

Freezing Strawberries

When you have more strawberries than you can eat or when strawberries can be obtained at a reasonable cost, freeze them to eat later. For freshly made strawberry jam at any time of the year, freeze berries and then make the jam at your convenience.

Strawberries are easy to freeze. You can use a dry-sugar or a syrup pack. The dry-sugar pack is especially easy and gives the best flavor and color for sliced or crushed berries. For whole frozen berries a syrup pack is recommended because it produces a plump, well-shaped berry after thawing. For special sugar-free diets, strawberries can be frozen unsweetened, but they will not be as high in quality as sugar- or syrup-packed berries.

No matter which type of pack you choose to use, follow these general directions for preparing and packaging strawberries for freezing:

- Use only firm, fully ripe berries.
- To avoid bruising and soaking the berries, wash only a few at a time in cold water.
- Drain on absorbent paper or in a colander or sieve.
- Remove the hulls with the tip of a floating blade peeler.
- Chill the fruit in ice water to lower its temperature for fast freezing.

When packaging for freezing:

- Do not fill containers completely; allow a head space of ½" for pints, 1/4" for 1 1/2 pints, and 1" for quarts.
- Ascorbic acid (vitamin C) may be purchased in crystalline or tablet form or as a commercial ascorbic acid mixture to help prevent darkening of foods. If using the crystalline form, dissolve ½ teaspoon of ascorbic acid in each pint of water, berry I . nice, or crushed berries. For a dry-sugar pack, mix the ascorbic acid with the sugar. If using tablets, use 1,500 milligrams per pint; crush the tablets so that they will dissolve more readily. When using a commercial mixture, follow the manufacturer's directions.
- Seal containers and label with the name of the product and the date frozen.
- Freeze promptly, then store at 0 degree F or below.

Dry-Sugar Pack

- Halve, quarter, or slice clean berries into a bowl or shallow pan. If desired, berries may be crushed rather than sliced.
- Sprinkle sugar over berries, using 1/3 to [3/4 cup](#) sugar for each quart of fruit.
- Gently turn berries over and over until the sugar is thoroughly dissolved.
- Package and freeze.

Syrup Pack

Make a syrup using 1 1/4 cups water to each cup sugar. [Dissolve the sugar](#) in either cold or hot water; if hot water is used, be sure to chill the syrup before using. Use about ½ to 1/3 cup of syrup for each pint container. Place whole or sliced berries in containers and cover with cold syrup. Package and freeze.

Unsweetened Pack

- Pack whole, sliced, or crushed berries in containers.
- Cover whole or sliced berries with water or berry juice. For better color retention, add ascorbic acid to the water, berry juice, or crushed berries. Cover crushed berries with their own juice. Package and freeze as discussed earlier.