

Storing Meat 101: How Long Does Meat Last in the Fridge and Freezer?

Looking to extend the life of meat you've purchased? Storing meat is a breeze with the help of Glad's handy guide to freezing meat. But how long does meat last in the fridge and freezer? How long meat lasts in the fridge and how long meat lasts in the freezer depends on the kind of meat and how it's stored. Here's everything you need to know about storing meat.



How Long You Can Store Raw Meat & Cooked Meat

Although frozen foods stored continuously at 0°F or below can be kept indefinitely, not all raw meat has the same storage guidelines if you want to ensure quality when freezing. Here is a quick overview of how long meat can last in the freezer and how long meat can last in the fridge when stored properly.



Fresh Raw Red Meat

Storing fresh beef, veal, lamb or pork? These meats will stay good in the fridge for 3-5 days. Fresh red meat can last in the freezer for 4-12 months.

Hamburger and Other Ground Meats

Ground meats don't last quite as long in the fridge or freezer as other meats. In the fridge, ground meats like hamburger will last for 1-2 days. In the freezer, ground meats are good for 3-4 months. Learn more about storing ground beef and how long ground beef can stay in the fridge with these tips.

Fresh Poultry

Chicken and turkey – whether whole or in pieces – lasts about 1-2 days in the fridge. If you're storing a whole chicken or turkey in the freezer, it should stay good for 1 year; chicken or turkey pieces last in the freezer for 9 months. Learn more about how long chicken can last in the fridge or freezer or how long turkey can last in the fridge or freezer with these food storing tips.

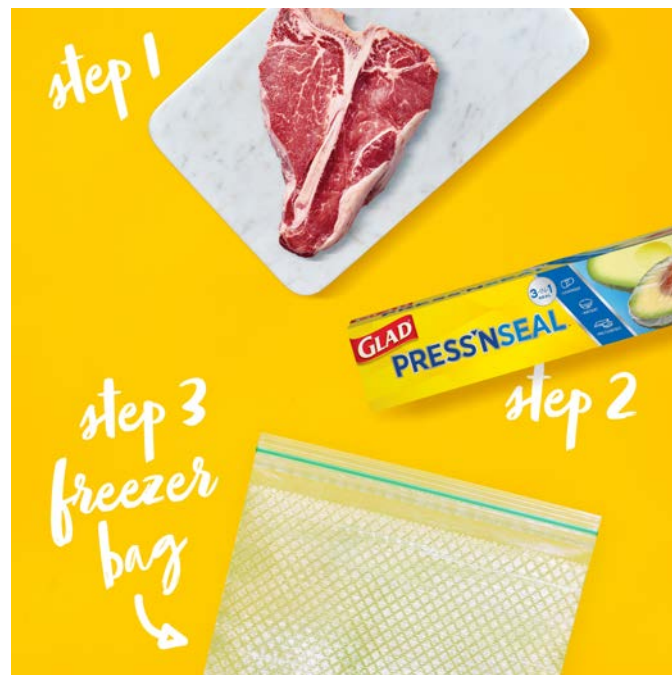
Cooked Meat

If you have leftovers that include cooked meat or poultry, those will stay good in the fridge for 3-4 days, and can be kept in the freezer for 2-6 months.

How to Freeze Meat for Storage

Curious about how to freeze meat long-term while avoiding freezer burn? The trick is to first tightly wrap each piece of meat, unwashed, in Glad® Press'n Seal or another type of freezer wrap. Then add a second layer of protection by placing the wrapped meat in an airtight freezer bag, like Glad® Flex'n Seal Freezer Quart Bags. Be sure to wash your hands before and after handling meat, especially if it's raw.

When freezing meat, it's also a good idea to clearly mark each bag with the date it was frozen, so you can stay organized and know what to prioritize cooking first and what you can save for later.



How to Thaw Meat

When it comes time to use some of the meat you've stored in your freezer, you should be aware of how to thaw meat properly. According to the USDA, you should never thaw meat on the counter or in hot water, nor should you leave it at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

The best way to thaw meat is to move the frozen package from the freezer onto a plate and into the fridge, and then let it thaw gradually. This method requires some planning ahead, as it can take a full day for meat to thaw in the fridge.

Need to thaw meat fast to cook it the same day? Ensure the frozen meat is in an airtight bag – such as a Glad® Flex'n Seal Food Storage Gallon Bags – then submerge it in cold tap water, changing the water every 30 minutes so it continues to thaw. You can also thaw frozen meat in the microwave, but should plan to cook it immediately after thawing to prevent bacteria from growing.

