

FACTSHEET No. 18

HOW TO STORE BREAD

Keep your bread fresh by keeping it in the original packaging and storing in a cool, dark and dry place, like a bread bin or cupboard.

After you've opened a loaf, fasten the bag with the 'best before' tag or a bag clip (a clothes peg does the trick, too)

Keep the end crust in place to keep the next slice fresh.

Clean your bread bin or cupboard regularly to get rid of mould spores that may affect your bread.

Ideally, don't store bread in the refrigerator (except in extremely hot weather) as this will speed up the staling process. If you do, take it out of the fridge about an hour before you use it, so it softens again.

YOU CAN FREEZE BREAD

You can freeze bread at any time. Simply place it in its original packaging or wrap it tightly in a freezer bag before freezing. This keeps it from drying out.

You can freeze on the day you buy or any time up until the best before date. Wrapped bread can be kept in a freezer for up to three months. Bags with perforations (holes) should not be used to store bread in the freezer.

DEFROSTING

You can remove the whole pack from the freezer and place on a wire rack to defrost. This will take a few hours, so it may be best to take it out the night before so it's ready for the morning.

If you only need a few slices, you can take out what you need and leave to defrost in a freezer bag to prevent the slices from drying out. If you are in a hurry, you can defrost slices in the microwave using the 'defrost' setting.

You can also toast bread straight from the freezer – just pop the frozen slices straight into the toaster.

Tip - Make packed lunches simple. Take your slices from the freezer, add your favourite sandwich fillings, wrap up or pop in your lunchbox. The bread will defrost slowly over the morning, just in time for lunch. Just make sure the sandwiches are fully thawed out before eating.

BEST BEFORE

Bread has a 'best before' date. This only refers to the quality – bread can still be eaten after this date, it just might not be at its best and is not guaranteed to last.

In time, bread will stale and go mouldy.

- **Staling:** when a loaf stales, the crust starts to become leathery while the inside loses its softness. These changes can be temporarily reversed by warming in an oven or by toasting.
- **Mould:** freshly baked bread is free from mould. However, mould spores, which are always present in the air, can fall on the crust and mould may develop, particularly in warm/moist conditions.

CRUSTY BREAD

Crusty bread and rolls are best eaten on the day of purchase as they can go stale after only a few hours.

Unwrapped crusty bread should be kept in a clean, well ventilated bread bin. Don't put it in an airtight container as free circulation of air is essential to keep the crust crisp.

Crusty bread and rolls which have become a little stale or have lost their crispness can be freshened by wrapping in foil and placing in a pre-heated oven for 5–10 minutes. The bread should be left in the foil to cool down and eaten soon afterwards because reheating causes it to dry out and go stale fairly quickly. Bread should only be reheated once.