## Things Cooks Know

STRATEGIES, TECHNIQUES, AND TIPS ABOUT <u>FREEZING</u>—FROM THE *REAL SIMPLE*TEST KITCHEN TO YOURS By Grace Elkus

## Making the Most of Your Freezer Follow these tips to turn the deep freeze from a black hole To keep cold air to a source of weeknight dinner inspiration. (Plus, you circulating, store food away from won't have to dig to find the ice cream.) freezer vents. Reserve the bottom shelf for heavier items that could leak, Ö IIIII such as meat and casseroles. Use the top shelf for more delicate items, like sliced bread, ice cream, and bags of fruits and veggies. Remove store-bought items from bulky Save the door packaging, place in shelf (the warmest bags, and label with part of the freezer) heating instructions. Store food in gallon-size plastic for flours and Use a shoebox or freezer bags (different from plastic nuts, which can go clear container for storage bags, which are thinner and rancid at room smaller items, such less protective) or square temperature. The as Parmesan rinds storage containers, which fit or vegetable scraps door is also snugly into corners. the best place for for stock. bottles of booze.





1 Once they've cooled, pour into gallon-size plastic freezer bags, leaving a little extra room at the top (liquids expand as they freeze). Squeeze out any air and seal shut.



2 Label the bags, then place in a single layer on a baking sheet and freeze until solid. This will keep the bags from wrapping around the wire shelving.



3 Remove the tray and stack bags until ready to thaw. Or store them upright.



## Three Tricks for Labeling

- 1 A permanent marker or freezer tape (which won't come loose in the cold) is your best bet for clear, legible freezer labels. If using tape, dog-ear a small corner before sticking it on the container so it's easy to peel off later.
- 2 The ideal label should include the name of the dish, the date, heating instructions, and discard date. Arrange items so all labels are facing outward.
- 3 If you're big on meal prep, keep a freezer inventory checklist in the kitchen—or, better yet, on the freezer door. When you pull out dinner, cross it off.