

Keeping Veggies Fresh

Look at these ideas for creative and waste-free ways to extend the life of your produce, in and out of the refrigerator.

Asparagus—Place the upright stalks loosely in a glass or bowl with water at room temperature. Will keep for a week outside the fridge.

Basil—Difficult to store well. Basil does not like to be cold or wet. The best method here is an airtight container/jar loosely packed with a small damp piece of paper inside, left out on a cool counter.

Beets—Cut the tops off to keep beets firm, and be sure to keep the greens! Leaving any top on root vegetables draws moisture from the root, making them lose flavor and firmness. Beets should be washed and kept in an open container with a wet towel on top.

Beet greens—Place in an airtight container with a little moisture from a damp cloth.

Berries—Don't forget, they're fragile. When storing, stack them in a single layer, if possible, in a paper bag. Wash right before you plan on eating them.

Carrots—Cut the tops off to keep them fresh longer. Place them in closed container with plenty of moisture, either wrapped in a damp towel or dunk them in cold water every couple of days if they're stored that long.

Corn—Leave unhusked in an open container if you must, but corn really is best the day it's picked.

Greens—Remove any bands, twist ties, etc. Most greens must be kept in an air-tight container with a damp cloth to keep them from drying out. Kale, collard greens, and chard do well in a cup of water on the counter or fridge.

Melons—Keep uncut in a cool dry place, out of the sun for up to a couple weeks. Cut melons should be in the fridge; an open container is fine.

Peaches (and most stone fruit)—Refrigerate only when fully ripe. Firm fruit will ripen on the counter.

Strawberries—Don't like to be wet. Do best in a paper bag in the fridge for up to a week. Check the bag for moisture every other day.

Sweet Peppers—Only wash them right before you plan on eating them as wetness decreases storage time. Store in a cool room to use in a couple of days, place in the crisper if longer storage is needed.

Tomatoes—Never refrigerate. Depending on ripeness, tomatoes can stay for up to two weeks on the counter. To hasten ripeness, place in a paper bag with an apple.

Zucchini—Does fine for a few days if left out on a cool counter, even after cut. Wrap in a cloth and refrigerate for longer storage.