Freezing Strawberries

Using the sugar pack method

Step by-Step Directions

July 2016

CLEAN: FOOD SAFETY STARTS HERE!

Wash hands for 20 seconds

1. Wet hands under hot running water. Add lots of soap.
2. Rub and wash back of hands, wrists, between fingers and under fingernails for 20 seconds.
3. Rinse well under running water.
4. Dry with paper towels.
5. Use paper towel to turn off the water faucet.

Clean and Sanitize Sink and Counter Tops

1. Wash counter tops and prep sinks with hot soapy water.
2. Fill squirt bottle with 1 quart water. Add 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach or use commercially prepared cleaner per directions on label.
3. Spray counter tops and sink with bleach solution. Let air dry.
4. Wash hands.

Clean as You Go

1. Wash dishes, utensils, cutting boards, etc. in hot soapy water.
2. Let air dry.
3. Put away items where you found them.

INGREDIENTS:

- Select fresh, fully-ripe, firm strawberries with a deep red color.
- ¾ cup of granulated sugar per quart of berries


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**DIRECTIONS:**

**Prepare fruit**

1) **Sort** strawberries removing bruised, damaged, immature or under-ripe berries. Under-ripe fruit may develop a poor color and a bitter off-flavor during freezing.

2) **Rinse** strawberries well under running cold water in a colander. Do not soak.

3) **Drain** fruit in colander removing as much water as possible to prevent ice crystal formation during freezing.

4) **Trim** the strawberries. Carefully remove the hull and stem with a paring knife. Cut around the stem in a small circle. You want to leave as much of the strawberry as possible. Also remove any bruised or damaged areas.

5) **Slice** the strawberries in half lengthwise. Try to make each half close to equal in size.

6) **Add sugar.** Place the trimmed and halved strawberries into a clean mixing bowl. Add the ¾ cup of sugar per quart of berries. Using a clean spoon or spatula, mix the sugar into the berries, combining thoroughly, but being careful not to damage the berries.

7) **Allow juices to form.** Once all strawberries are coated with sugar and the sugar has started to dissolve, let the strawberries and sugar sit for 15 minutes. This allows the sugar to draw out the juice in the strawberries and make a syrup.

8) **Package.** Before packaging the strawberries for the freezer, make sure there are no sugar crystals left on the strawberries, the bowl, or the mixing spoon. Pack the strawberries into rigid plastic freezer containers or freezer plastic bags. Leave correct amount of headspace.
   - a) In rigid containers:
     i) ½-inch for pint size
     ii) 1 inch for quart size
   - b) In plastic bags, pint or quart size:
     i) Approximately ½-inch

9) **After** the strawberries are added to the container, fill any spaces with the remaining juice. This helps to keep all the strawberries packed in the juice and preserve texture.

10) **Wipe** the rim of the container with a damp paper towel to remove any excess juice or strawberry pieces. This will help to keep the lid tightly sealed and secure. Any food or liquid left in the sealing area will freeze, expand, and loosen the seal.

11) **Label** the lid with: 1) The Date; 2) Name of Product; 3) Form of Food – e.g. halved sugar pack; 4) Amount – e.g. 2 cups.

12) **Seal** the lid on the container, releasing all the air. Make sure all edges are sealed tightly before freezing.

13) **Freeze.** Place the packaged strawberries in the freezer in an upright position. An upright freezer, chest freezer, or refrigerator-freezer combination can be used as long as it can reach a temperature of 0˚F or below. Keep a thermometer inside the freezer in order to keep track of the temperature at all times.