



A Nutrition Resource

SAFE THAWING PRACTICES

Do's and Don'ts

DO

- Keep foods out of the "Danger Zone" (40-140°F)
- Thaw foods:
 - In the refrigerator
 - In cold water
 - In the microwave

DON'T

- Keep perishable foods outside of refrigeration for more than 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature is above 90°F)
- Thaw foods:
 - On the countertop
 - In hot water

Thawing in the refrigerator

Frozen foods can be thawed in the refrigerator but require plenty of time to defrost. When thawing foods in the refrigerator, remember these tips:

- Plan ahead! Frozen foods require at least one day (24 hours) to thaw for every 5 pounds of weight.
- After thawing, ground meat, stew meat, poultry, and seafood will stay safe in the refrigerator for 1-2 days before cooking.
- After thawing, red meat cuts stay safe in the refrigerator for 3-5 days before cooking.
- Foods thawed in the refrigerator may be refrozen without cooking. This is the only method that allows for safe refreezing without cooking.

Thawing in cold water

Food thaws faster in cold water than in the refrigerator but this method can be more tedious. Keep the following in mind to safely thaw foods in cold water:

- Frozen food should be placed in leak-proof packaging prior to thawing.
- After food is properly packaged, food should be submerged in cold water to thaw.
- Cold water must be changed every 30 minutes during thawing.
- Thawing time will vary depending on the size and weight of the food.
 - 1 pound: 1 hour or less
 - 3-4 pounds: 2-3 hours
 - Whole turkey: 30 minutes for every pound
- If thawed completely, food must be cooked immediately.

Thawing in the microwave

Thawing food in the microwave is another quick method but may result in uneven thawing and cooking. Therefore, it is important to remember the following when microwave thawing:

- Some parts of the food may enter the "Danger Zone" (40-140°F) during the thawing process due to uneven heating.
- Foods thawed in the microwave must be cooked immediately after thawing.
- Microwave thawing may be more suitable for smaller portions of food.





Cooking without thawing

Don't have time to thaw? Frozen food can be safely cooked without thawing but keep in mind that cooking time will be about 50% longer compared to that of fully thawed or fresh foods.

Harvest Vegetable Salad

Yield: 8 Servings | Serving Size: 1 Cup

- 3 cups fresh or frozen (thawed) cauliflower florets
- 2 cups fresh or frozen (thawed) broccoli florets
- 1½ cups cooked red kidney beans or 1 (15-ounce) can red kidney beans, drained & rinsed
- 2 medium carrots, sliced diagonally
- ½ - 1 cup sliced large, pitted olives
- 2 green onions, sliced

Dressing

- 3 Tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1½ Tablespoons olive oil or vegetable oil
- 1 Tablespoon chopped fresh parsley or cilantro (optional)
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon dried basil (optional)
- Salt to taste (optional)

- 1) Wash all vegetables. Trim or peel as needed. Cut into bite-sized pieces.
- 2) In a large bowl, combine all salad ingredients.
- 3) In a small jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine all dressing ingredients and shake well.
- 4) Pour dressing over vegetables and stir to coat vegetables.
- 5) Cover and refrigerate 1 to 4 hours to marinate; tossing occasionally. Add salt to taste (no more than ¼ teaspoon), if desired.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	1 cup (135g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 4g	5%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 100mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 14g	5%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 3g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 5g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 35mg	2%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 392mg	8%
*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

For more information on safe food handling practices, visit **USDA's The Big Thaw** website at <https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/big-thaw-safe-defrosting-methods>

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This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact the Montana Public Assistance Helpline at 1-888-706-1535 or www.apply.mt.gov. Montana State University Extension is an ADA/EO/AA/Veteran's Preference Employer and Provider of Educational Outreach.