



Fresh vs frozen berries: When to use them in your cooking

Ingredients

Method

Frozen and fresh berries can be interchangeable in the kitchen, but there are some recipes and situations where using the wrong type can be disastrous.

Whether you're craving berries out of season, or freeze your home grown berries to stop yourself from wasting them, frozen berries can be a year-round lifesaver. But anyone who has ever cooked with frozen fruit knows that it can transform simple recipes into a soggy mess if not handled correctly. Here are some tips for ensuring you make the most of your berries, whether they are fresh or frozen.

Decorating with berries

It should go without saying, but in any situation where your berries are decorative and uncooked you will want to use the freshest berries. This includes cakes, tarts and even your morning yogurt. Frozen berries have a tendency to get a little bit squished and as they thaw you will notice the colour running. So not only will fresh berries be the most aesthetically pleasing option, they'll also offer more support when being layered.

When blending your berries

If you have a veritable bounty of berries in your house and a mixture of fresh and frozen, then you may wonder which one you should be reaching for with your recipes. However, if you're blending your berries into a smoothie or making your own ice cream you can actually use either. Frozen berries will help to keep things cool in the warmer months without the need to add ice if it is scorching outside. You will also find that your berries tend to be completely interchangeable in galettes and tarts that are baked without the need for thickening agents.

When baking with berries

Generally, speaking, you can use fresh and frozen berries interchangeably in your baking recipes, but you may need to make a few tweaks to ensure it

comes out perfectly. Frozen berries will lower the temperature of your mixture considerably, so you may need to increase cooking times by 5 minutes to make sure it is cooked through.

If cooking your berries into a pie filling, you may need to add additional thickening agents because frozen berries tend to release more liquid than fresh and will lead to a runnier consistency. For best results in your baking, don't defrost the berries before use but instead toss them in flour. The flour will stop them sinking to the bottom of your mixture in the oven and can stop them bursting or their colour from bleeding.

Finally, if you're baking a pie and are worried that the filling will be too soft and runny, try replacing the pie lid with a lattice design for an open faced pie that will allow the excess moisture to evaporate.

Notes
