

## Freezing

### Blanching

Blanching (scalding vegetables in boiling water or steam for a short time) is a must for almost all vegetables to be frozen. It stops enzyme actions which can cause loss of flavor, color and texture.

Blanching cleanses the surface of dirt and organisms, brightens the color and helps retard loss of vitamins. It also wilts or softens vegetables and makes them easier to pack.

Blanching time is crucial and varies with the vegetable and size. Underblanching stimulates the activity of enzymes and is worse than no blanching. Overblanching causes loss of flavor, color, vitamins and minerals. Follow recommended blanching times (pages 229-230).

### Water Blanching

For home freezing, the most satisfactory way to heat all vegetables is in boiling water. Use a blancher which has a blanching basket and cover, or fit a wire basket into a large pot with a lid.

Use one gallon water per pound of prepared vegetables. Put the vegetable in a blanching basket and lower into vigorously boiling water. Place a lid on the blancher. The water should return to boiling within 1 minute, or you are using too much vegetable for the amount of boiling water. Start counting blanching time as soon as the water returns to a boil. Keep heat high for the time given in the directions for the vegetable you are freezing.

### Steam Blanching

Heating in steam is recommended for a few vegetables. For broccoli, pumpkin, sweet potatoes and winter squash, both steaming and boiling are satisfactory methods. Steam blanching takes about 1½ times longer than water blanching.

To steam, use a pot with a tight lid and a basket that holds the food at least three inches above the bottom of the pot. Put an inch or two of water in the pot and bring the water to a boil.

Put the vegetables in the basket in a single layer so that steam reaches all parts quickly. Cover the pot and keep heat high. Start counting steaming time as soon as the lid is on. See steam [blanching times](#) recommended for the vegetables listed below.

### Cooling

As soon as blanching is complete, vegetables should be cooled quickly and thoroughly to stop the cooking process. To cool, plunge the basket of vegetables immediately into a large quantity of cold water, 60°F or below. Change water frequently or use cold running water or ice water. If ice is used, about one pound of ice for each pound of vegetable is needed. Cooling vegetables should take the same amount of time as blanching.

Drain vegetables thoroughly after cooling. Extra moisture can cause a loss of quality when vegetables are frozen.

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## Blanching Times\*

Vegetable	Blanching Time (minutes)
<b>Artichoke-Globe</b> (Hearts)	7
<b>Artichoke-Jerusalem</b>	3-5
<b>Asparagus</b> Small Stalk Medium Stalk Large Stalk	2 3 4
<b>Beans-Snap, Green, or Wax</b>	3
<b>Beans-Lima, Butter, or Pinto</b> Small Medium Large	2 3 4
Beets	cook
<b>Broccoli</b> (flowerets 1 1/2 inches across) Steamed	3 5
<b>Brussel Sprouts</b> Small Heads Medium Heads Large Heads	3 4 5
<b>Cabbage or Chinese Cabbage</b> (shredded)	1 1/2
<b>Carrots</b> Small Diced, Sliced or Lengthwise Strips	5 2
<b>Cauliflower</b> (flowerets, 1 inch across)	3
<b>Celery</b>	3
<b>Corn</b> Corn-on-the-cob Small Ears Medium Ears Large Ears Whole Kernel or Cream Style	7 9 11

<b>Vegetable</b>	<b>Blanching Time (minutes)</b>
<i>(ears blanched before cutting corn from cob)</i>	4
<b>Eggplant</b>	4
<b>Greens</b> Collards All Other	3 2
<b>Kohlrabi</b> Whole Cubes	3 1
<b>Mushrooms</b> Whole <i>(steamed)</i> Buttons or Quarters <i>(steamed)</i> Slices <i>steamed)</i>	5 3 1/2 3
<b>Okra</b> Small Pods Large Pods	3 4
<b>Onions</b> <i>(blanch until center is heated)</i> Rings	3-7 10-15 seconds
<b>Peas-Edible Pod</b>	1 1/2-3
<b>Peas-Field</b> <i>(blackeye)</i>	2
<b>Peas-Green</b>	1 1/2
<b>Peppers-Sweet</b> Halves Strips or Rings	3 2
<b>Potatoes-Irish (New)</b>	3-5
<b>Pumpkin</b>	cook
<b>Rutabagas</b>	3
<b>Soybeans-Green</b>	5
<b>Squash-Chayote</b>	2
<b>Squash-Summer</b>	3

<b>Vegetable</b>	<b>Blanching Time (minutes)</b>
<b>Squash-Winter</b>	cook
<b>Sweet Potatoes</b>	cook
<b>Turnips or Parsnips</b> Cubes	2

\*blanching times are for water blanching unless otherwise indicated.

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