

Freezing Cranberries

EASY! (BUT PERHAPS A BIT MORE TO IT THAN THROWING THE BAG IN THE FREEZER)

Cranberries are a wonderful fall fruit that are easy to preserve for use throughout the year. The very easiest preservation method is to simply store them in the fridge (refrigeration is preserving!), where they will keep for about 4 weeks. Next up is freezing. Sure, you're thinking, I can just throw the bag in the freezer, right? Well yes, you can, but cranberries should be washed and sorted before using, and who wants to sort through frozen berries? Additionally, the thin plastic bags that cranberries are sold in are not the best for freezer storage. A few simple steps on the front end of the process will mean you can take those beautiful cranberries straight from the freezer and into your favorite recipes. Here's the preferred method for freezing cranberries.

- **Sort:** Berries should be brightly colored (a full, deep red or yellowish red), with firm, smooth, and glossy skins. Remove stems and leaves, and discard any berries that are soft, shriveled, wrinkled, or blemished.
- **Wash:** Rinse the cranberries in cool running water and drain, removing as much excess moisture as possible.
- **Freeze:** Pack the berries into a freezer-safe container or freezer bag, removing as much air as possible. Label with the contents and date and freeze. Berries may also be first frozen individually on trays and then packed into containers.
- **Store:** Cranberries can be frozen for up to one year.
- **Use:** Cranberries can be used in recipes straight from the freezer. (However, if you froze the berries in their original bag without first washing them, be sure to rinse them in cold water and drain before using.)

For further information, visit the National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP) at <https://nchfp.uga.edu/> or contact your local Cooperative Extension Service.

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