

Food Safety Guidelines

Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before beginning to work and after changing tasks or after doing anything that could contaminate your hands, such as sneezing or using the bathroom.

Start with clean equipment. After using, clean equipment thoroughly with hot soapy water.

After washing cutting boards, other equipment and surfaces with hot soapy water and rinsing, sanitize with a solution of 1 tablespoon chlorine bleach per gallon of water (or approx. 1 teaspoon per four cups water). After spraying the surface or dipping cutting boards in the solution, allow to air-dry. Remake sanitizing solution daily.

Keep raw meat separate from other foods on cutting boards and other work surfaces. Consider using color-coded cutting boards for raw meat and other foods.

If using frozen meat in sausage formulations, thaw meat in a refrigerator at 40°F or below on the lowest shelf to avoid dripping of juices on ready-to-eat foods.

Always thaw frozen meats and fish in the refrigerator, not at room temperature.



Original Development by:

Martin Marchello, Professor, Department of Animal and Range Sciences, North Dakota State University and Julie Garden-Robinson, Food and Nutrition Specialist/Assistant Professor, North Dakota State University Extension Service, revised 2003

Lana Hardy, County Extension Agent, Home Economics, Lawrence County, Ohio Cooperative Extension Service, 1991

Additional Resource: National Center for Home Food Preservation at <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/index.html>

Adapted for Oklahoma by Barbara Brown, Food Specialist, Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, 2007



Oklahoma State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, State and Local Governments cooperating. Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, disability, or status as a veteran and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.



Freezing Game Meats & Fish



Freezing meat and fish is the most accepted way to maintain quality.

Game Meats

Use only meat from healthy, disease-free animals. Chill meat quickly after killing to 40°F or lower to prevent spoilage. Use packaging designed for freezer storage. Wrap tightly; pressing out as much air as possible.

Large Game—Deer, moose, antelope and other large game can be handled like any other meat. Trim and discard bloodshot meat and all traces of fat before freezing. Package meat, seal, label and freeze.

Small Game—Rabbit, squirrel and other small game should be skinned, dressed and then chilled. Refrigerate for 24 to 36 hours until meat is no longer rigid. Cut into serving size pieces or leave whole. Package, seal, label and freeze.

Poultry and Game Birds—Package in freezer paper or wrap, or place in freezer bags. Game birds should be cleaned and dressed as soon as possible after shooting. Remove excess fat on wild ducks and geese. Do not stuff poultry or game birds before freezing.

Storage—Maintain freezer at 0°F or less. Frozen ground meat should be used within 3 months. Venison will keep frozen for 8 to 12 months, game birds about 12 months.

Fish

Fish for freezing should be as fresh as possible.

Preparation — Wash fish, and remove scales by scraping fish gently from tail to head with the dull edge of a knife or spoon.

Remove entrails after cutting entire length of belly from vent to head. Remove head by cutting above collarbone. Break backbone over edge of cutting board or table.

Remove dorsal or large back fin by cutting flesh along each side and pulling fin out. Do not trim fins with shears or a knife because bones will be left at the base of the fin.

Wash fish thoroughly in cold running water. Fish is now dressed or pan dressed, depending on size. Large fish should be cut into steaks or fillets for easier cooking. For steaks, cut fish crosswise into 3/4-inch thick steaks. For fillets, cut down back of fish from tail to head. Then cut down to backbone just above collarbone. Turn knife flat and cut flesh along backbone to tail, allowing knife to run over rib bones. Lift off entire side of fish in one piece, freeing fillet at tail. Turn fish over and cut fillet from other side.

Pretreating—Fish are categorized as either fat or lean fish, by the amount of fat in their flesh. “Fat fish” includes varieties such as mullet, mackerel, trout, tuna and salmon. Most freshwater fish are “lean fish.”

Before freezing, fish can be pretreated to improve the quality of the stored fish. Fat fish should be dipped for 20 seconds in an ascorbic acid solution made from 2 tablespoons crystalline ascorbic acid to one quart of cold water to control rancidity and flavor change. Lean fish may be dipped for 20 seconds in a brine of 1/4 cup salt to 1 quart cold water to

firm the fish and decrease drip loss from thawing. (These pretreatments are not needed if a lemon-gelatin glaze is used.)



Packaging—Fish may be frozen using any of the following methods. If several fish are placed in the same package, place freezer paper or wrap between them for easier separation.

- **Lemon-Gelatin Glaze**—To prepare glaze, mix 1/4 cup lemon juice and 1-3/4 cups water. Dissolve one packet of unflavored gelatin in 1/2 cup lemon juice-water mixture. Heat remaining 1-1/2 cups of liquid to boiling. Stir dissolved gelatin mixture into boiling liquid. Cool to room temperature. When cool, dip the cold fish into lemon-gelatin glaze and drain. Wrap fish in moisture-vapor resistant packaging, label and freeze.
- **Ice Glaze**—Place unwrapped fish on trays in freezer to freeze. As soon as fish is frozen, dip it in near-freezing ice water. Place fish again in the freezer a few minutes to harden the glaze. Take fish out, and repeat glazing until a uniform cover of ice is formed. Wrap fish in moisture-vapor resistant paper or place in freezer bags, label and freeze.
- **Water**—Place fish in a shallow metal, foil or plastic pan; cover with water and freeze. To prevent evaporation of ice, wrap container in freezer paper after it is frozen, label and freeze. This method will produce a poorer quality product than using a glaze.