

## Super Sandwiches

In a plan and prep world, sandwiches do not come to mind, but you can make sandwiches ahead of time and freeze them, making school lunch packing a breeze. Unfortunately, not all sandwiches freeze well or should be made beforehand. How do you know what to freeze and what to wait to make?

It is important to use fresh bread for freezing. Wraps or tortillas will get brittle and break apart in the freezer, so avoid using them. Breads that are whole-grain, gluten-free, or seeded breads do better when frozen due to the denser consistency.

Sandwiches with jams or jelly do not freeze well because they soak into the bread, making it soggy. Hard-boiled egg whites get tough in the freezer and do not taste good. Tomatoes, onions, pickles, and lettuce become limp when thawed; it is best to add them to a thawed sandwich right before eating. Raw vegetables are not the best for frozen sandwiches. Low-fat cheese does not freeze as well as full-fat cheese.

Peanut butter and other nut butters freeze well. If you want to make peanut butter and jelly, spread peanut butter on both slices of bread and put the jelly in the middle. Canned meats, such as tuna, salmon, chicken, or ham, freeze well and are even better if you add a little dressing to them but not too much, or the bread will get soggy. Cooked meats like roast beef, turkey, or chicken work well and are even better if you finely chop them and add some dressing. Cheese works well to freeze, but it may become crumbly as it thaws, so a better option would be to grate the cheese before freezing it. Be sure to use condiments sparingly so they do not soak into the bread and make it soggy.

There are some basic steps to follow for assembling sandwiches and freezing them:

1. Make an assembly line. Complete one step for each sandwich before moving on to the next one. When all steps are completed, place each sandwich into a bag and label it so you know what kind of sandwich it is and the date. The last step is to get out as much air as you can.
2. Place sandwiches in a single layer in the freezer on a cookie sheet to help them freeze flat for roughly an hour until they hold their shape. Place each bag inside a bigger freezer bag (like a gallon bag). Again, remove as much air as possible. The second bag is because sandwich bags are unsuitable for maintaining food quality during freezer storage.
3. Freeze sandwiches at 0°F or lower to retain color, flavor, moisture, and vitamin content.
4. Use sandwiches within 3 months for best quality and flavor.
5. Thaw sandwiches in their individual bags or other wrapping, such as a paper towel to absorb the moisture, in the refrigerator the day you plan to eat them.
6. Keep sandwiches in an insulated lunch bag or lunch box with a frozen cold pack for meals away from home. Also, you can store them in a refrigerator when you get to your location.
7. Pack tomatoes, onions, lettuce, and pickles that do not freeze well in a snack-sized bag or small container, and add them to the sandwich right before you eat it.

8. If you have a sandwich that's filling might soak into the bread add a thin layer of soft butter or margarine to each slice of bread before you assemble it. Make sure to spread it all the way to the edge. Do not use melted butter or margarine.

Have some fun making sandwiches, and try making your own uncrustables at home with any filling or even breakfast ones with sheet pan scrambled eggs. Frozen sandwiches are good for lunch and before or after sports practices. Consider what kinds of sandwiches your family will like and work on preparing those.