

Shared Harvest often receives donations of food items after the date on the package has expired. In most cases, this food is still safe to eat! Food manufacturers use different date codes to ensure that consumers receive their product at peak quality. Once a produce is past code date, many manufacturers or retailers donate it to food banks. Some foods deteriorate quickly, while the quality of other items may last longer than expected. This is why the storage times listed in the accompanying charts are intended as useful guidelines, not hard and fast rules.

Tips on Storing Canned and Boxed Food:

- Store cans and boxes off the floor, either on a pallet or shelf and 18 inches away from the wall so air can circulate
- Store canned and boxed goods in a clean, dry, and cool area (below 85°F).
- Extremely hot (over 100°F) and cold (below 30°F) temperatures can damage canned goods and shorten shelf life.
- Always rotate your stock – First in-First out!

Do Not Distribute Food from Cans or Jars If:

- Leaking or stained
- Swollen can
- Rusty
- Badly dented, crimped or pinched
- Container is cracked
- Foul odor
- Safety seals are broken or missing
- Lids are loose or missing
- Foods exhibit changed color or odor
- NEVER TASTE SUSPICIOUS FOODS!

Do Not Distribute Food from Boxes If:

Inside bag:

- Is torn or leaking
- Seals are ripped
- Has moldy or foreign objects inside

Box without an inside bag:

- Is open or torn
- Is stained or wet
- Has live or dead insects, webs, or droppings

Category	Shelf Life After Coded Date
Canned goods, low acid (meats, vegetables, beans, pasta, soup, etc)	2 years
Canned goods, high acid (fruit, tomato-based products, pickles, etc)	12 months
Baking supplies and mixes	12 months
Condiments and Sauces	12 months
Cereal	12 months
Grains (rice, oatmeal, dry pasta)	12 months
Tea and Coffee	12 months
Spices	2 years
Peanut Butter, Nuts, Dried Beans	6 months
Snacks	6 months
Drinks	6 months
Baby Food	Use-by Date
Bakery	4 days
Bakery with dairy icing, filling, or pies	4 days in refrigerator



Refrigerated Donations

Refrigerated donations need to be kept below 40°F to prevent harmful bacteria from developing that could cause foodborne illness.

Your supermarket deli maintains rigid quality assurance and sanitation standards to ensure you will always receive fresh, wholesome products.

Any refrigerated donations, from the deli or otherwise, should be placed in a refrigerator as soon as possible after transport.

Storing Refrigerated Food:

- Store eggs in their original carton on a shelf, not in the door.
- Place meat, poultry and seafood items on the lowest shelf in the coldest part of the fridge to minimize leakage onto other stored foods.
- Clean refrigerator regularly to remove spoiled food, odors and bacteria.
- Don't overload refrigerator. Air must circulate freely to cool foods evenly.
- As soon as you get home, immediately put cold perishables into the refrigerator or freezer.

Keeping Refrigerated Food Safe during a Power Outage

- Refrigerated foods should be edible as long as power is out no more than four hours.
- Discard any perishable foods that have been above 40°F for two hours or more, and any food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture, or feels warm to the touch.
- If you have any doubts about the safety of any item in your fridge after power is restored, it's best to err on the side of caution and discard it.

Category	Shelf Life After Coded Date
Store Sliced Meats	5 days
Store Sliced Cheese	3 weeks
Block Cheeses	6 months
Shredded Cheeses	1 month
Soft Cheeses	1 week
Milk	1 week
Butter	1 month
Eggs	3 weeks
Eggs Sour Cream and Dips	2 weeks
Yogurt	1 week
Creamers	4 days
Juice and Fruit Drinks	3 weeks
Tube Cans of Dough, Pie Crusts, and Cookie Dough	use-by date
Salsa and Pesto	use-by date
Salads	4 days
Chicken, Rotisserie or Fried	3 days
Dishes or Meals from Deli	3 days



Frozen Donations

Because foods frozen at peak quality will taste better than foods frozen near the end of their useful life, quickly freeze items you don't plan to use in the next day or two. Keep the freezer temperature at 0°F or below; frozen food quality deteriorates more rapidly above 0°F.

Remember, freezing to 0°F inactivates but does not destroy microbes such as bacteria, yeasts and molds that can be present in food. Once a frozen food item is thawed, these microbes can become active, multiplying under the right conditions to levels that can lead to food borne illness.

Defrosting

- Never defrost foods outdoors, in a cold room in the house, such as the basement, or on the kitchen counter. These methods encourage growth of harmful bacteria.
- There are three ways to defrost food: in the refrigerator, in a sealed package in cold water, and in a microwave. Never defrost or thaw food by leaving it on a kitchen counter.
- Food thawed in the refrigerator can be refrozen without cooking. Plan ahead because food may take several hours to thaw in the refrigerator.
- Foods defrosted in cold water or in the microwave should be cooked immediately.

Keeping Frozen Food

Safe during a Power Outage

- Even when the power is off, a full freezer will stay frozen for about two days; a half-full freezer about one day. So keep the freezer door closed.
- You can pack foods tightly together to insulate one another.
- All thawed raw or cooked foods can be refrozen if they still contain ice crystals or are 40°F or below, but there may be some quality loss.
- Foods thawed and held above 40°F for more than two hours should be discarded.

Category	Shelf Life After Coded Date
Burritos, sandwiches, Pancakes, Waffles	2 months
Fruit such as berries, melons	4-6 months
Ice cream and Sorbet	2-4 months
TV Dinners, entrees, breakfast	3 months
Vegetables	8 months
Raw Fish	3 months
Cooked fish	1-2 months
Raw Shellfish	3-6 months
Cooked Shellfish	3 months
Beef, lamb, pork or veal chops, steaks, roasts	4-12 months
Chicken or turkey	9 months
Ground meats	3-4 months
Bacon, Ham, Sausage	1 month
Chicken nuggets, patties	1-3 months
Hotdogs and Lunch Meat	1-2 months