

Why Frozen?

What are the benefits of buying frozen Southern Maryland Meats products?

Southern Maryland Meats products are processed, vacuum packaged and frozen at USDA inspected facilities. Freezing insures SMM products retain their quality, flavor and freshness longer than freshly packaged meats.

- **High Quality**

SMM products are frozen at the peak of freshness. Nutritional value is maintained even through the freezing process as freezing pauses bacterial growth and slows chemical changes to decrease the chance of rancidity.

- **Longer Shelf-life**

Frozen products have an increased shelf-life (up to six months in the freezer for most meats); you have the chance to use your meat immediately or keep for later ... and even buy more (bulk) when the price is right for you!

- **Safe Packaging**

SMM products are vacuum packed in convenient portion sizes which lowers risk of freezer burn and increases shelf life. Be sure to handle all frozen packages with care to insure the vacuum seal remains intact.

- **Buying Local Supports your Local Economy**

When you purchase from a SMM producer, you know you are buying a product that was raised in one of the 5 southern Maryland counties. You are helping your local economy and agriculture community. You can even meet the producer and possibly see their operation



Southern Maryland Meats is a program of the Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission (SMADC)

www.smadc.com

Common Questions about Frozen Meats



The color is off... Why is this?

SMM products are NOT treated with Carbon Monoxide or other chemicals to enhance color. Instead of the normal bright, cherry red color the meat is a rich burgundy or brown. SMM products are usually dry-aged*, which also changes the color. The color changes may occur when oxygen is removed during vacuum packaging causing the meat to darken.

The texture has changed... Frozen meat may not appear as juicy and the fat looks crumbly. A small amount of moisture is lost in the dry-aging process, however less moisture is lost when you thaw vacuum packed frozen meats than conventionally aged and packaged meats. That's because the ice crystals that form during freezing are smaller in dry-aged meats.

Frozen meat doesn't weigh as much as fresh... Meat does weigh less when it is frozen. But, once the meat is thawed it should weigh about the same as it would have if it was fresh.

If I buy frozen then I have to thaw it.... Buying fresh or frozen is a customer preference. However, with frozen meat you can choose to thaw it immediately or keep frozen to enjoy the superior flavor of locally raised meats anytime.

***Dry-aging** - the dry-aging process changes meat in two ways.

First, moisture is evaporated which creates a greater concentration of flavor and taste. Second, the meat's natural enzymes break down the connective tissue in the muscle, which leads to more tender meat. (Average Dry-Aging period: Beef: 14-21 days, Lamb/Goat: 7-14 days.)

****Wet-aging** – wet-aged meat cuts found in most U.S. grocery stores are vacuum packed in plastic trays and boxed for immediate distribution. During wet aging, the plastic doesn't allow the meat to breathe, so it ages in contact with its own juices.

www.southernmarylandmeats.com

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