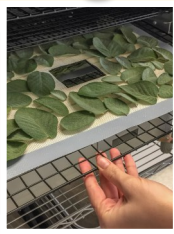


So You Want to Preserve



Spring Produce & Freezing Rice and Pasta

February 2022

Utilizing Seasonal Produce Sales

Plan ahead now to capitalize on the great summer flavors by growing or purchasing in-season produce, when they are at a lower price.

Grocery stores have great sales throughout the winter and early spring on many in-season vegetables and fruits. Selecting those that are your families' favorites can be a win-win when considering preservation methods that extend those great flavors.

More information about seasonal produce visit:

<https://food.unl.edu/utilizing-seasonal-produce-sales>

Explore Nebraska's produce at

<https://food.unl.edu/article/nebraska-produce>

Plan Ahead

Whether you take advantage of grocery store produce or plan to garden, the key is to plan **how can I use this later?**

Don't waste your time and money to preserve food, just to toss it later.



Preserving Spring Garden Produce

Asparagus - Freeze or pickle asparagus to enjoy later as a nutritious side dish or enjoy an addition to your holiday relish tray with pickled asparagus.

Broccoli – This product can easily be frozen. Broccoli is one of those vegetables that needs to be blanched prior to freezing. Be sure to seek out correct water or steam blanching methods found at <https://go.unl.edu/blanching>.

Rhubarb – Rhubarb can be cleaned, cut and frozen to use later. Package in freezer containers or bags with 1 cup measurements so once thawed, it is ready to use as dessert recipe or make into rhubarb syrup.

Strawberries - Freeze or dehydrate strawberries for a serving of fruit in your morning cereal, add them to your favorite fruit smoothies or make into jam for later gift giving.

Preserving Rice and Pasta

Using your freezer is a great way to keep leftover pasta or cook ahead.

Both rice and pasta can be frozen with success.

Ideas

Make individual servings for the grab and go. Or use cook once eat twice to maximize time spent prepping meals.

Having stir fry vegetables or already cooked and frozen meat, like chicken, can make a quick, healthy meal.

Use frozen cooked rice and pasta to add at the end of a slow cooker meal.

For more help, hints and ideas for reheating and using rice or pasta visit:

<https://food.unl.edu/article/freezing-rice-and-pasta>



How to Freeze

Pasta

1. Cook pasta al dente (slightly undercooked). Drain water.
2. Mix in a small amount of oil to keep the pasta from sticking together.
3. Cool pasta before placing in a freezer-safe plastic bag or freezer container to avoid condensation. Label & date.

Rice

1. Cook rice according to package directions. While hot, spread rice evenly on a baking sheet or in shallow freezer containers.
2. Let rice cool about 20 minutes. If using a baking sheet, scoop rice into freezer-safe plastic bags or freezer containers.
3. Label each bag or container with the date, type and amount of rice. If freezer bags are used, remove the air, press so contents lay flat for easier storage and seal. Place rice in freezer.



Canning is NOT Recommended

Don't be fooled by posts and websites that give directions to can with pasta and rice.

It is not safe to add rice or pasta to any home canned product (i.e.: soup). The starch interferes with heat getting evenly transferred to the center of the jar allowing bacteria to survive.

Always look for a research-tested recipe from a reliable source for canning. Reliable sources include [Nebraska Extension](#), the [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#), or Cooperative Extension websites from other states.

Reliable Resources:

National Home Food Preservation
<https://nchfp.uga.edu>



Nebraska Extension
www.food.unl.edu

For more information:

<http://go.unl.edu/foodpreservation>