How to Blanch Vegetables Ready for Freezing

Growing your own vegetables (or being able to buy them cheaply) can save you a lot of money - if you can either use them all up before they go bad or preserve them so they will stay fresh until you can. One way to preserve vegetables so you can use them later and have them fresh is to freeze them.

Freezing vegetables is the easiest method of preserving, as long as it is done properly, otherwise the food will become freezer burnt and inedible, wasting money, time and energy.

Blanching vegetables before freezing and proper packaging will keep them in tip top condition for months.

Blanching is the simple process of dropping vegetables (and sometimes fruit) into boiling water for two minutes and then removing and immediately plunging into ice water to stop the cooking process.

Blanching keeps the bright colours of vegetables, especially greens, and stops some vegetables from going grey (like asparagus). It is also used to aid peeling fruits and vegetables (like tomatoes and peaches).

To blanch and freeze vegetables:

Step 1: Soak the vegetables in a sink full of cold water with 1/2 cup white vinegar added. This will clean the vegetables and if they have come straight from your garden, kill any bugs that may be hiding in them.

Step 2: Prepare a large bowl or pot of ice water. I half fill a stock pot with cold water and then add ice cubes to fill it 3/4 full.

Step 3: Bring a large pot of water to the boil. Add salt (the water should taste like sea water, so it needs to be very salty). Drop the vegetables, a few at a time, into the pot of water. Don't over-fill it, or it will go off the boil. Boil for two minutes, and then remove from the heat immediately.

Step 4: Plunge the vegetables straight into the ice water. Allow them to cool completely.