

Refrigerator and Freezer Storage Guidelines

Recommended Storage Times for Maximum Quality

Beef Cut	Refrigerator 35°F to 40°F	Freezer 0°F or below
Fresh Beef		
From Purchase Date		
Steaks, Roasts	3 to 4 days	6 to 12 months
Beef for Stew, Kabobs or Stir-Fry	2 to 3 days	6 to 12 months
Ground Beef	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Leftover Cooked Beef		
All	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Cured/Smoked/Ready to Eat Beef		
Corned Beef, ready-to-cook	1 week	2 weeks
Frankfurters, Deli Meats	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
Beef Sausage, smoked	1 week	Not recommended
Beef Sausage, dry and semi-dry, unsliced	2 to 3 weeks	Not recommended

Defrosting Guidelines

For best quality, defrost beef in the refrigerator, never at room temperature. Place frozen package on a plate or tray to catch any juices and place in the refrigerator according to chart.

Beef Cut	Package Thickness	Approximate Refrigeration Time (35°F to 40°F)
Steaks, Ground Beef*, Beef for Stew, Kabobs or Stir-Fry	½ to ¾ inch 1 to 1-½ inches	12 hours 24 hours
Small Roasts Thin Pot Roasts	Varies	3 to 5 hours per pound
Large Roasts Thick Pot Roasts	Varies	4 to 7 hours per pound

* According to USDA, Ground Beef can be defrosted in the microwave, but it must be cooked within the same day.

Beef can be refrozen as long as it was defrosted properly and is used within the freezer storage guidelines above.