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Freezing Sandwiches

In order to stay ahead of the curve, we often prepare meals in advance, freeze, and then have “ready-made-meals” when we are pressed for time. It provides a nutritious alternative to eating fast food, as well as, saves money. However, have you ever thought about preparing sandwiches ahead of time and freezing them? It is a great way to eat healthy, it is convenient, and it’s economical.

Some common sandwich fillings that DO freeze well include:

- * Peanut butter and other nut butters
- * Canned tuna and salmon
- * Cooked roast beef, chicken, and turkey
- * Natural and processed hard and semi-hard cheeses, such as Swiss, Cheddar. (Frozen cheese may crumble more after thawing, you may be more satisfied with the results if you grate it before freezing it in a sandwich.)

Common sandwich fillings that DO NOT freeze well include:

- * Hard-cooked egg whites
- * Jelly or jam (it soaks into bread and makes it soggy)
- * Tomatoes, lettuce, pickles, onions, etc. become limp when thawed; they can be added to thawed sandwiches just before eating them.

It is important to note that “salad dressings,” such as Miracle Whip, work better as a binder in sandwiches than mayonnaise. Mayonnaise tends to separate upon thawing.

Here are some basic tips to follow when assembling sandwiches that you are going to freeze:

1. For sandwiches where the filling might soak into the bread, spread a thin layer of soft butter or margarine to the edges of the sides of the bread, then put your filling on top.
2. Place the sandwich in a zip-top sealing type plastic sandwich bag, making sure to label the bag with the date and type of sandwich. Get as much air as possible out of the bag before sealing it.
3. Use frozen sandwiches within 1 to 3 months for best flavor and quality.
4. Thaw individual sandwiches in their bag in the refrigerator .

5. To keep perishable sandwich foods like meats and cheese cold, pack them in an insulated lunch bag or box, include a small frozen gel pack.

6. Add tomato, onion, pickles, etc. just before eating the sandwich.

This information came from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, UNL Extension in Lancaster County. For additional information you may visit their website at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciq-freezing-sandwiches.shtml>. Another good resource for freezing make-ahead foods is “Freezing Prepared Foods” by the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service at <http://www.uga.edu/nchfp/publications/uga/FreezingPreparedFoods.pdf>. Of course you are also welcome to contact the Texas AgriLife Extension Service office at 903/473-5000, ext. 157 for additional information.

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