

Your freezer should be your best friend, make sure it's a happy relationship! Here are the *Fresh Living* team's Top 5 tips to ensure your stocked-up freezer is your bestie.

#### 1. ROLL CALL

Always make sure that you keep track of what goes into the freezer. Label all items and include the date it was frozen and the expiry date. This helps avoid food spoilage.

#### 2. PORTION CONTROL

If you are buying in bulk, portion items in smaller batches and store in zip-seal bags so that you only defrost what is needed for a specific meal.

#### 3. COOKING TO FREEZE

If you are preparing meals that you are considering freezing for later use, make sure that the cooked food is completely cool before placing it into the freezer. This helps prevent the food from going off.

#### 4. TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Now generally freezer foods can be stored for longer periods of time. But, always check the "use by" date on the packaging. If freezing from fresh, raw meat can last 4-6 months while cooked meat will last about 2-3 months. If stored any longer, you might start to see freezer burn on the items – these aren't dangerous and food will still be edible, but the texture is not what you want at all.

#### 5. DEFROSTING RULES

If in a hurry and you completely forgot to defrost tonight's dinner, simply place into a bowl or bucket of cold water and leave to defrost, this speeds up thawing. Otherwise, defrosting at room temperature overnight is the best way, avoid using the microwave if you can plan ahead.

Go on, let that freezer relationship bloom.