

Keep It Safe

When shopping, pick up beef just before checking out. If it will take longer than 30 minutes to get it home, keep it cold in a cooler in the car.

At-Home Storage

- Refrigerate or freeze as soon as possible after purchasing.
- Label each package with the date, name of beef cut and weight or number of servings. Practice the FIFO inventory system – first in, first out.
- Freeze beef in its original transparent wrap up to two weeks. For longer storage, wrap in heavy-duty aluminum foil or place in plastic freezer bags; remove as much air as possible.
- Refrigerate leftovers promptly after serving (within two hours after cooking).

Ground meats are more perishable than roasts or steaks. During grinding, more surface area is exposed, resulting in shorter shelf life.

Refrigerator And Freezer Storage Guidelines

Recommended Storage Times for Maximum Quality

| Beef Cut | Refrigerator (35°F to 40°F) | Freezer (0°F or below) |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| FRESH BEEF | | |
| Steaks, Roasts | 3 to 4 days | 6 to 12 months |
| Beef for Stew, Kabobs or Stir-Fry | 2 to 3 days | 6 to 12 months |
| Ground Beef | 1 to 2 days | 3 to 4 months |
| LEFTOVER COOKED BEEF | | |
| All | 3 to 4 days | 2 to 3 months |
| CURED/SMOKED/READY-TO-SERVE BEEF | | |
| Corned Beef, ready-to-cook | 1 week | 2 weeks |
| Frankfurters, Deli Meats | 3 to 5 days | 1 to 2 months |
| Sausage, smoked | 1 week | Not recommended |
| Sausage, dry and semi-dry, unsliced | 2 to 3 weeks | Not recommended |

Defrosting Guidelines

Always defrost beef in the refrigerator, never at room temperature. Place frozen package on a plate or tray to catch any juices and place in the refrigerator according to chart.

| Beef Cut | Package Thickness | Approximate Refrigeration Time (at 35°F to 40°F) |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|---|
| Steaks, Ground Beef,* | 1/2 to 3/4 inch | 12 hours |
| Beef for Stew, Kabobs or Stir-Fry | 1 to 1-1/2 inches | 24 hours |
| Small Roasts | Varies | 3 to 5 hours per pound |
| Thin Pot Roasts | | |
| Large Roasts | Varies | 4 to 7 hours per pound |
| Thick Pot Roasts | | |

*Cook as soon as possible after defrosting.

