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Opening Extract from...

Freeze & Easy

Fabulous Food & New Ideas for Making the
Most of Your Freezer

Written by Sara Lewis

Published by Pavilion Books

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**FREEZE
& EASY**

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Notes

- Medium eggs are used.
- Some dishes contain nuts or nut derivatives.
It is advisable for those with known allergic
reactions or who may be potentially vulnerable
– pregnant and nursing mothers, invalids,
the elderly, babies and children – to avoid
these recipes.
- If using a fan-assisted oven, reduce the
temperature by 10 or 20°C; see your
manufacturer's handbook for details.
- Microwave timings have been tested in
a 750 watt oven: if your machine is more
powerful, reduce the timings slightly; increase
timings for a lower wattage machine.

FREEZE & EASY

**FABULOUS FOOD AND NEW IDEAS FOR
MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR FREEZER**

SARA LEWIS



PAVILION



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INTRODUCTION

How many of us really make the most of our freezer? Many of us buy things that are on special offer, freeze them and then forget about them, or make a dish for another day but neglect to label it before we freeze it. Most people store a loaf of bread, a pack of frozen peas and the all-important tub of ice-cream in the freezer. But it can do so much more. In this book you'll find recipes and tips to make your freezer really work for you, saving you time and money.

COOK TWO, FREEZE ONE

Having a big cook-up can really save time in the kitchen. You may need to allow an extra 15 minutes or so to chop veggies and prepare meat or fish, but the cooking time will be the same whether you are making one meal or two. Freeze in portion sizes that will be most useful to you: for four, two, or individual servings if your family eats at different times.

GIVE YOURSELF A BREAK

During the week, take out as many portions as you need and leave in the fridge to thaw overnight. Next day you've got a healthy 'ready meal' –

freeing you up to help to get on with your life.

BRILLIANT FOR BABY FOOD

Freeze smooth baby dinners in an ice-cube tray, then pop the frozen cubes into a plastic bag, and microwave when needed them. As your baby's appetite grows, simply thaw more ice-cubes at once. When he or she moves on to more roughly chopped food, pack mini-dinners in plastic containers. A word of warning: some microwaves heat unevenly, so stir the food once during reheating and once again before serving.

FAB FOR FADDY KIDS

Batch-cook and freeze your children's favourites and you'll always have a healthy supper at the ready.

GET AHEAD

If you have invited friends over, prepare some or all of the meal in advance and freeze it, so you can enjoy their company rather than being tied to the kitchen. The freezer really comes into its own at Christmas and on other special occasions, when there are so many things to prepare.

HOW TO USE YOUR FREEZER EFFICIENTLY

- A freezer needs to run at -18°C/0°F or lower. Some freezers have a digital indicator for easy checking; if yours doesn't, it's worth buying a small freezer thermometer.
- Don't site the freezer next to the cooker or a sunny window. Freestanding models need a little space at the back for air to circulate so that they work efficiently. Once a month – or, in real life, every three months – remove fluff and dust from the coils at the back to improve the efficiency of the freezer and reduce energy consumption.
- Wrap and label food before you freeze it.
- Never put warm or hot foods in the freezer. Cool cooked foods quickly by putting the container into a bowl of cold water with a large ice block.
- Sort through the freezer from time to time to check what's in there. You can freeze most cooked food for up to 2 months. Use up older items before newer ones that may be at the front or on top.
- Add no more than 10 per cent of the freezer capacity of previously unfrozen food at one time. If you are planning on adding lots of veggies from the garden or cooking for a party, think about doing it in a couple of batches. Set the freezer to fast-freeze so that it is extra-cold. Allow a little space between packages so that cold air can circulate freely. When the food is frozen, restack items close together.
- Most homegrown vegetables must be blanched before freezing (see page 68). Freeze as soon as possible after picking them.
- Freezers run more efficiently when full. If yours looks a bit empty, fill the gaps with a few loaves of bread, tubs of ice-cream or frozen veg.
- Open the door for as short a time as possible. It takes 30 minutes for the temperature to chill down again each time you open it. If there are young children in the house you might want to use a plastic freezer lock so the door doesn't get left open accidentally.
- Thaw the freezer every 6 months, or as soon as there is a build-up of ice.

SAVE MONEY

MAKE THE MOST OF SUPERMARKET OFFERS

Buy-one-get-one-free offers can be a genuine money-saver if you put the 'free one' straight into the freezer (assuming it is freezable). But check on the pack that the item hasn't been previously frozen.

BENEFIT FROM VEGETABLES AND FRUIT IN SEASON

A bumper crop in your garden or a visit to a pick-your-own farm can result in healthy and thrifty meals. Blanch vegetables and freeze in portions, make into soups and sauces, or use in casseroles and baked dishes. Even lettuce makes a delicious soup that can be frozen. Open-freeze berries (see page 112) before packing and labelling, or purée them with sugar and a squeeze of lemon juice to make a sauce for ice-creams and desserts, or to drizzle over yogurt for breakfast. Cook large batches of fruit with sugar and a little water or wine and flavour with finely grated lemon or orange zest, cinnamon or ginger to make a compote, pie filling or crumble base.

SAVE TIME AND MONEY WITH READY-FROZEN VEGETABLES

Frozen veg can be cheaper than their fresh counterparts, especially in winter, and are just as high in vitamins and minerals – in fact they often have a higher vitamin content because they haven't been hanging around in storage. Better to use some frozen veg than to buy fresh ones and not have time to use them so they go to waste.

FREEZE LEFTOVERS FROM A ROAST

Popping something into a freezer bag can save both money and time. But don't be tempted to freeze a pack of chicken breasts or minced (ground) beef that has been lurking in the fridge for a few days because you didn't get round to cooking it – by the time it's thawed it will be past its best.

- Freeze a leftover roast chicken carcass to make stock when you have time.
- If you have made too much gravy when cooking a roast, freeze the leftovers in a plastic bag; great for serving with sausages, or to use as the base for a savoury sauce.

MONEY-SAVING FREEZER TIPS

- That half-glass of wine left in the bottle can be frozen in an ice-cube tray and used to transform a gravy or sauce.
- Cut half a lemon into thin slices and freeze with water in an ice-cube tray for a stylish addition to drinks.
- Raw pancake or Yorkshire pudding batter freezes well.
- Blitz slightly stale bread in the food processor, then freeze the crumbs in a plastic bag. Use to coat fish cakes or sprinkle over gratins before grilling.
- Grate Cheddar, Parmesan or Gruyère cheese that has got a little dry around the edges, pack in a plastic bag and use straight from the freezer.
- Freeze leftover egg whites in a small plastic container and use to make meringues or a pavlova at a later date. Yolks or beaten egg can be frozen in an ice-cube tray. Don't freeze an egg in its shell or it will explode.

FREEZER TIMES

The low temperature of a freezer prevents potentially harmful bacteria from multiplying, but the flavour and appearance of food will gradually deteriorate, especially if it is not well packed. This can result in freezer burn, which is dehydration, resulting in greyish-white patches on the surface of food, especially meat and poultry. The patches are not harmful, just unsightly, and they can be cut off the food once thawed.

We've all come across packages at the back of the freezer that have been in there a little too long. Thaw the item slowly in the fridge and then inspect it carefully when fully thawed. If in doubt, throw it out.

COOKED OR PREPARED DISHES

1–2 months	cooked ham, pâté
	pancakes
	sandwiches
2–3 months	enriched bread dough, such as brioche
	raw biscuit (cookie) dough, uncooked pastry, crumble mix
	creamy mousses, homemade ice-cream or sorbet
3–4 months	tarts, quiches, pies
	cooked casseroles, gravy
	stock
	bread, breadcrumbs
8–12 months	cakes
	fruit compotes, cooked fruit fillings for pies and crumbles

UNCOOKED FOOD

1–2 months	bacon, sausages, hotdogs
	smoked fish
2–3 months	herring, mackerel, sardines, salmon and shellfish
3–4 months	raw minced (ground) beef, pork or lamb; raw meatballs and burgers
	unsalted butter, full-fat soft cheese or double (heavy) cream
	grated hard cheese
	chopped fresh herbs
	white fish
	duck (joints of whole)
6–8 months	full-fat hard cheese, such as Cheddar or Gruyère
	salted butter
	jointed chicken and whole game birds
	beef, lamb or pork steaks, chops or diced meat
	green vegetables, blanched
	tomatoes (open-freeze, then pack)
	whole Seville oranges
12 months	halved stoned fruits, such as peaches and plums
	whole chicken
	leg of lamb, joint of beef or pork
	summer berries (open-freeze, then pack, purée or cook as a compote)
	raw egg whites or yolks (add a little salt or sugar to yolks), frozen separately or as beaten eggs

THAWING AND REHEATING

Many of the recipes in this book can be reheated straight from the freezer. Some can be thawed in the microwave, others overnight in the fridge.

Thawing time depends on the size and type of container and the depth of the frozen food. Meat, poultry and dairy foods are best thawed in the fridge. However, for larger quantities this can take up to 2 days. To speed up the process, you can immerse food in a well-sealed plastic bag in cold water and change the water frequently. Never thaw poultry, meat or fish by immersing in hot water.

Bacteria are not destroyed through freezing. Once a dish is taken out of the freezer to thaw, any bacteria present can multiply. Food should be brought up to 70°C/158°F for 2 minutes; test it with a meat thermometer, or check that sauces are bubbling all over the surface. This is especially important when reheating baby food (obviously you should allow this to cool before serving it). Stir food at least once during reheating so that it reheats evenly; it must be hot throughout.

Do not reheat cooked food more than once. Once food has thawed, do not refreeze it.

HELP – THE FREEZER HAS BEEN TURNED OFF!

In the case of a power cut, do not open the freezer door – and warn the rest of the family not to open it. A packed freezer should stay cold for up to 12 hours, or best-case scenario up to 36 hours.

When the power comes back on, or if the freezer has been off for longer than 12 hours, take everything out and sort through it. Set the freezer to fast-freeze. Anything that is still frozen hard can go back into the freezer, after you have wiped off any moisture. Frozen vegetables, bread and puff pastry can be put back if partly frozen, but aim to use them up within a few weeks. Use partly thawed frozen fruit to make jam, adding an extra 10 per cent of fruit to your recipe. Cooked food or shellfish that has defrosted cannot go back in the freezer. Anything else that is raw and has begun to thaw will need to be thawed fully, cooked, cooled and refrozen. Ice-cream that is partly thawed must be discarded.

STORAGE TIPS

Choose freezer containers that suit your lifestyle: single servings if you live on your own or your family often eats at different times; four- or six-serving containers for meals you plan to share.

When reusing plastic containers such as ice-cream tubs, check that the lids fit well. For family suppers that can be cooked straight from the freezer, you can buy 23cm/9in square foil containers with lids, or smaller versions for individual servings. A selection of freezer-to-microwave dishes can be a good investment. Identical containers use space efficiently.

Ovenproof china dishes can be used in the freezer, but avoid glass, as it may shatter. However, rather than 'losing' a dish in the freezer you can line it with foil before adding the food; freeze until solid, then lift out and wrap well. To thaw and serve, peel away the foil and replace the food in the dish.

'Boil in the bags' are useful for rice or vegetables as they can go straight from the freezer to a pan of boiling water. Plastic bags with a gusset are more stable when filling with soup. Store

grated cheese, breadcrumbs or crumble topping in ziplock bags that you can dip into and reseal.

Freeze soups and sauces in stackable brick shapes to make best use of freezer space. Put a plastic bag into a loaf tin, then fill and freeze; remove the tin once the food is frozen. If using metal ties, remove them before thawing the food in the microwave.

Leave a 2cm/¾in space when filling dishes, especially for liquids such as soup, as water expands during freezing.

Wrap meat and poultry closely with clingfilm (plastic wrap) or foil so that it won't dry out and get freezer burn.

Use freezerproof labels and label foods clearly with their recipe title, the date you froze them and the 'use-by' date. You always think you will remember what's in the box – but a few months later it can be hard to tell the difference between a frozen casserole and a fruit compote. Coloured labels or coloured pens can help you locate different foods: perhaps red labels for meat, blue for fish and so on.

MEAT



MEAT

Dinner ready and waiting sounds almost too good to be true, especially after a manic day at work or ferrying kids here and there. How about spicy slow-cooked beef with sweet potatoes or sausage and lentil stew with garlic and herb bread that can be reheated from frozen in the microwave? If you can plan a day ahead and leave a meal to thaw in the fridge overnight, why not look forward to beef and mustard hotpot, slow-cooked belly pork with richly flavoured beans, or lamb rogan josh? For a family get-together you can pull a complete roast dinner out of the freezer as if by magic: roast leg of lamb, a summer vegetable medley of peas, broad beans (fava beans) and green beans, and goose-fat-roasted potatoes.

Before freezing raw meat, it makes sense to repackage the meat into usable portions: a large pack of chicken thighs will be impossible to separate into 4 or 8 pieces once frozen as a block.

The freezer really comes into its own in preparation for large gatherings such as Christmas or Thanksgiving. Stuffing, bacon rolls, sauces and gravy can all be made in advance to save you time on the day (see pages 40–43).

When reheating food, make sure meat is piping hot right through to the centre. To test, put the blade of a small, sharp knife into the meat, leave for 10 seconds, then take out and briefly touch the blade: it should be hot. Pork and chicken should show no signs of pink juices. If you are unsure, cook the dish for a little longer and then retest. Stir sauced dishes to even out the heat.



ROAST LAMB

READY AND WAITING

SERVES 6–8
PREP: 30 MINUTES
COOK FROM FROZEN: 2½–3 HOURS

Rosemary roast potatoes

1.5kg/3lb 5oz BAKING POTATOES, CUT INTO CHUNKS
115g/4oz ½ CUP GOOSE FAT
3 SPRIGS OF FRESH ROSEMARY
6 GARLIC CLOVES, FINELY CHOPPED
SEA SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER

Summer vegetable medley

500g/1lb 2oz BROAD BEANS (FAVA BEANS) IN PODS, SHELLED
200g/7oz GREEN BEANS, TOPS TRIMMED
500g/1lb 2oz PEAS IN PODS, SHELLED
2 SMALL LEEKS, CUT INTO 1cm/½in SLICES
40g/1½oz ⅓ TBSP BUTTER
FINELY GRATED ZEST OF 1 UNWAXED LEMON
SMALL HANDFUL OF FRESH PARSLEY, ROUGHLY CHOPPED
4 TSP CAPERS, DRAINED AND CHOPPED (OPTIONAL)

Roast lamb

1.8kg/4lb FROZEN PART-BONED LEG OF LAMB
2 TBSP OLIVE OIL
3 GARLIC CLOVES, FINELY CHOPPED
½ TSP SMOKED HOT PAPRIKA
1 TSP BLACK PEPPERCORNS, ROUGHLY CRUSHED
LEAVES FROM 3 SPRIGS OF ROSEMARY, ROUGHLY CHOPPED

To serve

450ml/16fl oz/2 CUPS LAMB STOCK
4 TBSP DRY SHERRY OR PORT
1 TBSP REDCURRANT JELLY

Family and friends love to share a traditional roast dinner, and here’s a way to prepare everything – meat, potatoes and vegetables – so that it is ready to go straight into the oven from the freezer. What could be easier?

1. Put the potatoes in a saucepan of lightly salted boiling water, bring back to the boil and cook for about 10 minutes, until almost tender. Drain in a colander, shaking it to roughen the edges. Melt the goose fat in the drained saucepan and use a little to brush a large foil roasting dish. Add the potatoes, rosemary, garlic, salt and pepper to the roasting dish, then pour the remaining goose fat over. Leave to cool, then cover with the lid. Freeze.
2. For the vegetables, put the broad beans and green beans in a large saucepan of boiling water and cook for 2 minutes. Add the peas and leeks and cook for another minute. Drain well, then transfer to a large freezer bag. Add the butter, lemon zest, parsley and capers, if using, plus a little salt and pepper. Leave to cool completely, then seal the bag, pressing out as much air as possible. Freeze.
3. Put the frozen lamb on a large piece of foil. Mix the oil, garlic and paprika with salt and the crushed peppercorns, then brush over the lamb and sprinkle with the chopped rosemary. Wrap the foil around the lamb to enclose tightly. Freeze.

Recipe continues...

To freeze

At the end of step 3, label all containers and freeze for up to 2 months.



BEEF AND MUSTARD HOTPOT

SERVES 4, TWICE
PREP: 30 MINUTES
COOK: 2¼ HOURS
REHEAT FROM FROZEN: THAW 12–18 HOURS, REHEAT
1 HOUR–1 HOUR 10 MINUTES FOR THE HOTPOT,
30–35 MINUTES FOR CASSEROLE WITH DUMPLINGS

2 TBSP SUNFLOWER OIL
1.25kg/2lb 12oz LEAN BRAISING BEEF, CUBED
2 ONIONS, FINELY CHOPPED
4 TBSP PLAIN (ALL-PURPOSE) FLOUR
1 LITRE/1¾ PINTS/4 CUPS BEEF STOCK
2 TBSP WHOLEGRAIN MUSTARD
2 TBSP LIGHT BROWN SUGAR
3 BAY LEAVES
SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER
500g/1lb 2oz CHANTENAY BABY CARROTS,
SCRUBBED, LEFT WHOLE
350g/12oz SWEDE (RUTABAGA),
CUT INTO CUBES THE SAME SIZE AS THE BEEF
2 LEEKS, WHITE PART THICKLY SLICED,
GREEN PART THINLY SLICED

Make up a large casserole to serve 8, then split and serve two ways: as a hotpot, topped with golden sliced potatoes, or as a casserole with light herb dumplings. You could also serve the casserole as it is, with mashed potatoes, or cover it with puff pastry and bake it as a pie.

1. Preheat the oven to 160°C/325°F/Gas Mark 3. Heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a large frying pan, add the beef, a few pieces at a time, and cook, turning, until browned all over. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a large casserole dish. Cook all the beef in the same way, adding more oil as needed. Cook the onions in the same pan for 5 minutes until softened and just beginning to brown.
2. Sprinkle the flour over the onions, stir, then gradually stir in the stock and bring to the boil. Stir in the mustard, sugar, bay leaves and plenty of salt and pepper. Pour over the beef, cover and cook in the oven for 1¼ hours.
3. Stir the carrots, swede and white leek slices into the casserole and return to the oven for 45 minutes, until tender.

Recipe continues...

To freeze the hotpot

At the end of step 4 (see page 27), spoon half the casserole into a foil-lined ovenproof dish. Arrange the boiled sliced potatoes over the beef and brush with the melted butter and mustard mixture. Cover with foil, seal and label, then leave to cool completely. Freeze until firm. Take the frozen casserole out of the dish, check it is completely wrapped, then return to the freezer for up to 3 months. Spoon the other half of the casserole into a plastic bag, seal and label.

To serve from frozen

Peel away the foil and return the hotpot to the dish. Cover the top with foil and thaw in the fridge for 12–18 hours, or until completely thawed. Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 5. Remove the foil and place the hotpot in the oven for 1 hour–1 hour 10 minutes, until piping hot. Check after 30 minutes and loosely cover with foil if the potatoes are browning too quickly.



CHICKEN AND WILD MUSHROOM LASAGNE

SERVES 4–6

PREP: 30 MINUTES

COOK: 55 MINUTES

COOK FROM FROZEN: THAW OVERNIGHT,

COOK 50–60 MINUTES

750g/1lb 10oz CHICKEN THIGHS ON THE BONE
3 SPRIGS OF FRESH THYME
175ml/6fl oz/¾ CUP DRY WHITE WINE
750ml/1¼ PINTS/3 CUPS CHICKEN STOCK
SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER
3 TBSP OLIVE OIL
2 ONIONS, THINLY SLICED
115g/4oz DICED PANCETTA
350g/12oz MIXED MUSHROOMS, LARGER ONES SLICED
2–3 GARLIC CLOVES, FINELY CHOPPED
55g/2oz/¼ CUP BUTTER
55g/2oz/½ CUP PLAIN (ALL-PURPOSE) FLOUR
115g/4oz/½ CUP MASCARPONE CHEESE
250g/9oz (6 SHEETS) FRESH LASAGNE
40g/1½oz/6 TBSP FRESHLY GRATED PARMESAN CHEESE

Chicken thighs are given a gourmet makeover in this pasta dish, topped with creamy smooth mascarpone and Parmesan and baked for a golden bubbling crust. The choice of mushrooms could include chestnut, oyster, shiitake or button.

1. Put the chicken thighs and thyme in a saucepan, add the wine and stock, season well with salt and pepper and bring to the boil. Cover and simmer gently for 45 minutes, or until the chicken is very tender and cooked through.

2. Leave the chicken to cool. Lift out of the stock, discard the skin and take the meat off the bones. Cut the meat into bite-size pieces and set aside. Discard the thyme and strain the stock into a measuring jug. Make up to 750ml/1¼ pints/3 cups with extra water if necessary.

3. Heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a frying pan, add the onions and pancetta and cook for 5 minutes, stirring, until just beginning to turn golden. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a plate. Add the remaining oil to the pan, heat, then add the mushrooms and garlic and cook until just beginning to colour.

4. Heat the butter in a saucepan, stir in the flour, then gradually stir in the reserved chicken stock. Bring to the boil, stirring until thickened. Whisk in the mascarpone cheese. Taste and adjust the seasoning.

Recipe continues...

To serve from frozen

Thaw overnight in the fridge. Preheat the oven to 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 5. Remove the foil and bake for 50–60 minutes until the top is golden and the lasagne piping hot. Check after 40 minutes and cover loosely with foil if the lasagne is browning too quickly.

5. Spoon a little of the sauce into a 23cm/9in square dish that is 5cm/2in deep, add 2 lasagne sheets, then cover with half the chicken, half the onion and pancetta mixture and one-third of the mushrooms. Moisten with more sauce. Top with 2 more lasagne sheets, the rest of the chicken, onions and pancetta, then add half the remaining sauce and another one-third of the mushrooms.

6. Cover with the 2 remaining lasagne sheets, the remaining mushrooms and sauce. Sprinkle with the Parmesan.

7. To serve, cook the lasagne in an oven preheated to 190°C/375°F/Gas Mark 5, for 40–45 minutes, until the top is golden and bubbling.

FREEZING TIP

Rather than baking this in a foil dish, you could line your favourite ovenproof dish with foil, allowing a generous overhang of foil over the top of the dish. Layer up the lasagne, then freeze until firm. Lift the lasagne out of the dish and wrap the foil over the top of the lasagne. Freeze, then peel off the foil and return the lasagne to the china dish to thaw.

BOLOGNESE SAUCE

For a classic lasagne, make a Bolognese-style sauce. Brown 500g/1lb 2oz minced beef with a chopped onion in 1 tbsp olive oil. Add 1 finely chopped garlic clove, 1 tsp dried oregano, 250ml/8fl oz/1 cup red wine and a 400g can chopped tomatoes. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes. In a separate pan, melt 55g/2oz/¼ cup butter, stir in 55g/2oz/½ cup plain (all-purpose) flour, then gradually mix in 600ml/1 pint/2½ cups milk and bring to the boil, stirring, until thickened and smooth. Flavour with grated nutmeg, salt and pepper. Layer ½ Bolognese sauce, 2 sheets lasagne, ½ cheese sauce, 2 sheets lasagne, rest of Bolognese sauce, lasagne and cheese sauce in the dish. Add freshly grated Parmesan and bake as in step 7.

To freeze

At the end of step 6, cool completely then open-freeze until the top is firm. Wrap the dish in foil, seal and label. Freeze for up to 1 month – see guidelines on the pack of pasta.

FISH



FISH

Fresh fish is best eaten or frozen on the day of purchase. It makes sense to buy double what you need, then you can cook it all, eat half for supper and stock your freezer with a dish that you can pull out at a later date when you're short of time.

Fish pie can be cooked from frozen, so it could be a lifesaver on a busy day. Thai-style fish curry, a cheat's bouillabaisse or a Greek-inspired slow-cooked squid flavoured with white wine and lemon can all be made in advance, frozen, and then defrosted before being reheated.

A bag of frozen raw fish fillets makes a versatile standby: cook from frozen with a slice of herb, chilli or olive butter, add a warm pea salad or make into a creamy gratin with leeks and spinach. When buying fish, always check the label. If it has already been frozen and thawed before sale you will need to cook it before freezing. Do not refreeze raw fish that has been thawed.

If using frozen prawns (shrimp) or mixed shellfish, follow the guidelines on the pack: most say to thaw fully before use while others give instructions for using from frozen. If you need to thaw them in a hurry, soak the bag in cold water, changing the water several times. After 30 minutes they will be ready to use. Don't be tempted to use warm water.



THAI GREEN CURRY WITH MONKFISH

SERVES 4

PREP: 15 MINUTES

COOK: 20 MINUTES

REHEAT FROM FROZEN: THAW OVERNIGHT,
REHEAT 8–10 MINUTES

1 ONION, QUARTERED
1 STEM OF LEMONGRASS, THICKLY SLICED
2.5cm/1in PIECE FRESH GINGER, PEELED AND
THINLY SLICED
1 TBSP SUNFLOWER OIL
1 TBSP THAI GREEN CURRY PASTE, OR TO TASTE
400ml CAN FULL-FAT COCONUT MILK
150ml/5fl oz $\frac{2}{3}$ CUP FISH OR VEGETABLE STOCK
GRATED ZEST AND JUICE OF 1 LIME
1–2 TSP THAI FISH SAUCE (NAM PLA)
1 TSP PALM SUGAR OR CASTER (SUPERFINE) SUGAR
600g/1lb 5oz MONKFISH FILLETS, HALVED
LARGE HANDFUL OF FRESH CORIANDER (CILANTRO) LEAVES
SMALL HANDFUL OF FRESH BASIL LEAVES

To serve

RICE NOODLES, COOKED
300g/10oz READY-PREPARED STIR-FRY VEGETABLES,
STIR-FRIED IN A LITTLE SUNFLOWER OIL
FRESH HERBS TO GARNISH

To serve from frozen

Thaw overnight in the fridge.
Transfer to a saucepan, cover and
reheat for 10 minutes until piping
hot. Serve with rice noodles, stir-
fried vegetables and fresh herbs.

Monkfish is a wonderfully firm white fish, and perfectly suited to cooking in a spicy coconut milk curry. You could also use hake, cod loins, salmon or trout fillets.

1. Put the onion, lemongrass and ginger in a food processor or blender and blitz until very finely chopped. Heat the oil in a large saucepan and cook the onion mixture over a low heat for 5 minutes, stirring, until softened but not coloured. Stir in the curry paste and cook for 30 seconds.
2. Stir in the coconut milk, stock, lime zest and juice, fish sauce and sugar. Bring just to the boil, cover and simmer gently for 5 minutes.
3. Add the monkfish pieces in a single layer, push down into the liquid, cover and simmer gently for 8 minutes, until just cooked.
4. Using a slotted spoon, lift the fish out of the pan and slice thickly. Chop the herbs and stir into the sauce, then return the fish to the pan. Taste and add more fish sauce if liked.
5. To serve, spoon into bowls over cooked rice noodles. Top with stir-fried vegetables and garnish with fresh herbs.

To freeze

At the end of step 4, leave to cool. Pack in two or single-portion freezer containers, seal and label. Freeze for up to 2 months.



CHEAT'S BOUILLABAISSE

SERVES 4

PREP: 20 MINUTES

COOK: 40 MINUTES

COOK FROM FROZEN: THAW OVERNIGHT,
REHEAT 8–10 MINUTES

2 TBSP OLIVE OIL

1 LARGE ONION, FINELY CHOPPED

2 CELERY STALKS, FINELY CHOPPED

2 GARLIC CLOVES, FINELY CHOPPED

1 RED PEPPER, DESEEDED AND ROUGHLY CHOPPED

500g/1lb 2oz TOMATOES (PEELED IF YOU LIKE),
ROUGHLY CHOPPED

250ml/8fl oz/1 CUP DRY WHITE WINE

250ml/8fl oz/1 CUP FISH STOCK

1 TBSP TOMATO PURÉE (TOMATO PASTE)

2 SPRIGS OF FRESH THYME

2 SPRIGS OF FRESH TARRAGON

LARGE PINCH OF SAFFRON THREADS

SALT AND FRESHLY GROUND BLACK PEPPER

500g/1lb 2oz WHITE FISH FILLETS (USE A MIXTURE
OF FISH OR JUST ONE TYPE)

350g/12oz FROZEN MIXED SEAFOOD (SLICED SQUID
RINGS, MUSSELS AND PRAWNS), THAWED ONLY IF
SERVING THE DISH NOW, CLEANED

1 SMALL BAGUETTE, TO SERVE

ROUILLE, TO SERVE (SEE PAGE 52)

To serve from frozen

Thaw overnight in the fridge. Reheat the bouillabaisse in a saucepan, stirring gently until piping hot throughout. Toast the baguette slices. Serve with the rouille.

This is a main-course soup packed with fish and seafood, delicately flavoured with saffron and white wine. Traditionally made with a mixed catch fresh from a sunny Mediterranean quayside, this version uses fish available from the supermarket: monkfish, red mullet, red snapper, cod, haddock, tilapia or hake.

1. Heat the oil in a saucepan, add the onion and celery and cook gently for 10 minutes, stirring from time to time until softened and just turning golden. Stir in the garlic, red pepper and tomatoes and cook for 2–3 minutes.

2. Stir in the wine, stock and tomato purée. Add the herbs and saffron and season generously with salt and pepper. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer gently for 15 minutes.

3. Add the fish fillets in a single layer if possible, cover the pan and cook gently for 10 minutes or until the fish is just cooked. Lift out onto a plate, remove any skin and bones, break into large flakes and return to the soup.

4. To serve, discard any mussels that fail to close when tapped against the side of the sink. Add the thawed seafood to the soup and reheat for 5 minutes, until the seafood is piping hot. Discard any mussels that have failed to open. Slice and toast the baguette. Serve the bouillabaisse in shallow bowls, with toast and a spoonful of rouille (see page 52).

Recipe continues...

To freeze

At the end of step 3, leave to cool completely. Pack into 4 containers, divide the frozen seafood between the containers then cover, seal and label. Freeze for up to 2 months. Slice and open-freeze the baguette, then pack into a plastic bag.

