



## Fall & Winter Produce Storage Guide

Cold storage of fruits and vegetables was used by our ancestors to keep food after the harvest season.

Today, the year 'round availability of fresh produce in the supermarket has reduced the use of home storage. However, there are still benefits to storing at home. For instance, buying food fresh in season and storing is less expensive and more nutritious. Food harvested at peak maturity has better flavor and a higher nutritional value. Many fall and winter vegetables can keep for weeks or months with a little bit of care - you don't have to have it exactly perfect to be successful in storing month's worth of local produce!

	<b>How to Store</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Apples	Cold & Moist: 30-32°F, 90% humidity. Store in fridge. Early season apples are best eaten ASAP, midseason will keep for weeks, and late-season for a few months.	Apples emit ethylene gas (accelerates ripening). Store away from other produce and toss out rotten apples.
Cabbage	Cold & Moist: 32-34°F, >90% humidity. Store in fridge. To maintain high humidity store in plastic bags with some holes for airflow. Can be stored two months or longer.	Don't peel outer leaves until ready to use – they protect the inner leaves.
Onions & Garlic	Cold & Dry: 32-50°F, 50-70% humidity. Do not refrigerate. Store in a cool, dry place. Keep at room temp in the kitchen for short term or in a colder spot for longer storage. Do not put in plastic bags as warm temperatures encourage sprouting.	Garlic- mince in advance and cover with olive oil & freeze. Add frozen to recipes as needed.
Potatoes	Cool & Moist: 40-50°F, 90% humidity Do not refrigerate (cold temps convert starch to sugar). Store in paper bag in cool, damp location. Room temp OK for a few weeks.	If storing colder, bring potatoes back to room temperature the week before you eat them.
Root Vegetables (Carrots, Parsnips, Beets, Turnips, Rutabaga, Storage Radishes and Celeriac)	Cold & Moist: 32-40°F, 90-95% humidity Store in the fridge. To maintain high humidity store in plastic bags with some holes (or open at the top) for airflow and a few drops of water. Cut off any green, leafy tops before storing. Roots vary in storage life, but can last months if stored correctly.	Cut off any green, leafy tops before storing. For beets & carrots, if skin is in good shape, no need to peel (but wash well!)- lots of trace minerals in skin.
Sweet Potatoes	Warm & Dry: 55-70°F, 70% humidity Keep at room temp (above 55°F is important – cooler temps will result in chilling injury). Keep dry in paper bags or baskets out of direct sunlight.	

Winter Squash	Cool to Warm & Dry: 50-55°F, 50-70% humidity Store at room temp for up to several weeks or in cool, dry place for longer storage. Temps below 50°F will cause chilling injury to squash. Storage potential varies with variety. (2-6 months). Delicata doesn't store well, but Butternut is one of the longest storing varieties.	If you don't want to store, cook pumpkin in advance (cut into 1-2 inch chunks & steam for 15-20 minutes or boil 8-10 minutes) and then freeze in airtight containers.
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### Tips for long-term storing:

Keep in mind that you don't have to have it exactly perfect to be successful in storing months worth of local produce, but here are some helpful suggestions

**STORE THINGS DIRTY:** the process of cleaning can cause tiny scratches that may shorten the storage life Wash right before use.

**STORE ONLY THE HEALTHY:** One bad apple can ruin the barrel. Go through your stored produce periodically and remove anything that's starting to decay.

**STORE FRUIT AND VEGETABLES SEPARATELY:** Fruits release ethylene, which speeds the ripening process of vegetables. Fruits are also very susceptible to picking up the taste of nearby vegetables.

**SPACES TO CONSIDER when you don't have refrigerator space:**

Spaces that are cold but don't freeze (or on very cold nights take your containers inside) are good options where refrigeration is recommended. Examples include:

- Entryways
- Stairwells & Bulkheads
- Attached Garages
- Four Season porches and
- drafty closets that you don't open often.

For low humidity (dry) store in open bins, one layer deep with plenty of air circulation.

For high humidity (moist) you will need to use packing materials.

**CHECK PERIODICALLY:** Go through your stored produce and remove for use or compost anything that's starting to decay. Remember that "rotten apple that spoils the whole bunch"? That won't happen if you remove it quickly when notice it starting to "rot".

**RESOURCES:** This quick guide was adapted from the following resources. You may want to explore them more fully for more information and helpful ideas on getting the most out of your winter vegetables:

Cornell Storage Guidelines

<http://chemung.cce.cornell.edu/resources/storage-guidelines-for-fruits-vegetables.pdf>

Wolf Pine Farm Winter Storage & Use Guidelines

[https://wolfpinefarm.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Winter\\_Veggie\\_Storage\\_And\\_Usage.pdf](https://wolfpinefarm.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Winter_Veggie_Storage_And_Usage.pdf)

Red Fire Farm: How to Store Winter Vegetables

<https://www.redfirefarm.com/how-to-store-winter-vegetables/>

UMass Extension Harvest and Post Harvest Needs of Fall/Winter Storage Crops

[https://ag.umass.edu/sites/ag.umass.edu/files/pdf-doc-ppt/harvest\\_and\\_storage\\_chart\\_winter\\_sare\\_project.pdf](https://ag.umass.edu/sites/ag.umass.edu/files/pdf-doc-ppt/harvest_and_storage_chart_winter_sare_project.pdf)