

Shelf Life of Common Food Bank Products



A food product can appear “outdated”, but it is important to remember that this food may still be safe to eat! Most of the time, the date on a food package refers to when the product will be at its highest quality. It is usually not a safety date. As long as the food has been stored and handled properly, it will remain safe to consume for a reasonable amount of time after the date on the packaging.

Please use the table below as a general reference for shelf life extensions.

Food Item	Shelf Life After “Best By” or Code Date	Source
Baby Food or Formula	No extension - follow expiration date on package	USDA Food Product Dating
Beans, dried	1 year	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Bread	4 days at room temp, 2 weeks refrigerated, 3 months if frozen	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Butter	3 months refrigerated, 9 months frozen	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Canned Goods, high acid	12-18 months	Food Marketing Institute
Canned Goods, low acid	2-5 years	Food Marketing Institute
Casserole Mix	1 year	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Cereal, dry	1 year	Food Marketing Institute
Cheese, cream	2 weeks	Food Marketing Institute
Cheese, hard	6 months unopened, 4 weeks opened	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Cheese, sliced	3-4 weeks	Food Marketing Institute
Chicken or Turkey, whole cut	2 days refrigerated, 1 year if frozen	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Crackers	8 months, except graham crackers - 2 months	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Deli Meat, unopened	2 weeks	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Dough (pizza, biscuit, rolls, etc.)	No extension	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Eggs, in shell	5 weeks	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Fish, breaded frozen	18 months	Food Marketing Institute
Flour, white	1 year	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Frozen Dinner	3 months	Food Marketing Institute
Fruit, frozen	6 months	Food Marketing Institute
Ground Beef	2 days refrigerated, 4 months if frozen	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Half & Half	3-4 days, 4 months if frozen	Food Marketing Institute
Hot Dogs	2 weeks refrigerated, 2 months frozen	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Jams, Jellies, Preserves	1 year	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Juice, bottled shelf-stable	9 months	Food Marketing Institute
Juice, refrigerated	3 weeks, 1 year frozen	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Juice, concentrate	2 years frozen	Food Marketing Institute

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Macaroni and Cheese, mix	9-12 months	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Margarine	5 months	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Milk, liquid	1 week	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Milk, non-fat, dry	1 year	
Nuts	9 months	Food Marketing Institute
Oatmeal	1 year	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Oil (olive, vegetable, salad)	6 months	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Pancake Mix	9 months	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Pasta, dry	2 years	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Peanut Butter	18 months	Food Marketing Institute
Pork, roasts or chops	5 days refrigerated, 1 year frozen	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Potatoes, instant	1 year	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Rice	1 year for brown rice, 2 years for white rice	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Salad Dressing	1 year	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Sour Cream	3 weeks	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Spaghetti Sauce	18 months	Food Marketing Institute
Spices	2-4 years	Food Marketing Institute
Stuffing Mix	9-12 months	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Sugar, powdered	18 months	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Sugar, granulated	2 years	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Tortillas	3 mo. refrigerator, 6 mo. freezer	Food Marketing Institute
Tuna, canned	12 months	Food Marketing Institute
Vegetables, frozen	8 months	NYS Agriculture & Markets
Waffles, frozen	2 months	NYS Agriculture & Markets