

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FREEZING CLAMS --	2
FREEZING CRAB --	3
FREEZING FISH --	4
FREEZING FISH ROE --	5
FREEZING FISH IN SAUCE --	6
FREEZING LOBSTER --	7
FREEZING OYSTERS --	8
FREEZING SCALLOPS --	9
FREEZING SHRIMP --	10
SAUCE RECIPES FOR FROZEN FISH --	11
THAWING FROZEN FISH --	12

FREEZING CLAMS

Freeze clams either in the shell or shucked. To freeze in the shell, simply place the live clams in moisture-vapor resistant bags. Press out excess air and freeze.

To freeze shucked meat, clean and wash the meat thoroughly. Drain and pack in freezer containers, leaving $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch headspace. Seal, label, and freeze.

Shellfish has a recommended shelf life of 3 months at 0°F. For best quality, use the recommended storage times. After these times, the food should still be safe, just lower in quality.

Source:

E.L. Andress and J.A. Harrison. 1999. *So Easy to Preserve*. Fourth Edition. Cooperative Extension Service/University of Georgia. Athens, GA. 344 pp.

Reviewed:

August 2002 by Angela Fraser, Ph.D., Associate Professor/Food Safety Education Specialist, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC.

FREEZING CRAB

Select only live crab to prepare for freezing. Crab will freeze better if the meat is not picked before freezing. Simply remove the back, legs, entrails and gills either before or after boiling the crab for five minutes. Cool it quickly after it is cooked. Wrap the claws and body or core of the crab that still contains the meat or use an ice-glaze and then wrap in freezer wrap or paper. Seal, label, and freeze.

Frozen crab has a recommended shelf life of 3 months at 0°F. For best quality, use the recommended storage times. After these times, the food should still be safe, just lower in quality.

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FREEZING FISH

Preparation:

Freeze only fresh fish. Wash fish, and remove scale by scraping fish gently from tail to head with the dull edge or a knife or spoon. Remove entrails after cutting entire length of belly from vent to head. Remove head by cutting above collarbone. Break the backbone over the edge of a cutting board or table. Remove the dorsal or large back fin by cutting flesh along each side and pulling the fin out. Do not trim the fins with kitchen shears or a knife because the bones will be left at the base of the fin.

Wash fish under cold, running water. Cut large fish into steaks or fillets. To make steaks, cut fish crosswise into $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick steaks. To make fillets, cut down the back of the fish from tail to head. Then cut down to the backbone just above collarbone. Turn the knife flat and cut the flesh along the backbone to the tail, allowing the knife to run over the rib bones. Lift off the entire side of the fish in one piece, freeing fillet at tail. Turn fish over and cut fillet from other side.

Pretreating:

Dip fatty fish (mullet, mackerel, trout, tuna, and salmon) for 20 seconds in an ascorbic acid solution made from two tablespoons ascorbic acid to one quart of cold water. Dip lean fish (flounder, cod, whiting, redfish, croaker, snapper, grouper, sheepshead, and most freshwater fish) for 20 seconds in a brine of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt to 1 quart of cold water to firm the flesh and decrease the drip loss on thawing. If lemon-gelatin glaze is used, neither of these pretreatments is needed.

Packaging:

If packing several fish in the same package, place freezer paper or wrap between for easier separation.

Lemon-gelatin glaze -- Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup lemon juice with 1-3/4 cups water. Dissolve one packet of unflavored gelatin into $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the lemon juice-water mixture. Heat the remaining 1-1/2 cups of liquid to boiling. Stir the dissolved gelatin mixture into the boiling liquid. Cool to room temperature. When cool, dip the cold fish into the lemon-gelatin glaze and drain. Wrap the fish in moisture-vapor resistant packaging, label, and freeze.

Ice glaze – Place unwrapped fish in the freezer to freeze. As soon as it is frozen, dip the fish in near-freezing ice water. Place fish again in the freezer for a few minutes to harden the glaze. Repeat this process until a uniform cover of ice is formed. Wrap the fish in moisture vapor resistant paper or place in a freezer bag, label, and freeze.

Water – Place fish in a shallow metal, foil or plastic pan; cover with water and freeze. To prevent evaporation of the ice, wrap the container in freezer paper after it is frozen, label, and freeze.

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FREEZING FISH ROE

Thoroughly wash and package in freezer containers or bags and boxes, leaving 1/4-inch headspace. Seal and freeze. Frozen roe has a recommended shelf-life of about 3 months. For best quality, use the recommended storage times. After these times, the food should still be safe, just lower in quality.

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FREEZING FISH IN SAUCE

Fish can be frozen in a sauce in boil-in-a-bag pouches or other suitable container. (Good choices include tomato and mushroom sauce, which are included in this database). Place fish in the package with sauce, seal, and freeze. Thaw in refrigerator. Cook to at least 145°F. It should be used within 2-4 months. For best quality, use the recommended storage times. After these times, the food should still be safe, just lower in quality.

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FREEZING LOBSTER

For best quality, freeze uncooked. Freeze lobster whole, or clean it and freeze just the shell portions that contain the edible meat. (Some lobsters have large front claws that contain edible meat, while others have edible meat mainly in the tail section.)

Freeze in the shell to keep the meat from drying out. Wrap the whole lobster or its portions in moisture-vapor resistant wrapping and freeze.

Frozen lobster has a recommended shelf-life of 3 months at 0°F. For best quality, use the recommended storage times. After these times, the food should still be safe, just lower in quality.

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FREEZING OYSTERS

Oysters can be frozen either in the shell or shucked. Freezing changes the texture and flavor of oysters. Frozen oysters are best used in casseroles or stews.

Only freeze oysters in the shell that are still alive. A live oyster will keep its shell tightly closed or will close when tapped. Wash the shells thoroughly and place in moisture-vapor resistant bags.

To freeze shucked oysters, shuck into a strainer (save the liquor) and remove any pieces of shell or sand. If necessary, rinse to remove any sand. Place oysters and liquor in a plastic container or freezer bag, leaving -inch headspace, seal and freeze.

Frozen oysters have a recommended shelf life of 3 months at 0°F. For best quality, use the recommended storage times. After these times, the food should still be safe, just lower in quality.

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FREEZING SCALLOPS

Scallops for freezing should be alive until shucked. A live scallop will keep its shell tightly closed or will close it when tapped. To freeze, place shucked scallops in a freezer container, leaving 1-inch headspace, seal, and freeze.

Frozen scallops have a recommended shelf life of 3 months at 0°F. For best quality, use the recommended storage times. After these times, the food should still be safe, just lower in quality.

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FREEZING SHRIMP

Shrimp can be frozen cooked or raw, in or out of the shell. To maximize shelf life, freeze shrimp raw, with heads removed, but shells still on. Shrimp can also be frozen in water in a freezer container. Wash and drain shrimp if frozen uncooked. Quickly chill cooked shrimp before freezing. Package in freezer containers or bags, leaving 1/4-inch headspace, seal, and freeze.

Frozen shrimp has a recommended shelf life of 3 months at 0°F. For best quality, use the recommended storage times. After these times, the food should still be safe, just lower in quality.

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SAUCE RECIPES FOR FROZEN FISH

Tomato Sauce

Ingredients:

2 cups stewed tomatoes
1 small onion, chopped fine
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoon melted butter or margarine
2 tablespoon flour

Procedure. Simmer tomatoes, onion, salt and pepper together for 10 minutes. Combine melted butter with flour. Gradually add tomato mixture to flour and butter. Cook until thick, stirring constantly. Cool before adding to fish. Makes 2 cups.

Mushroom Sauce

Ingredients:

1/3 cup diced onion
2 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 tablespoon chopped green pepper
1 can undiluted cream of mushroom soup
1 cup milk
1 teaspoon red pepper
_ teaspoon salt

Procedure. Saute onion in oil until yellow. Add green pepper and cook 3 minutes. Gradually stir in soup and milk. Add seasonings and heat, stirring constantly. Cool before adding to fish. Makes 2 cups.

Place fish in package with either sauce, seal and freeze. Thaw in refrigerator. Cook to at least 145°F. It should be used within 2-4 months. For best quality, use the recommended storage times. After these times, the food should still be safe, just lower in quality.

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THAWING FROZEN FISH

Fish can be cooked successfully without thawing first by allowing additional cooking time. Approximately double the time in a recipe is needed to fully cook frozen fish. If a recipe calls for breading, stuffing or broiling thawed fish works the best. Thaw fish in its original wrapping in the refrigerator or under cold running water. Never allow fish to thaw at room temperature. Thaw fish only until it has just become pliable. It may still have some ice crystals in it. Free fish frozen in ice blocks by running cold water over the block. When the fish is free of ice, remove it and wipe dry. Cook at once. If thawed fish is required, remove fish when freed of ice and let stand in clean, cold water until just thawed. Drain, wipe dry and cook at once. To avoid the leaching effect of the water, remove the fish when free of ice and cover with aluminum foil or food wrap and finish thawing in the refrigerator. Cook at once. Thawing times vary with the size and shape of the package and with a temperature. Typically, a pound of fish requires 6 to 8 hours to thaw in the refrigerator or 1 to 2 hours to thaw under cold water.

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