



SEEDTIME



Food Storage Cheat Sheet

Have you ever wondered what the best way to store a certain fruit, vegetable, or nut would be? We've probably all experienced that emotional rollercoaster of the excitement of a bountiful harvest, but only to have a letdown when the produce you worked so hard to grow and preserve seemed to go bad far too quickly.

In this cheat sheet we've put together a list of common fruits, vegetables and nuts with the most ideal storage practice for them.

...*But first*, did you know there are many factors outside of temperature that affect the shelf life of a product? In addition to **temperature**, food preservation can be impacted by **relative humidity**, the **container choice**, **ventilation**, and don't let this one scare you — **Ethylene production**.

You might be asking yourself what's that??? Well, Ethylene is a naturally occurring plant hormone produced by plant cells that aid in the ripening and aging process of fresh products. Ethylene can be beneficial or detrimental, depending on the fruit or vegetable. It is detrimental to most non-fruit vegetables. Exposure to ethylene can result in a number of undesirable characteristics, including yellowing of green vegetables, lignification of asparagus, spotting in lettuce and sprouting in potatoes.

Most fruits are big ethylene producers while many vegetables are ethylene sensitive and absorb the gas which in turn causes that particular produce to ripen faster. As one would gather, heavy ethylene producers **shouldn't be stored** with heavy ethylene absorbers! It's recommended to store these two opposing types in separate drawers/spaces or at least 6-8 inches apart.

Here's a table to help make life easier when determining what produce is producing and absorbing ethylene — notice some do both! *Disclaimer — this is not an exhaustive list of fruits and vegetables, but a quick tool containing some of the more popular produce choices. Also, there are conflicting lists online. Some veggies are higher producers or more sensitive than others. Because of that, some lists will list them as a producer or sensitive while others won't.*

Fruit/Vegetable	Ethylene Producer	Ethylene Sensitive
Apples	✓	✓
Asparagus		✓
Avocadoes	✓	✓
Bananas	✓	✓
Beets		
Broccoli		✓
Brussel Sprouts		✓
Cabbage		✓
Carrots		✓
Cauliflower		✓
Cucumbers		✓
Eggplant		✓
Grapes		✓
Kiwis	✓	✓

Fruit/Vegetable	Ethylene Producer	Ethylene Sensitive
Lettuce		✓
Mangos		✓
Mushrooms		✓
Melons		✓
Onions	✓	✓
Peaches	✓	✓
Pears	✓	✓
Peppers	✓	✓
Plums	✓	✓
Potatoes	✓	
Radishes		✓
Spinach		✓
Squash		✓
Sweet Potatoes		✓
Tomatoes	✓	

Okay, so we've talked about ethylene long enough! What about other storage practices for produce such as temperature, ventilation and container choices?

Well, we've got you covered with that too!

Vegetables

Vegetables	Temperature (°C/°F)	Relative Humidity (%)	Packaging	Notes
Asparagus	0°C/32°F	95-100	Non-vented	Store upright in moist paper towel
Beans, green	4–7°C / 39–45°F	90–95	Vented	Avoid chilling injury
Beets	0°C / 32°F	98–100	Non-vented	Trim tops to reduce moisture loss
Broccoli	0°C / 32°F	95–100	Non-vented	Avoid storing near ethylene producers
Brussel Sprouts	0°C / 32°F	95–100	Non-vented	Refrigerate in loose plastic bag
Cabbage	0°C / 32°F	98–100	Vented or loose	Avoid storing near ethylene producers
Carrots	0°C / 32°F	98–100	Non-vented	Store in moist environment
Cauliflower	0°C / 32°F	95–98	Vented	Avoid storing near ethylene producers
Celery	0°C / 32°F	98–10	Non-vented	Wrap in foil to prolong shelf life
Corn, sweet	0°C / 32°F	95–98	Non-vented	Use quickly; sugar turns to starch
Cucumbers	10–12°C / 50–55°F	90–95	Vented	Sensitive to cold injury
Eggplant	10–12°C / 50–55°F	90–95	Vented	Chilling injury below 10°C/50°F
Garlic	0–2°C / 32–36°F	65–70	Netted or mesh bags	Cool, dry, well-ventilated

Vegetables	Temperature (°C/°F)	Relative Humidity (%)	Packaging	Notes
Greens (leafy)	0°C / 32°F	95–100	Non-vented	Store damp with paper towels
Lettuce	0°C / 32°F	98–100	Non-vented	Avoid storing near ethylene producers
Mushrooms	0–2°C / 32–36°F	90–95	Paper bags or vented	Avoid plastic; absorb moisture easily
Onions (dry)	0–2°C / 32–36°F	65–70	Mesh bags	Store separately from potatoes
Peppers	7–10°C / 45–50°F	90–95	Vented	Avoid chilling injury
Potatoes	7–10°C / 45–50°F	90–95	Paper bags	Avoid refrigeration to prevent sweetness
Radishes	0°C / 32°F	95–100	Non-vented	Keep moist
Spinach	0°C / 32°F	95–100	Non-vented	Best stored unwashed until use
Squash (summer)	7–10°C / 45–50°F	95	Vented	Chill injury below 7°C/45°F
Squash (winter)	10–13°C / 50–55°F	50–70	Vented	Long storage if kept dry and cool
Sweet potatoes	13–16°C / 55–60°F	85–90	Paper bags	Do not refrigerate
Tomatoes (ripe)	10–12°C / 50–55°F	85–90	Vented	Chill injury below 10°C/50°F
Turnips	0°C / 32°F	95–100	Non-vented	Remove tops for longer storage

Fruits

Fruits	Temperature (°C/°F)	Relative Humidity (%)	Packaging	Notes
Apples	0–1°C / 32–34°F	90–95	Vented	Keep away from ethylene-sensitive foods
Apricots	0°C / 32°F	90–95	Vented	Chill immediately
Avocados (unripe)	13–15°C / 55–59°F	85–90	Vented	Ripen at room temperature
Avocados (ripe)	4–5°C / 39–41°F	85–90	Vented	Refrigerate when ripe
Bananas (green)	13–15°C / 55–59°F	90–95	Vented	Do not refrigerate
Bananas (ripe)	12–13°C / 54–55°F	85–90	Vented	Refrigeration causes browning
Berries (all)	0°C / 32°F	90–95	Non-vented (paper towel)	Do not wash until ready to eat
Cherries	0°C / 32°F	90–95	Vented	Keep cold and dry
Citrus (oranges, grapefruit, etc)	5–10°C / 41–50°F	85–90	Vented	Best in mesh or open bag
Figs	0°C / 32°F	90–95	Non-vented	Very perishable, eat quickly
Grapes	0°C / 32°F	90–95	Vented	Avoid excess moisture
Kiwis	0°C / 32°F	90–95	Vented	Ethylene sensitive
Mangoes (unripe)	13–15°C / 55–59°F	90–95	Vented	Ripen at room temperature

Fruits	Temperature (°C/°F)	Relative Humidity (%)	Packaging	Notes
Mangoes (ripe)	10°C / 50°F	90–95	Vented	Short-term refrigeration
Melons (whole)	7–10°C / 45–50°F	85–90	Vented	Store cut melons at 0–2°C/32–34°F
Nectarines	0°C / 32°F	90–95	Vented	Ripen at room temperature
Papayas	13°C / 55°F	90–95	Vented	Refrigerate after ripening
Peaches	0°C / 32°F	90–95	Vented	Ripen at room temperature
Pears	-1–0°C / 30–32°F	90–95	Vented	Chill before ripening at room temperature
Pineapples	10–13°C / 50–55°F	85–90	Vented	Sensitive to cold injury
Plums	0°C / 32°F	90–95	Vented	Ripen at room temperature
Pomegranates	0–5°C / 32–41°F	90–95	Vented	Long shelf life if refrigerated
Strawberries	0°C / 32°F	90–95	Non-vented	Store dry, unwashed
Watermelon (whole)	10–15°C / 50–59°F	85–90	Vented	Refrigerate after cutting

Nuts

Nuts	Temperature (°C/°F)	Relative Humidity (%)	Packaging	Notes
Almonds	0–10°C / 32–50°F	60–70	Airtight	Avoid moisture; refrigerate for long-term
Walnuts	0°C / 32°F	60–70	Airtight	Refrigerate or freeze for long storage
Pecans	0°C / 32°F	60–70	Airtight	High oil content; refrigerate
Hazelnuts	0°C / 32°F	60–70	Airtight	Low humidity is key
Pistachios	0–5°C / 32–41°F	65–70	Airtight	Light & moisture sensitive
Brazil nuts	0–5°C / 32–41°F	60–70	Airtight	Susceptible to rancidity
Macadamias	0–5°C / 32–41°F	60–70	Airtight	Refrigerate to avoid rancidity
Chestnuts (fresh)	0°C / 32°F	90–95	Vented or breathable bag	Store like fruit; high moisture content

Whew! We know that was a lot of produce, but we hope we've created a quick tool for you to get more life out of the fruits, vegetables and nuts you plan to store.