

Food Facts

Cool News About Frozen Foods

(NAPSA)—Imagine a way for your family to enjoy fresh produce, meat and fish every day, without having to worry about the food spoiling before you get to it again. Actually, there is such a way and people have been doing it for thousands of years—preserving food by freezing it.

More recently, new techniques mean frozen food is even longer lasting, safer and just as nutritious as the “fresh” or refrigerated products found in your kitchen. For example, frozen fruits and vegetables are processed within hours of harvest, “locking in” their vitamins and minerals. Researchers at the University of California Center for Excellence in Fruit and Vegetable Quality found frozen fruits and vegetables are nutritionally similar to their “fresh” counterparts at the time of consumption. And the Produce for Better Health Foundation says that when it comes to good nutrition, all forms count—fresh, frozen, canned, dried and 100 percent juice.

More good news: Frozen products are often much lower in cost per serving and have a much greater shelf life than refrigerated foods. They can also be more easily portioned and stored for use at a later time, reducing spoilage and waste. A recent Zogby International survey found that 87 percent of consumers purchase frozen foods because they’re convenient and easy to prepare.

Once you purchase frozen food, however, you have to treat it right. The experts at the Frozen Food Foundation explain how:

- Get it into your home freezer as quickly as possible. Consider keeping a cooler or insulated bag in your car so frozen products don’t thaw on the way home.



Flash frozen shrimp and vegetables can be stir-fried into a delicious dinner any night of the week.

- To protect the nutrients in frozen food, set your freezer to 0° F.

- If you can see the product through the package, make sure no frost or ice crystals have formed, which could indicate the product has been thawed and refrozen.

- When choosing frozen seafood and shellfish, look for packages that aren’t open, torn or damaged.

- To thaw frozen seafood, place it in the refrigerator overnight. If you must use frozen seafood before it has a chance to thaw on its own, seal it in a plastic bag and immerse it in cold water to bring the temperature up or use the “defrost” setting on your microwave.

- Follow the instructions when preparing frozen foods. Most frozen foods are “ready-to-cook,” which, as their name suggests, means they must be cooked prior to consumption.

- If you can, use a microwave oven to prepare frozen vegetables. When you cover vegetables with water and boil them or fry them on the stove top, vitamins and minerals can leach out.

You can learn more at www.frozenfoodfacts.org.