



Using, Storing and Preserving Eggplant



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Eggplant is a cold-sensitive vegetable that should be started from transplants. Set transplants in the garden when the soil has warmed, and the danger of frost has passed.

Food Safety and Storage

- Wash hands before and after handling fresh produce.
- Wash eggplant under cool running water. Do not use soap.
- Eggplants do not like cool temperatures, so they do not store well. Harvest and use immediately for best flavor. If you must store them, wrap in plastic and store for one to two days in the refrigerator. Use while the stem and cap are still greenish and fresh-looking.
- Keep eggplant away from raw meat and meat juices to prevent cross-contamination.
- For best quality and nutritional value, do not preserve more than your family can consume in 12 months.

How to Preserve

Canning is not recommended for eggplant.

Freezing

Harvest before seeds become mature and when color is uniformly dark. Wash, peel and slice into ½-inch-thick pieces. Water blanch,* covered, for 4 minutes in 1 gallon of boiling water containing ½ cup lemon juice (fresh or bottled). Cool for 4 minutes in ice water, drain and package, leaving ½-inch headspace. Seal, label, date and freeze.

***Water blanching:** Use 1 gallon of water per pound of prepared eggplant. Put eggplant in blanching basket or strainer and lower into boiling water. Place lid on pan or blancher. Return water to boiling and start counting blanching time as soon as the water returns to a boil. It should take only a minute to come back to a boil. If it takes longer than one minute, too much eggplant has been put in the boiling water.

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References

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Wolford, R., & Banks, D. (2013). Eggplant. *Vegetable Gardening*. University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.
<https://extension.illinois.edu/gardening/eggplant>

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