



# SHOP SMART EAT WELL

Fall  
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...a quarterly bulletin from the UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program

## Can Fruits and Vegetables Fit into Your Budget?

We all know that fruits and vegetables are good for your health. They contain vitamins, minerals, and other important nutrients. Many people think that when you are shopping on a budget, there's no room for these tasty options.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are usually the best price when purchased in season. This is a great time to stock up, but how are you going to use that much ripe produce?

### **FREEZE IT!**

Read on for some important definitions and the best way to freeze summer produce, so you can enjoy it through the winter.

**Cookie Sheet Method:** Freeze small pieces of produce in a single layer on a rimmed cookie sheet. Once the produce is frozen, transport to a freezer bag or reusable container.



**Blanching:** A cooking process where fruits and/or vegetables are scalded briefly in boiling water, then plunged into ice water to stop the cooking process. This helps produce to maintain bright flavors, color, and texture through the freezing process.

#### **Freezing Tips:**

- Blanch most vegetables
- Remove pits from all stone fruit (cherries, plums, etc.)
- Slice large produce into manageable pieces
- Remove as much air as possible from freezer bags and pack reusable containers to the top
- Don't forget to write a date on all items

See reverse side for freezing common summer produce.

# Freezing Common Summer Produce



**Berries:** Stock up during the summer when berries are less expensive, higher in vitamin C, and more flavorful! Use the Cookie Sheet Method.

**Peaches, Plums, and Cherries:** Remove pits first and slice into bite-sized pieces. Use the Cookie Sheet Method. If you prefer fuzz-free peaches, blanch and peel first.

**Zucchini:** What to do with all that zucchini? Quickly blanch and use the Cookie Sheet Method. Zucchini has high water content, making it slightly mushy once thawed, so use it in recipes like lasagna or pureed into a sauce. Or, grate and freeze flat in bags to make zucchini bread!

**Green Beans:** Trim and cut beans to desired size, then blanch and use the Cookie Sheet Method.

**Tomatoes:** Blanched and peeled tomatoes can be frozen and used in recipes later. However, tomatoes tend to freeze best when already cooked into something like sauce or soup.

## Basic Tomato Sauce

Makes about 6 servings

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, peeled and chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 pound fresh tomatoes, seeds removed and chopped
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon dried basil, oregano, or Italian seasoning (if you like)
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste

### Directions

1. Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook until soft. Stir in garlic and cook 1 minute.
2. Stir in tomatoes, black pepper, salt, and sugar. If using basil, oregano, or Italian seasoning, add that too.
3. Cook 15 minutes.
4. Stir in tomato paste and cook another 15 to 20 minutes.

*Recipe from What's Cooking, USDA Mixing Bowl*

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