

The Best Way to Store Garlic

The simplest way to preserve your garlic is to place it in mesh produce bags. These are reusable and provide the air circulation that your garlic will need to keep well.

Mesh produce bags are a fantastic way to store your garlic.

The environmental requirements for storing garlic:

- 60-65°F (15.5-18°C) air temperature
- Moderate humidity
- Good air circulation



If the temperature drops too much, your bulbs will begin to sprout after the temperature rises again. Therefore, attempting to preserve store-bought garlic that was kept in the refrigerated section is a bad idea. If the humidity is too low, your garlic will dry out too quickly and shrivel and if the air circulation is poor, your garlic has a high chance of rotting. When cured, cleaned, and stored properly, garlic will keep easily for over half a year.

Other Ways for Storing Garlic

If you have fresh bulbs of garlic that you want to preserve faster than the method outlined above, there are a lot of different options for you. Some are better than others, and some popular methods of storing garlic can actually be quite dangerous — so read on.

Putting Garlic in the Fridge

Storing fresh garlic in the fridge is generally not a good idea. This is because garlic bulbs are low-acidity, making them prone to *Clostridium botulinum*, better known as the culprit behind botulism.

When you see garlic sold at the store in oil, it typically has a preservative like citric acid added to increase the acidity of the mixture, preventing *Clostridium botulinum* from forming. It is also stored at a lower temperature in commercial fridges than your fridge at home is capable of reaching in most cases.

Freezing Garlic

Freezing fresh garlic is a fantastic option. Here are the best ways to do it:

- **Unpeeled whole cloves** — Leave the peels on and place them directly in the freezer after harvesting or purchasing. Thaw them out and unpeel before use.
- **Chopped and formed into a block** — Peel the skin off and chop the cloves into even pieces. Form into a block or any shape you wish, so long as you wrap it very tightly in a plastic bag or wrap. You can grate it while frozen or simply break off a piece before use.
- **Pureed in oil** — Peel your cloves and then blend them in a food processor or blender with an oil of your choice. Because the oil won't freeze completely, you can easily scrape some pureed garlic off for use in cooking.



No matter which method you choose, it's vital that you freeze it as soon as you're finishing preparing. Don't put it in the fridge or leave it out, for reasons listed in the fridge section above.

Canning Your Garlic

Canning garlic is not recommended. As mentioned in the refrigerating garlic section, garlic is a low-acidity plant that is prone to *Clostridium botulinum*. The spores also proliferate in low-oxygen environments, which canned foods are known for.

Drying Your Garlic

To dry garlic cloves, first be sure that they're fresh and not soft or bruised. Peel your cloves and cut each of them in half. Dry them at around 140°F (60°C) for two hours. After two hours, reduce to 130°F (54°C). Take them out of the oven or food dehydrator when they are fully dry.

Storing Your Garlic in Vinegar or Wine

One of the more interesting ways to store garlic is to place cloves into vinegar or wine and put them in the fridge. If you're using wine, go with a dry white wine. If using vinegar, white vinegar will work. It will keep for 3-5 months in the fridge.

If you use this method, keep a watchful eye for any unusual growth on the surface of your container. This is usually mold or yeast forming due to a higher than ideal temperature, so make sure your fridge is cold enough.

Sources: postharvest.ucdavis.edu, epicgardening.com