

# Storing Meat

**Question: Should I store meat in the refrigerator or the freezer?**

Both are great! Generally, fresh meats should not be stored in the refrigerator for more than three to five days and ground meats no longer than one to two days. Freezing is a great money-saving option if you buy meat in bulk while on sale!

**Question: Can I put meat in the freezer in its original packaging?**

You can, but to decrease the chance of freezer burn wrap the package with aluminum foil, heavy plastic bags, and/or freezer paper.

**Question: How do I thaw frozen meat?**

It is best to thaw meat overnight in the refrigerator. If you need to thaw more quickly, use the microwave or put the meat in a leak-proof plastic bag and soak in cold water. The bag should be submerged in cold tap water, changing the water every 30 minutes. One-pound packages of meat, poultry or seafood may thaw in an hour or less. A 3- to 4-pound package may take two to three hours. For whole turkeys, plan about 30 minutes per pound. When thawed completely, the food must be cooked immediately.

**Question: Can I re-freeze meat once I cook it?**

Yes, you can! Cooked meats can usually be frozen for up to three months.

## Southwestern Beef Chili with Corn

### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 poblano or bell pepper, chopped
- ½ pound ground beef
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 15-ounce cans black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- Kosher salt and pepper
- ½ cup corn kernels (from 1 ear, or frozen and thawed)
- ½ cup grated cheddar cheese (2 ounces)
- 2 scallions, sliced



### Directions

Heat the oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the carrots, onion, and poblano and cook, stirring, for three minutes. Add the beef and cook, breaking it up with a spoon, until it is no longer pink, three to five minutes.

Add the tomato paste and cook, stirring, until it is slightly darkened, one minute. Add the beans, chili powder, three cups water, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Simmer over medium heat until the vegetables are tender, about 10 minutes.

Stir in the corn. Divide among bowls and top with cheese and scallions.

**Make Ahead!**  
**Refrigerate up to 3 days or freeze for up to 3 months!**

# Freezing Meat

Different types of meats can be frozen for different periods of time. Use this table for a general guide as to how many months each can be stored.

Always remember to label the product before you freeze it. Wrap tightly and write the current date in clear view. This way you can keep track of when the product needs to be used.

Food Item	Maximum Months in Freezer
Bacon and Sausage	1-2
Poultry	2-3
Hams, Hot-Dogs, Lunch Meats	1-2
Uncooked Roast	4-12
Uncooked Steaks or Chops	4-12
Uncooked Ground Meat	3-4
Cooked Meat	2-3

**Store raw meats on plates on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator to avoid juices dripping on to other foods!**

