



VEGETABLE STORAGE / THE LONGER KEEPERS

Keep the harvest.

Vegetable storage for UK homes, sheds and allotments

Store only good quality produce. Separate any damaged or marked crops for immediate use if still safe, and discard mouldy or rotten vegetables. Always harvest gently and label the batches.

CROP	PREPARE & STORE	KEEPING EXPECTATION
Maincrop potatoes	Let the surfaces dry; brush off loose soil. Store in darkness in paper sacks or breathable bags, protected from frost.	Weeks to months, depending on variety and store. Check for rot and sprouting.
Onions, garlic & shallots	Dry under cover with airflow until skins and necks are thoroughly dry. Store cool, dry and ventilated.	Storage varieties can last months. Use thick-necked or damaged bulbs first if good.
Carrot, parsnip, beetroot, swede & turnip	Remove tops without cutting the crown. Pack quality, unwashed roots in slightly damp sand or coir; keep very cool, about 0–4°C, without freezing.	Several weeks or longer in suitable storage. Check that packing is not wet and roots are not shrivelling.
Pumpkin & winter squash	Harvest mature fruit before frost. Keep the stalk intact; cure the skin in a warm, dry, airy place. Store approximately 10–15°C, with fruits separated.	Often months when properly matured. Immature or frost-damaged fruit stores poorly.
Winter cabbage	Choose firm storage varieties. Keep the heads very cool, about 0–4°C, with airflow and frost protection.	Weeks to months. Spring cabbage and loose heads are for quicker use.

These are broad expectations for suitable varieties and good storage, not guaranteed shelf lives. The root-packing, bulb-drying and squash conditions are different: one damp shed corner will not suit them all.

A UK shed is not automatically a safe store

Check actual temperatures with a min/max thermometer. Protect from rain, rodents and frost; avoid condensation. If your store is unsuitable, keep smaller batches in the house or fridge and freeze a glut.



VEGETABLE STORAGE / EVERYDAY HARVESTS

Fresh for the week.

A fridge guide and simple habits that reduce waste

Keep the fridge at 0–5°C; check with a thermometer. The times below are approximate quality windows for fresh, whole produce in good condition. Cut produce needs prompt refrigeration.

CROP	WHERE & HOW	USE AS A GUIDE
Lettuce, spinach, kale	Fridge; a container or bag limits wilting. Keep leaves from sitting in water.	3–5 days
Broccoli, sprouts; peas	Fridge; cool promptly after picking.	3–5 days
French / runner beans	Fridge; keep in a bag. Young, tender pods are best.	About 1 week
Cauliflower, peppers, cucumber	Fridge; protect from drying out and use promptly.	About 1 week
Courgette; aubergine	Fridge for short storage; use aubergines first.	3–5 days; 2–3 days
Spring onion; soft herbs	Fridge; protect from wilting. Keep basil stems in water at room temperature and use promptly.	A few days
Carrot, beetroot, radish	Fridge; remove leafy tops and bag roots.	1–2 weeks
Ripe tomatoes	Refrigerate to slow deterioration; bring to room temperature to serve. Ripen unripe whole fruit indoors first.	Use within a few days

Still in the ground?

Suitable winter leeks, parsnips and hardy brassicas can be harvested as needed. Lift a small supply before frozen ground makes digging them out difficult. Waterlogging, pests and exposed sites can make outdoor storage unreliable.

A glut to freeze

Freeze while quality is good. Most vegetables need blanching first; check for a crop-specific method. Cool cooked food and refrigerate within 1–2 hours. Keep leftovers for no more than 48 hours, or freeze.

Potato check: current UK advice allows fridge storage as well as a cool, dark, dry place. Remove sprouts and green portions; discard extensively green, bitter, mouldy or rotten potatoes. Wash all produce before preparing or eating it.