



How to Freeze Lobster at Home



Prepared by the
University of Maine Department of Food Science & Human Nutrition
& the Lobster Institute
(www.lobsterinstitute.org 207-581-1443)

How to Prepare and Freeze Whole "in the shell" Lobster:

Properly prepared whole or "in the shell" lobster has a good quality shelf-life of 9 to 12 months.

1. Lobsters should be chilled and live.
2. Blanch at 212 F° for 60 seconds in a 2% salt brine (2.5 TBSP of non-iodized or sea salt to 2 quarts of water.)
3. Chill after blanching in cold running water or in a tub with a mixture of 50% water to 50% ice .
4. Following a 15-20 minute chill, remove excess surface water.
5. Place in commercial freezer bags and remove as much air as possible. (New Ziploc vacuum bag systems available at supermarkets work well.)
6. Place in a second freezer bag or over-wrap with a laminated freezer wrap.
7. Freeze at -18 C° (0 F°)- standard for home refrigerator/freezer units.
8. Store frozen at -18 C° (0 F°) or lower –the lower the storage temperature the better the lobster meat quality will be maintained.
9. Thawing directions: Lobsters should be thawed overnight in the refrigerator.
10. Thawed lobsters should be boiled in a 2% salt brine for 12-15 minutes.

You can also just freeze tails and claws "in the shell":

1. Follow steps 1 through 4 above
2. Remove claws and tail from blanched lobsters
3. Continue with steps 5 through 10 above

How to Prepare and Freeze Picked Tail and Claw Meat:

Lobster meat that has been picked and frozen will have an acceptable shelf life of 3-6 months if stored at temperatures of 0 F° (-18 C°) or lower.

1. Follow steps 1 through 4 above.
2. Remove tail and claw meat from the shell.
3. Place in commercial freezer bags and remove as much air as possible. (New Ziploc vacuum bag systems available at supermarkets work well.)
4. Continue with steps 7 through 10.
5. Thawed lobster meat can be prepared by steaming for 8-10 minutes (in a colander above steaming pot of water).

Lobsters can be frozen "green," or uncooked, but shelf-life is limited and off-flavors can develop.

These procedures were compiled by Alfred Bushway, Beth Calder and Robert Bayer and were derived from work done by Dr. Matt Highlands, Professor of Food Science at the University of Maine from 1935 to 1974.

Reference: Getchell, J.S. and Highlands M.E. 1957. Processing lobster and lobster meat for freezing and storage. Maine Agricultural Experiment Station Bulletin 558. University of Maine, Orono, ME



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