

# Food Storage Guide

## Store food **to stay fresh longer**



When storing **vegetables in water**, remember to replace the water every few days

Always store **cut fruits and vegetables** in the fridge

**Milk, eggs and butter** should be stored on a shelf towards the back of the fridge—the fridge door is too warm for them

Keep **onions** stored away from potatoes—they make them sprout faster

**Ripe bananas** give off a gas that makes the fruit around them ripen faster—store them away from other fruit



Keep **meats** in the coldest part of the fridge—usually the lower shelf or the meat drawer

For longer storage, keep **bread** in the freezer—putting it in the fridge makes it stale faster

Remove **rubber bands and twist ties** from vegetables before storing

Remove the **green tops** of carrots, beets and radishes before storing, leaving about an inch stem

### Packaging

Examples of breathable bags and containers:



- Bags with holes (perforated, mesh). You can make your own by poking holes in a produce bag. Better yet, use reusable mesh produce bags!
- Containers with holes (aerated)
- Open or loosely closed produce bags
- Uncovered or loosely covered containers
- Paper bags
- Cloth bags
- Baskets

Examples of airtight bags and containers:



- Closed produce bags
- Containers with closed lids



### What do food date labels really mean?

Food date labels are set by manufacturers to indicate when food is at its best quality, not when food is no longer safe to eat. Except for infant formula, date labels are not required by federal regulation.

**Sell By:** Recommends to the store when to sell the food by, so it still has a shelf life when you take it home. You can still eat food after the sell by date.

**Best Before/Best By:** Means that the food will be at its best flavor or quality before that date. It does not mean that the food is no longer safe to eat.

**Use By:** Means that the food may start to lose quality after that date. It does not mean that the food is no longer safe to eat. Infant formula is the only exception—it should not be used after the “Use By” date.

For resources to help you waste less food, visit

[seattle.gov/util/reducereuse](http://seattle.gov/util/reducereuse)

# Food Storage Chart

## Refrigerator Low-humidity drawer (FRUITS)

Store loose or in breathable bags



**Stone Fruits**  
(ripe) peaches, nectarines, plums, apricots



**Tropical Fruits**  
(ripe) kiwis, mangoes, papayas



**Citrus**  
oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit



**Apples**



**Pears (ripe)**



**Avocados (ripe)**

## High-humidity drawer (VEGETABLES) Refrigerator

Store in airtight bags or containers



**Artichokes**



**Greens**



**Cabbage**



**Celery**



**Bok choy**



**Brussels sprouts**



**Cauliflower**



**Carrots**



**Green onions**



**Peppers**



**Beets**



**Green beans**



**Broccoli**



**Cucumbers**



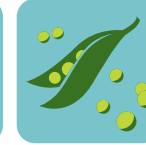
**Zucchini**



**Herbs**  
(other than basil)



**Radishes**



**Peas**

Store in breathable or loosely sealed bags

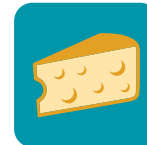
## Refrigerator (SHELF)

Store in airtight bags or containers

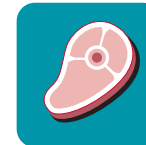


**Cherries**

Store in wax or parchment paper



**Cheese**



**Meat**

Store in original or airtight packaging

Store loose



**Melons (ripe)**



**Pineapples (ripe)**



**Butter**



**Eggs**



**Milk**

Store in original packaging

Store in breathable bags or containers



**Berries**



**Mushrooms**



**Grapes**

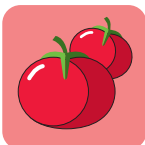


**Asparagus**  
(trim a half-inch off stalk before storing)

Store in a jar of water (1" deep) covered loosely with a bag

## Counter Out of direct sunlight

Store loose



**Tomatoes**



**Bananas**



**Fruits that need to ripen**  
(melons, pears, tropical and stone fruits, avocados)



**Basil**

Store in a glass of water, covered loosely with a bag

## Pantry or Cupboard

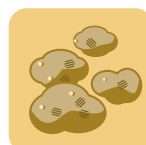
Store in breathable bags or containers



**Garlic**



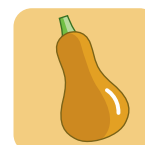
**Onions**



**Potatoes**



**Bread**



**Winter squash**



**Eggplant**

Store loose