

Excess Garden Produce:

By Chef Jen, RDN/LDN, RYT-200

With the pandemic and transition to working from home, many people had extra time on their hands and many planted a home garden. At this point, most people are drowning in tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini and other produce. In this weeks' cooking video, I've used ~2 lbs of tomatoes for Southern Tomato Pie and 25 jalapenos for jalapeno poppers.

If you have excess vegetables, like peppers, onions, zucchini and squash, you can easily slice and freeze them for winter time use. I would recommend slicing the zucchini and squash into half-moons. You can easily sauté them up with olive oil, salt, pepper and if desire, other herbs, as a great side dish to accompany your protein choice.

You have 2 options for peppers and onions:

1- slice for use in fajitas, cheesesteaks, sausage and peppers sandwiches



2- dice for use in omelets or other sauces and sautés.



You can mix them together after freezing or separate.

After you've prepped the veggies to the desired cut, lay them out on a sheet pan that can fit in the freezer. Make sure that the pieces aren't touching one another. If they do, they may freeze in a big clump and be "icy". You can check after 2-3 hours, if frozen, you can transfer to a freezer bag or freezer safe container for later use. Usually they keep 6 mo-1 year in the freezer.

The jalapeno poppers in this video are prepped for freezing with the same idea in mind. I suggest freezing for 8-24 hours before cooking. They can last up to 6 months in the freezer as well.

The tomato pie is the only item that I do not suggest that you freeze. The tomatoes are too delicate and will turn to mush. I suggest eating this pie right away or using leftovers within 2 days.

You can also use tomato, jalapenos (or bell peppers) and onion from your garden to make and jar salsa. There are strict guidelines, however to canning that must be followed to prevent the growth of a fatal bacteria that causes botulism. See [this link](#) to UD's Cooperative Extension's canning tips or the [National Center for Home Food Preservation](#). I'll see you all again next week!

Be Well, Eat Well, Walk your Dog and Bon Appetit!

~~ Chef Jen