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Preservation of Meat Poultry and Fish by Freezing

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Preservation of Meat, Poultry, and Fish by Freezing

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A well-planned home supply of meats, poultry, and other foods is a fine way to provide for the farm family. The use of a freezer locker can give a simple and satisfactory method for storing such foods. The preservation of meats, poultry and game by freezing has increased rapidly in Colorado during the last year or two. Careful planning and proper preparation and storage are essential for an economical and satisfactory variety of meats in the locker.

Freezer lockers can give real service in many communities. A greater variety of fresh foods can be made available to people and thus contribute a desirable supplement to the salted, dried, and canned foods already prepared by the farm family. A freezer locker can give additional service by increasing the healthful variety and quality of foods available, and by decreasing the need for cash purchases.

Effect of Freezing on Food Value of Meat.—Slow handling, slow freezing and thawing, and storage of the product above zero degrees Fahrenheit bring on vitamin destruction. Freezing itself seems to have no effect on the vitamin content of food thus preserved.

Selection and Slaughtering.—Well-finished, healthy animals provide best-quality meat for storage. Although meat becomes more tender when frozen, old tough cuts are not made choice by the freezing process. A good "finish" of fat on an animal helps retain moisture and flavor in any cut of meat.

When slaughtering is done on the farm, select a cool time and a clean place. Chill rapidly just above freezing (34 to 36 degrees F.). Avoid freezing. Locker concerns often provide chilling rooms at a nominal charge. Freeze only selected cuts to promote economy.

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Further directions on fattening for slaughter, and for cutting may be obtained from the Agricultural Extension Service at Fort Collins, Colorado, or from your county agent.

Cleanliness Important.—Freezing does not sterilize the meat, although it may kill some bacteria and inactivate most molds, bacteria, and enzymes. Sterilize equipment used and keep slaughtering quarters and workers as clean as possible. There is no danger of food poisoning if good-quality meat is properly handled. Wild game that has been on the road several days is usually a poor locker investment.

Wrapping and Containers.—Use good, strong, wrapping materials. They should give no “off” flavors and should be grease and blood proof as well as moisture-vapor proof. Protection during storage depends in part on the paper used. “Freezer burn” or drying may be due to poor-quality paper allowing the passage of air. The giblets and other pieces of poultry may be packed in a carton or wrapped in moisture-vapor-proof paper and then placed in a carton. Regular freezer-locker paper which has a waxy preparation on one side is often used. Generally two wrappings are needed to prevent drying out of meat.

Freezing and Storage.—Quick freeze at 10 degrees below zero F., with a moving air current. Store at 0 degree F. In general, pork which is more susceptible to rancidity than other meats, may be kept frozen 4 to 5 months. Poultry, lamb, and beef can be stored 6 to 12 months. A constant turnover of meats in frozen storage means economy.

Care and Use of Frozen Meat

Cook as soon as completely thawed, otherwise it will begin to spoil. Avoid putting into water.

Cooking.—Either of these methods may be used:

1. Place frozen meat directly into moderate oven. Allow about 10 to 20 minutes per pound **more** than for fresh or thawed cuts.

2. Thaw meat in refrigerator. It will take a 3 or 4-pound roast 2 or 3 days to thaw completely.

Labeling and Records

Use adhesive tape, china-marking pencil, or a wax crayon for labeling. Give date, name, product, and type of pack. A record book with additional information is valuable.

Table for Preparing Meats for Freezing

Kinds	Handling	Chilling	Preparation	Wrapping	Storing
Beef	Well-finished. Compact, rounded cuts store best. Family-size portions	2 weeks if possible. 34 to 36°F.	Follow standard method of cutting.	Use moisture - vapor proof paper as well as grease—and blood proof.	Label and date. Freeze at 10° below zero F. with moving air current. Store in locker at 0°F.
Lamb	Well-finished. (see beef)	3 to 10 days preferred.	Follow standard method of cutting.	Same	Same
Pork	Well-finished. (see beef)	2 days	Same	Same	Same
Veal	Rapid handling. (see beef)	2 days	Same	Same	Same
Ground meat	Rapid handling.	Thorough chilling.	No seasoning except salt. Pack firmly to exclude air. (Other seasonings are apt to give tainted flavor.)	Use moisture - vapor proof paper for wrapping with waxed side toward meat.	Same
Wild Game	Rapid handling.	Thorough chilling.		Same	Same
Game and Domestic Poultry	Semi-scald or dry pick. Singe. Draw immediately. Proper killing and bleeding essential for good-quality frozen poultry.	Cool thoroughly over night.	Halving or cutting conserves locker space. Remove head, neck, oil sac, shanks, entrails. Chicken for frying should be disjointed.	Wrap in moisture-vapor proof paper and place in container.	Same
Fish	Rapid handling.	Chill.	Glaze by dipping in water and freezing on open tray. Repeat 3 times.	Or pack in water in airtight container. Allow for expansion.	Same Keeps well for 6 months.