

"BEST IF USED BY" GUIDE

The "Best If Used By" date is intended to tell you how long the product will retain best flavor or quality. **The term is not a safety date.** "Best If Used By" dates are intended as useful guidelines. Some foods may deteriorate more quickly and other foods may last longer than the times suggested. A number of factors can shorten the useful life of a food product, such as improper handling and inadequate storage temperatures. The inventory control method of "first-in-first-out" [FIFO] should be practiced by those responsible for managing commodity inventories and distribution at the State and local level. Length of storage period is in relationship to pack date. Suggested temperatures do not preclude contamination by rodents and insects, assuming storage in original unopened containers. Store foods off the floor, and away from walls to allow for circulation of air. Products kept past the "Best If Used By" date are not necessarily "out of condition." **Food products may be eaten after the "Best If Used By" date if the product has been properly stored, handled, and the primary container is in good condition.**

Recommended Maximum Storage Period In Months

COMMODITIES	Dry Storage			
	0° F or below (-18° C)	40° F (4° C)	70° F (21° C)	90° F (32° C)
BEANS & PEAS				
Beans, cnd	—	72	36	18
Beans, Dried	—	24	12	9
Beans, Refried, cnd	—	72	36	18
Beans, Vegetarian, cnd	—	48	24	12
Lentils, Dried	—	24	12	9
Peas, Black-Eyed, cnd	—	72	36	18
Peas, Black-Eyed, Dried	—	24	12	9
DAIRY (Cheese is located on the last page)				
Milk, Nonfat, Dry	—	24	12	3
FRUIT				
Apple Slices, cnd	—	48	24	12
Apple Slices, Frz	18	—	—	—
Apple Juice, cnd	—	—	9	—
Applesauce, cnd	—	48	24	12
Apricots, cnd	—	48	24	12
Apricots, sliced, Frz	18	—	—	—
Blackberries, Frz	18	—	—	—
Blackberry Puree, Frz	18	—	—	—
Blueberries, Frz	18	—	—	—
Cherries, cnd	—	9	3-4	2-3
Cherries, Frz	24	—	—	—
Cherries, Dried	—	—	12	—
Cranberries, Dried	—	—	6-12	—
Cranberry Juice Concentrate	—	—	9	—
Cranberry Sauce Cnd	—	—	12-18	—
Date Products	—	5	—	—
Date Products, Frz	12	—	—	—

Recommended Maximum Storage Period In Months

COMMODITIES	Frozen	Refrigerated	Dry Storage	
	0° F or below (-18° C)	40° F (4° C)	70° F (21° C)	90° F (32° C)
Fig Nuggets	—	24	—	—
Figs, Whole, Dried	—	9	3-4	2-3
Fruit Cocktail, cnd	—	48	24	12
Orange Juice, Concentrate, Frz	24	—	—	—
Orange Juice, Single Serve, Frz	9	—	—	—
Peaches, cnd	—	48	24	12
Peaches, Sliced Freestone, Frz	18	—	—	—
Pears, cnd	—	36	18	9
Pineapple, cnd	—	48	24	12
Plum/Prune Puree	—	—	9	—
Plums, cnd	—	36	18	9
Prunes, Pitted, Dried	—	18	9	5
Raisins	—	18	9	5
Raspberry Puree, Frz	18	—	—	—
Strawberries, IQF, Frz	15	—	—	—
Strawberries, Sliced, Sweetened, Frz	15	—	—	—
GRAINS & CEREALS				
Cornmeal	—	24	12	6
Flour	—	24	12	6
Macaroni, Spaghetti, Rotini (Spirals)	—	72	36	18
Macaroni N' Cheese, Frz	6	2 weeks	—	—
Oats, Rolled, Quick	—	24	12	6
Rice, Brown	—	6	3	—
Rice, White, Enriched, Parboiled	—	30	20	10
Rice, White, Enriched, Regular	—	48	24	12
Wheat, Rolled, Quick	—	24	12	6
MEATS, POULTRY, FISH				
Beef Roasts, Ready to Cook, Frz	12	—	—	—
Beef, cnd with Natural Juices	—	60	36	18
Beef, Ground, Bulk, Frz	9	—	—	—
Beef, Ground, Patties, Frz	4	—	—	—
Chicken Meat, Cooked, Diced, Frz	6	—	—	—
Chicken Parts, Cooked, Breaded, Frz	4	—	—	—
Chicken, cnd, Boned	—	60	36	18
Chicken, Cut-up, Frz	8	—	—	—
Chicken, Thighs & Drumsticks, Frz	8	—	—	—
Chicken, Fajita	6	—	—	—
Egg Mix, All Purpose	—	—	12 - 15	—
Eggs, Pasteurized, Whole, Frz	12	—	—	—
Ham, Cooked, Frz	6	—	—	—
Ham, Water Added, Chilled	—	4	—	—
Pork Sausage, Frz	3	—	—	—
Pork, cnd with Natural Juices	—	60	36	18

Recommended Maximum Storage Period In Months

COMMODITIES	Frozen	Refrigerated	Dry Storage	
	0° F or below (-18° C)	40° F (4° C)	70° F (21° C)	90° F (32° C)
Pork, Ground, Frz	9	—	—	—
Pork, Fresh Ham Roast, Boneless	6-12	—	—	—
Salmon Nuggets, Frz	6	—	—	—
Salmon, Pink	—	72	36	18
Tuna, Chunk Light, cnd in Water	—	72	36	18
Turkey Breast, Deli-Style, Frz	4	—	—	—
Turkey Hams, Smoked, Frz	3-4	—	—	—
Turkey Rolls, Frz 4/10#	4	—	—	—
Turkey Roasts, Frz	7	—	—	—
Turkey Sausage, Frz	3	—	—	—
Turkey, Ground, Frz	3	—	—	—
Turkey, Whole, Frz	9	—	—	—
VEGETABLES				
Beans, Green, cnd	—	48	24	12
Beans, Green, Frz	12	—	—	—
Carrots, cnd	—	60	30	15
Carrots, Frz	12	—	—	—
Corn, Kernel, cnd	—	72	36	18
Corn, Kernel, Frz	24	—	—	—
Peas, Green, cnd	—	72	36	18
Peas, Green, Frz	14	—	—	—
Potatoes, French Fried & Rounds, Frz	12	—	—	—
Potatoes, Instant or Sliced, dehy	—	12	6	3
Potatoes, Sweet, In syrup, Cnd	—	—	24	—
Salsa, Tomato, cnd	—	48	24	12
Spaghetti Sauce, Meatless	—	48	24	12
Sweet Potatoes, cnd	—	48	24	12
Sweet Potatoes, Frz	12	—	—	—
Tomato Paste, cnd	—	36	18	9
Tomato Sauce, cnd	—	48	24	12
Tomatoes, cnd	—	48	24	12
Vegetables, Mixed, Frzn	12	—	—	—
OTHER				
Almonds Natural	—	4-6	—	—
Almonds Roasted	—	4-6	—	—
Peanut Butter	—	36	18	9
Peanuts, Roasted	—	60	24	12
Salad Dressing, Reduced Calorie	—	8	5	2
Trail Mix	—	—	6	—
Vegetable Oil	—	24	12	6
Vegetable Shortening	—	48	24	12
Walnuts, Shelled	20	10	—	—

Recommended Maximum Storage Period In Months

COMMODITIES	Frozen	Refrigerated	Dry Storage	
	0° F or below (-18° C)	40° F (4° C)	70° F (21° C)	90° F (32° C)
Fresh Produce: Recommended Maximum Storage Period In Weeks/Days				
Apples, Fresh	–	6 weeks	–	–
Apples, Sliced	–	10 days	–	–
Avocados, Hass		2 days		
Carrots, Whole Baby, Bulk	–	3-5 days	–	–
Carrots, Whole Baby, Snack-pack	–	2-3 days	–	–
Cantalope, Whole		3-5 days		
Celery Sticks		10-14 days		
Grapes, Seedless, Fresh	–	3-5 days	–	–
Iceberg/Romaine Mix		10 days		
Kiwi Fruit, Fresh	–	5-10 days	–	–
Oranges, Fresh	–	3 weeks	–	–
Pears, Bartlett, Fresh	–	2 days	–	–
Pears, D'Anjou, Fresh	–	2-3 days	–	–
Pineapple Spears	–	8 days	–	–
Romaine Lettuce		10 days		
Salad-Lettuce Mix (3-way)	–	10 days	–	–
Spinach, Ready-to-Eat		10 days		
Strawberries, Fresh	–	2-3 days	–	–
Tangerines, Fresh	–	14-28 days	–	–

CHEESE COMMODITIES	Frozen	Refrigerated	Thawed
	0° F or below (-18° C)	32-35° F (0 - 1.65° C)	Frozen at 0° F or below, & thawed at 35 F or below (-18° C and 1.65 C)

Recommended Maximum Storage Period in Months For Unopened Packages

Cheese, Am., Past., Process, block	–	12	–
Cheese, Am., Past., Process, sliced	–	6	–
Cheese, Am., Past., Process, shredded	–	5	–
Cheese, Cheddar, block	–	12	–
Cheese, Cheddar, shredded	–	6	–
Cheese, Cheddar, Reduced Fat, block	–	5	–
Cheese, Cheddar, Red. Fat, shredded	–	5	–
Cheese, Mozzarella, block	12	–	7–10 days
Cheese, Mozzarella, Lite	5	–	7–10 days
Cheese, Mozzarella, Unfrozen		Immediately	

Adapted from USDA Fact Sheets (<http://www.usda.gov/fcs/commodities>) and USDA Food and Nutrition Service

Other Sources: http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/BODY_HE5517 and <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dfm/fns/commbest.html>