.ndsu.edu (click on "publications" then "food")

This program is funded in part by USDA's Food Stamp Program. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716.

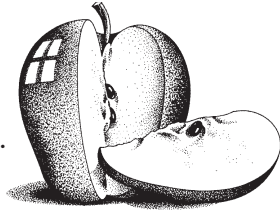
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My aunt just gave me a lot of vegetables and fruits from her garden, including corn, beans, peas, strawberries and rhubarb.

I don't want this food to go to waste.

How do I freeze it?

Act quickly. The quality of produce will not improve with freezing, so freeze high-quality produce as soon as possible. Follow these directions:



Corn

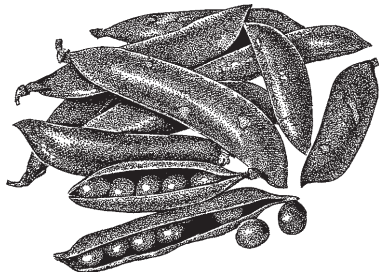
Blanch* husked cobs for four minutes, cool and drain. Cut corn off cob. Package in resealable freezer bags or freezer containers, seal and freeze.

Green or wax beans

Wash and remove ends. Leave whole, slice or cut into 1-inch lengths. Blanch* for three minutes, cool and drain. Package, seal and freeze.

Peas

Shell, blanch* for 90 seconds, cool and drain. Package, seal and freeze.



Rhubarb

Wash and cut into 1- or 2-inch pieces. Place in bags in recipe-sized amounts and freeze. (You can blanch for one minute to help retain color and flavor.)

Strawberries

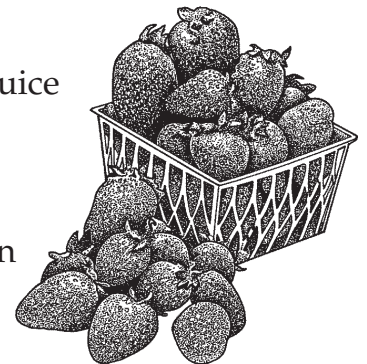
Select plump, fully ripe berries. Remove leaves and stems. Place whole berries on tray (such as cookie sheet) and place in freezer until berries are frozen. Remove from freezer and place in freezer bags.

* To "blanch," heat at least 1 gallon of water per pound of vegetables or fruit to boiling over high heat. Add vegetables or fruit, cover and reheat to boiling. Set a timer and blanch for the time specified for that fruit or vegetable.

Note: Some foods do not freeze well. These include green onions, lettuce, radishes and cucumbers.

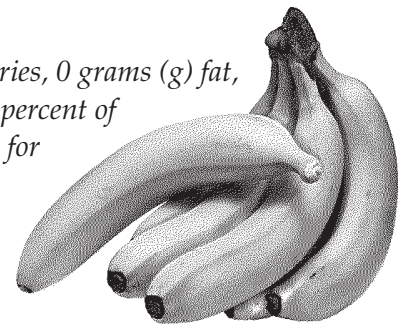
FRUIT SALSA

- 1 c. diced strawberries
- 1 diced banana
- 1 peeled and diced kiwi
- 1 cored and diced apple
- 2 Tbsp. lemon juice
- ¼ c. sugar
- ¼ tsp. nutmeg
- ¼ tsp. cinnamon



Combine fruit in a medium bowl and add lemon juice. Stir in sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon. Use as a dip with baked chips or serve as a side dish with grilled meat or fish.

*Makes four servings.
Each serving has 120 calories, 0 grams (g) fat,
31 g carbohydrate and 80 percent of
the daily recommendation for
vitamin C.*



For information about stretching your food dollars, visit www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise.

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Contact the local office of the
NDSU Extension Service
for more information
on food and nutrition or
managing your food dollar.

