Tips for Freezing Fruit

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I. Wash all fruit before freezing under clean running water.

II. Prevent Discoloration:

Light colored fruits like peaches, pears, apples and apricots darken when exposed to air.

Antioxidants control darkening and include:

a. Vitamin C or ascorbic acid. Note: filler in vitamin C tablets may make the syrup cloudy — it is not harmful.
   i. Crush three 500 mg (1500 mgs. per quart of water) vitamin C tablets to a fine powder.
      1. Hold or dip fruit for 1 minute in ascorbic acid solution, drain and pack.
      2. You may also add ascorbic acid directly to syrup packs (1500 mg. per quart of cold syrup) or fruit purees and juices (500 mg. per quart).
   ii. Ascorbic acid mixtures – commercial products are available. Follow directions on package.
   iii. Lemon juice (citric acid) works but not as well. Use 3 tablespoons bottled lemon juice per quart of water and dip fruit for 1 to 2 minutes, drain and pack.

III. Three fruit pack options:

i. Unsweetened pack – any fruit can be frozen unsweetened depending on use.
   o Gooseberries, currants, cranberries, blueberries and rhubarb - quality is good with or without sugar.
   o Fruit for jam, jelly or baking is best unsweetened.
   o Dry pack – pack firmly or crush fruit to make its own juice. No sugar or syrup is added.
   o Loose pack – put fruit on a tray or cookie sheet in a single layer and freeze. Once frozen, put into containers; remove air, seal, label and freeze.
   o Artificial sweeteners – add before freezing or serving. Adds sweetness but does not preserve color like sugar does.

ii. Dry Sugar pack – sugar helps to retain color and shape of frozen fruit. Slice or crush 1 quart of fruit into a bowl, sprinkle with sugar and gently mix. Add sugar to suit your taste. Sugar draws out the juice from the fruit making its own juice.

iii. Syrup pack – to make syrup, dissolve sugar in lukewarm water until clear. Chill syrup up to 2 days in refrigerator before using. Use 1/2 to 2/3 cups per pint of fruit.
   o Very Light: 10% syrup (1/2 cup sugar and 4 cups water)
   o Light: 20% syrup (1 cup sugar and 4 cups water)
   o Medium: 30% sugar (1 ¼ cups sugar and 4 cups water)
   o Heavy: 40% sugar (2 ¼ cups sugar and 4 cups water)
   o Very Heavy: 50% sugar (4 cups of water and 4 cups of sugar)

IV. Pack into freezer containers

a. Allow 1/2 inch headspace for expansion.

b. If using syrup pack, cover fruit with syrup to prevent darkening.

c. If using plastic rigid freezer container, place wax paper between lid and fruit.

V. Freeze

a. Store in freezer for 8 to 12 months at 0°F or lower.

References: