Vegetable Blanching Times Chart

How long to blanch each vegetable in boiling water before freezing, with the ice bath time that follows.

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01 The chart

Times start when the water **returns to a full boil** after you add the vegetables — not when you drop them in. The ice bath time is how long to leave them in the ice water afterwards. The full written guide is at frugalorganicmama.com/blog/blanching-vegetables.

Vegetable	Boiling water minutes	Steam minutes	Ice bath minutes	Cut it this way
Asparagus	**4**	**5**	**4**	Medium stalks, woody ends removed
Broccoli florets	**3**	**5**	**3**	1½-inch florets
Broccoli stems	**4**	**4½**	**3**	Peeled, cut to 1-inch pieces
Brussels sprouts	**5**	—	**5**	Small to medium heads, trimmed
Cabbage	**1½**	**3**	**1½**	Shredded or thin wedges
Carrots, sliced	**2**	**3**	**2**	¼-inch rounds or sticks
Carrots, baby	**5**	**8**	**5**	Small whole carrots
Cauliflower	**3**	—	**3**	1½-inch florets
Corn on the cob	**7**	—	**7**	Medium ears, husked
Corn kernels	**4**	—	**4**	Cut from the cob, or raw-pack
Eggplant	**4**	**5**	**4**	Peeled, ⅓-inch rounds or slices
Green beans	**3**	—	**3**	Trimmed ends, whole beans
Beet greens	**2**	—	**2**	Stems removed, leaves only
Collard greens	**3**	—	**3**	Stems removed, stacked and rolled
Kale	**2½**	—	**2½**	Stems removed (curly kale)
Mustard greens	**2**	—	**2**	Stems removed
Spinach	**2**	—	**2**	Washed leaves, stems on
Swiss chard, leaves	**2**	—	**2**	Leaves only
Swiss chard, stems	**3**	—	**3**	Stems only, 1-inch pieces
Mushrooms	steam only	**3–5**	**3**	Whole 5, buttons 3½, slices 3. Steam only — too porous for water
Okra	**3**	—	**3**	Small whole pods, up to 4 inches
Peas, shelled	**1½**	**3**	**1½**	Sorted by size
Peppers	**3**	—	**3**	Halved or strips, seeds removed
Turnips	**2**	**3**	**2**	Peeled and diced (½-inch cubes)
Zucchini	**3**	—	**3**	½-inch slices or cubes

A dash means the source does not give a time for that method. **These are freezing preparation times compiled from USDA and NCHFP guidance, not a safety standard for canning or other preservation methods.**

> **This chart is for freezing only.** Blanching times before freezing have nothing to do with canning. Canning has its own processing times, pressure requirements and acidity rules; using a freezing chart for canning is a food-safety hazard. For canning guidance use a USDA or NCHFP canning guide.

02 How to use this chart

What this chart covers

- Vegetables prepared for **freezing**, blanched in boiling water.
- Ice bath times so the vegetable stops cooking immediately.
- Steam times where the source provides them.

What it does not cover

- Canning, drying, or pickling times.
- Fruit, which has its own blanching rules.
- Microwave or pressure blanching.

Three things that change the answer

- **Size decides the time, not the vegetable alone.** Whole baby carrots need 5 minutes; ¼-inch carrot rounds need 2. Cut everything to the size listed, or the time will be wrong.
- **The clock starts at a full boil.** Add the vegetables, wait for the water to come back to a rolling boil, then start counting. Adding cold vegetables drops the temperature, and counting from the drop overcooks them.
- **The ice bath is not optional.** Blanching keeps the enzymes off but also keeps cooking the vegetable. Plunge it into ice water — one part ice to one part water, no warmer than 40°F / 4°C — within seconds of draining, and leave it there for the time listed.

At altitude, and by other methods

- **Above 3,000 feet**, water boils at a lower temperature. Add 1 minute to every boiling time in this chart.
- **Steam blanching** takes about 1.5× as long as boiling water. Where the steam column is a dash, the source gives no figure — use the multiplier, and expect the result to be less precise than a published number.
- **Mushrooms are steam-only.** They are too porous for water blanching and turn waterlogged. Pretreat whole or sliced mushrooms in a lemon juice or citric acid solution for 5 minutes to stop browning.

03 Why blanch at all

Blanching deactivates the enzymes that cause vegetables to lose colour, texture and flavour in the freezer. Skipping it does not make anything unsafe; it makes the result worse.

Blanched

Green beans hold eating quality for about 12 months at 0°F. Asparagus gives 8 to 12 months. Colour and texture survive thawing.

Not blanched

The same green beans and asparagus hold quality for about 3 months. After that they turn dull, limp and hay-like, even though they stay safe to eat.

Vitamin C loss during blanching runs about 15–25%, which is the cost of the enzyme deactivation. Water-soluble losses are lower with steam than with boiling water.

04 Sources and what each one supports

- **USDA Complete Guide to Home Canning** — the boiling water and ice bath times for every vegetable listed. nifa.usda.gov
- **National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP), University of Georgia** — the steam-blanching times, the mushroom pretreatment, and the altitude adjustment. nchfp.uga.edu/how/freeze/freeze-general-information/blanching-times/
- **USDA / NCHFP freezing guidance** — the 8–12 month quality window for blanched vegetables and the comparison with unblanched storage. nchfp.uga.edu

> **A note on what these sources are.** These are official home food preservation sources, not brand or blog estimates, and the numbers are reproducible against the published tables. Where a source gives no figure for a method, this chart leaves a dash rather than filling the gap with an estimate. The steam multiplier and the grouping of vegetables into categories are our own arrangement of the source data.