



By Cory Soal
R.H.A.D.

... Lend Me Your Ears

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Dear people of Halton Hills;

During these uncertain times, rest assured we remain open to serve you. We have adjusted services according to the guidance by Health Canada.

Please call for an appointment. We are not accepting walk ins at this time.

We handle every call on an individual basis to best handle each person's needs.

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FOOD AND DRINK

HOW TO FREEZE FRESH ONTARIO STRAWBERRIES

PERFECT FOR SMOOTHIES AND PIES ALL YEAR

BRYAN MYERS
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If you've got the freezer space, freezing fresh Ontario strawberries is simple. All you need are a handful of freezer bags and a cookie sheet or two.

Of course, thawed berries won't retain their shape and firmness, but they're perfect as a topping, in smoothies or baked into pies or crumbles.

PREPARE STRAWBERRIES

Wash strawberries, being careful not to overhandle the tender fruit. Dry with paper towel or a clean, lint-free cloth, or blot to remove water and prevent berries from sticking together.

Remove caps and hulls. Slice larger berries. With the sugar-pack method, the colour is maintained and the texture is not as soft as the dry-pack method.

DRY-PACK METHOD

Prepared berries can be placed directly into freezer bags or containers.



Bryan Myers/Torstar

Freezing fresh Ontario produce while it's in season is one of the ways to enjoy year-round local fruits and vegetables.

For the tray-freeze method, berries can be frozen on a baking sheet first to help maintain their shape and to keep individual berries separate.

After washing and drying, arrange berries in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet or tray and freeze until solid. Once frozen, working quickly to avoid thawing, transfer to freezer bags or containers.

SUGAR-PACK METHOD

Best for berries intended for pies, crisps, cobblers or toppings. Start with 1/4 cup of sugar for every four cups of berries. Gently combine hulled and

halved berries and sugar, tossing evenly to coat, and then place in freezer bags or containers.

For best results, frozen fruit should be stored at -18 degrees Celsius or colder. Higher temperatures can reduce the storage life of frozen food and increase its deterioration. Frozen fruit and vegetables should not be stored in the freezer door or areas that get opened frequently.

Food that is not properly wrapped is at risk of freezer burn, a term used for dehydration on the surface of the food. To prevent freezer burn, remove air from container and seal in airtight-freezer containers or bags. Food affected by freezer burn is safe to eat, but the quality is inferior. Burned areas can be trimmed off.

Frozen fruit will keep between eight and 12 months, but for the best flavour, it is best consumed within six months.

Frozen fruit can be thawed for eight hours in the refrigerator, three hours at room temperature, or about one hour by placing the sealed package under cold running water. If defrosting in the microwave, check often to prevent the fruit from cooking.



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