

# Date Labels, Explained

The government does not regulate date labels, except for infant formula. **Most date labels tell you about food quality, not safety.** They are created by manufacturers as a best guess about how long a food will taste freshest. Use your own judgement, not date labels, to determine if food looks, smells, and feels safe to eat.

## Is food safe to eat past the date?

<b>BEST IF USED BY</b>	Yes.
<b>BEST BEFORE</b>	Yes.
<b>SELL BY</b>	Yes.
<b>FREEZE BY</b>	Yes. Freezing by the date will prolong shelf-life.
<b>USE BY</b>	Most likely – be careful with deli meats and prepared foods. Use your senses!
<b>INFANT FORMULA</b>	Never!

## How to tell if food has gone bad: use your senses!



Is it moldy or discolored? Is the package swollen, leaking, rusted? Is the can extremely dented, especially near the rim? Is the safety seal broken or missing?



Does it smell off?



Is it slimy?

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**SAFE**



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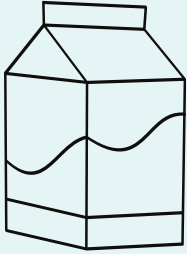
**SAFE**



# Food Storage, Freezing, and Date Guide

How long will your favorite food or beverage stay safe and tasty? What's the best way to store it?

## MILK



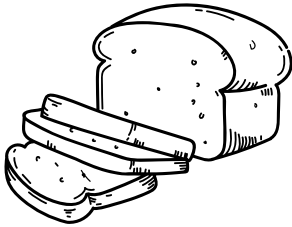
**STORE:** Do not store in the fridge door – it will last longer in the main body of the fridge, near the back.

**AT FRESHEST:** 5-7 days after the date label.

**FREEZABLE?** Yes, in an airtight container, with at least an inch of airspace. Milk may separate when frozen.

**SPOILED?** Sour smell, off-white or yellow color, thick or clumpy texture.

## SLICED BREAD



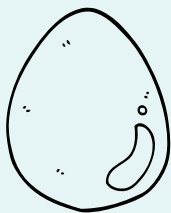
**STORE:** Keep tightly closed in original packaging at room temperature. Store in freezer for longer shelf-life.

**AT FRESHEST:** 5-7 days past the date label at room temperature.

**FREEZABLE?** Yes, wrap tightly in original packaging or foil. Will keep in freezer for at least 3 months.

**SPOILED?** Off smell, mold.

## EGGS



**STORE:** In the main body of the fridge.

**AT FRESHEST:** 3-5 weeks after the date label.

**FREEZABLE?** Yes. Whisk raw eggs together and add 1/2 tsp salt for every one cup of raw eggs. Store in airtight containers or bags. Will keep for 10-12 months.

**SPOILED?** Place egg in a glass of water. If the egg floats to the surface, it has gone bad.

## CANNED MEATS, SEAFOOD, & VEGETABLES



**STORE:** In a cool, dry area.

**AT FRESHEST:** 3-5 years after the date label. An exception is canned tomatoes, which last 18-24 months.

**FREEZABLE?** It's best to store unopened cans in the pantry. Once opened, items can be placed into airtight containers and frozen. Will keep for 3-6 months.

**SPOILED?** Discard any cans that are leaking, rusted, bulging, or severely dented.



Got questions on other products? Find answers and Spanish translations at [GreenOceanside.org](http://GreenOceanside.org)

