

# 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** on the lowest shelf of the fridge 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/utilities/stopfoodwaste](https://seattle.gov/utilities/stopfoodwaste)

# Food Storage Chart



Seattle  
Public  
Utilities

## Refrigerator



### Low-humidity drawer (FRUITS)

Store loose or  
in breathable bags



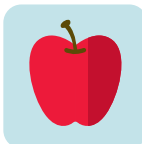
**Stone Fruits**  
(ripe) peaches,  
nectarines, plums,  
apricots



**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**



**Radishes**



**Peas**

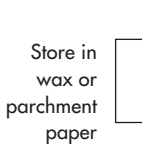
Store in  
breathable or  
loosely sealed  
bags

## Refrigerator (SHELF)

Store in  
airtight bags or  
containers



**Cherries**



Store in  
wax or  
parchment  
paper

**Cheese**



**Eggs**



**Meat**

Store in original  
or airtight  
packaging

Store loose



**Melons (ripe)**



**Pineapples (ripe)**

Rinse and pat  
dry, then store in  
airtight packaging  
on a bed of ice



**Fish & Shrimp**



**Shellfish (fresh)**

Store in open  
container, covered  
with a damp towel

Store in  
breathable bags  
or containers



**Berries**



**Mushrooms**



**Grapes**



**Asparagus**  
(trim half-inch  
off stalks first)



**Cilantro**

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