



Storing your veg right

The best way to store vegetables is in the refrigerator or anywhere where the temperature is under 10 degrees C (50 degrees F).

4 easy ways to store:

1. Don't leave fresh produce sitting in your fridge for a week before you cook it – its nutritional value will have begun to decline.

2. Use special plastic polyethylene bags or small re-usable refrigerator devices (brands like KeepFresh, SmartFresh or BluApple) that absorb the ethylene gas that fresh vegetables naturally give off as they ripen. The gas speeds up the whole rotting process, so the logic of these products is that by absorbing this gas, the rate at which produce goes off can be sharply reduced.



This then slows their natural ageing process which extends their life. I find these cartridges especially useful for green herbs and salad leaves or for times when I'm away in the country. Or if you bulk-buy and can't get to shop every week. The stay-fresh bags also help slow moisture and bacteria forming. A head of broccoli stored in a stay-fresh bag is still usable, compared to the rather limp broccoli left naked in the fridge.

3. Make sure your refrigerator is set to the correct temperature. Most refrigerators have a dial marked 1 to 10 so you can set it lower in summer and higher in winter. Ideally the more accurate way to check the actual temperature inside the fridge is to buy a small fridge thermometer. The temperature should be between 1 and 3 degrees C (34 and 37 degrees F) but officially it's anything **less than 4 degrees C** (39 degrees F).

4. Store starchy veg such as potatoes and kumera in a cool dark place such as under the sink where the temperature is cool.

Note: Mushrooms are 90 per cent water and will go slimy if stored in plastic bags. They will also absorb odours if stored with other foods that have a strong odour. Always store your mushrooms in paper bags.

The bottom line

The golden rule for all veg is to store them so they last. Find ways to slow their natural ageing process so you can extend their life.

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