

Food Safety During Power Outage

Refrigerated Food and Power Outages: When to Save It and When to Throw It Out

As the USDA notes in [Keeping Food Safe During an Emergency](#), your refrigerator will keep food safe for up to 4 hours during a power outage. Keep the door closed as much as possible. Discard refrigerated perishable food such as meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers after 4 hours without power.

After a power outage **never** taste food to determine its safety. You will have to evaluate each item separately—use this chart as a guide. **When in Doubt, Throw it Out!**

Type of Food	Exposed to temperatures of 40°F (4°C) or above for more than 2 hours
Meat, poultry, seafood	
Raw or leftover cooked meat, poultry, fish, or seafood;	Discard
soy meat substitutes	
Thawing meat or poultry	Discard
Salads: Meat, tuna, shrimp, chicken, or egg salad	Discard
Gravy, stuffing, broth	Discard
Lunchmeats, hot dogs, bacon, sausage, dried beef	Discard
Pizza with any topping	Discard
Canned hams labeled "Keep Refrigerated"	Discard
Canned meats and fish, opened	Discard
Casseroles, soups, stews	Discard
Cheese	
Soft cheeses: blue/bleu, Roquefort, Brie, Camembert, cottage, cream, Edam, Monterey Jack, ricotta, mozzarella, Muenster, Neufchatel, queso blanco, queso fresco	Discard
Hard cheeses: Cheddar, Colby, Swiss, Parmesan, provolone, Romano	Keep
Processed cheeses	Keep
Shredded cheeses	Discard
Low-fat cheeses	Discard
Grated Parmesan, Romano, or combination (in	Keep

Type of Food		Exposed to temperatures of 40°F (4°C) or above for more than 2 hours
can or jar)		
Dairy		
Milk, cream, sour cream, buttermilk, evaporated milk, yogurt, eggnog, soy milk		Discard
Butter, margarine		Keep
Baby formula, opened		Discard
Eggs		
Fresh shell eggs, eggs hard-cooked in shell, egg dishes, egg products		Discard
Custards and puddings, quiche		Discard
Fruits		
Fresh fruits, cut		Discard
Fresh fruits, uncut		Keep
Fruit juices, opened		Keep
Canned fruits, opened		Keep
Dried fruits, raisins, candied fruits, dates		Keep
Sliced or shredded coconut		Discard
Sauces, Spreads, Jams		
Opened mayonnaise, tartar sauce, horseradish		Discard (if above 50°F (10°C) for more than 8 hrs)
Peanut butter		Keep
Jelly, relish, taco sauce, mustard, catsup, olives, pickles		Keep
Worcestershire, soy, barbecue, hoisin sauces		Keep
Fish sauces, oyster sauce		Discard
Opened vinegar-based dressings		Keep
Opened creamy-based dressings		Discard
Spaghetti sauce, opened		Discard
Bread, cakes, cookies, pasta, grains		
Bread, rolls, cakes, muffins, quick breads, tortillas		Keep
Refrigerator biscuits, rolls, cookie dough		Discard
Cooked pasta, rice, potatoes		Discard
Pasta salads with mayonnaise or vinaigrette		Discard
Fresh pasta		Discard
Cheesecake		Discard
Breakfast foods: waffles, pancakes, bagels		Keep
Pies and pastry		
Cream filled pastries		Discard
Pies: Any with filling containing eggs or milk, e.g., custard, cheese-filled, or chiffon; quiche.		Discard
Fruit pies		Keep
Vegetables		
Fresh vegetables, cut		Discard
Fresh vegetables, uncut		Keep
Fresh mushrooms, herbs, spices		Keep
Greens, pre-cut, pre-washed, packaged		Discard
Vegetables, cooked		Discard
Tofu, cooked		Discard

Type of Food	Exposed to temperatures of 40°F (4°C) or above for more than 2 hours
Vegetable juice, opened	Discard
Baked potatoes	Discard
Commercial garlic in oil	Discard
Potato salad	Discard
Casseroles, soups, stews	Discard

Frozen Food and Power Outages: When to Save It and When to Throw It Out

A full freezer will hold a safe temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full and the door remains closed). Food may be safely refrozen if it still contains ice crystals or is at 40°F (4°C) or below, however, its quality may suffer. **Never** taste food to determine its safety. Use this chart as a general guide.

Type of food	Contains ice crystals and feels cold as if refrigerated	Exposed to temperatures of 40°F (4°C) or above for more than 2 hours
Meat, poultry, seafood		
Meat, poultry, seafood – all types of cuts	Refreeze	Discard
stews, soups	Refreeze	Discard
Dairy		
Milk	Refreeze (some loss of texture)	Discard
Eggs (out of shell) and egg products	Refreeze	Discard
Ice cream, frozen yogurt	Discard	Discard
Cheese (soft and semi-soft)	Refreeze (some loss of texture)	Discard
Hard cheeses	Refreeze	Refreeze
Shredded cheeses	Refreeze	Discard
Cheesecake	Refreeze	Discard
Fruits		
Juices	Refreeze	Refreeze (discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops)
Home or commercially packaged	Refreeze (will change texture and flavor)	Refreeze (discard if mold, yeasty smell, or sliminess develops)
Vegetables		
Juices	Refreeze	Discard after held above 40°F (4°C) for 6 hours
Home or commercially packaged or blanched	Refreeze (may suffer texture and flavor loss)	Discard after held above 40°F (4°C) for 6 hours
Breads and pastries		
Breads, rolls, muffins, cakes (without custard fillings)	Refreeze	Refreeze
Cakes, pies, pastries with	Refreeze	Discard

Type of food	Contains ice crystals and feels cold as if refrigerated	Exposed to temperatures of 40°F (4°C) or above for more than 2 hours
custard or cheese filling		
Pie crusts, commercial and homemade bread dough	Refreeze (some quality loss may occur)	Refreeze (quality loss is considerable)
Other Foods		
Casseroles: pasta, rice-based	Refreeze	Discard
Flour, cornmeal, nuts	Refreeze	Refreeze
Breakfast items: waffles, pancakes, bagels	Refreeze	Refreeze
Frozen meal, entree, specialty item (pizza, sausage and biscuit, meat pie, convenience foods)	Refreeze	Discard

Date Last Reviewed

August 8, 2024