

## FRESH FRUIT IN THE TROPICS

Fruit	Expected Shelf Life	Stowage Requirements
Apples	4 to 5 weeks	The tarter the apple, the longer it will last. Granny Smiths are widely available and last the longest. Storing with citrus causes overripening and bruising.
Citrus	4 to 5 weeks	If any mold, wash with a mild chlorine solution. Don't store with apples.
Pineapples	2 to 3 weeks	Buy when green; stow upright.
Avocado	2 weeks	Buy when green, rock hard, and without bruises.
Mangos	2 weeks	Buy when green and rock hard. Store in a separate container because ripening mangoes secrete a sticky resin.
Pears	10 to 14 days	Buy when rock hard. Wrap in tissue paper or paper towels.
Pamplemousse	10 days	Store this softball-sized, green, piney-tasting grapefruit of the Pacific as citrus.
Bananas	7 to 10 days	Buy when green. Bananas all ripen at the same time no matter what, so don't buy too many.
Melons	1 week	Buy when unripe. To test, press an end and smell; riper melons smell stronger.
Papaya	1 week	Buy when green. Use papaya grated in salad while green.
Other fruit	Less than 1 week	

# FRESH VEGETABLES IN THE TROPICS

Vegetable	Expected Shelf Life	Stowage Requirements
Potatoes/yams	1 to 2 months	Remove eyes as they appear. Stowing with apples will retard sprouting; stowing with onions will encourage sprouting.
Onions	1 to 2 months	Stow uncovered, and keep dry to slow sprouting. Cooking onions keep longest.
Garlic	1 month	Buy only totally dry, totally white garlic. Green or mold spots mean it will sprout.
Winter squash	1 month	
Cabbage	1 month	Wrap in newspaper or a towel.
Beets/turnips	3 to 4 weeks	Stow intact.
Tomatoes	3 to 4 weeks	Buy when green, then wrap individually in paper towels.
Cucumber	2 to 3 weeks	English cucumbers without bruises wrapped in cellophane last longest.
Carrots	2 weeks	Stow without the tops. If rubbery, peel and soak in water to make crisp again.
Zucchini/summer squash	2 weeks	
Green pepper	2 weeks	Green ones last longest; they'll turn red and yellow as they ripen.
Iceberg lettuce	1 to 2 weeks	Remove the outer leaves if they get slimy. Cut away the stem if it starts to rot.
Romaine hearts	1 to 2 weeks	Commercially packaged hearts in plastic last longest.
Eggplant	1 week	
Cauliflower/broccoli	1 week	If broccoli wilts, soak the bottoms in water to restore.
Other veggies	Less than 1 week	

## STORE AT ROOM TEMPERATURE

Category	Products	Expected Shelf Life	Notes
Condiments	Ketchup, mustard, relish, mayonnaise, oil-based salad dressing, vinegar, oil of all types	A minimum of several months	Mayonnaise keeps indefinitely as long as no bacteria get into the container. Always use a clean spoon to serve it, or buy it in squeeze bottles or in single-serving packets.
Spreads	Jelly and jam, peanut butter, honey, maple syrup, molasses	A minimum of 2 to 4 weeks	Peanut butter, even all-natural and without preservatives, keeps for months. Small containers prevent spoilage, particularly of jelly and jam and maple syrup, which molds after a few weeks. Honey sometimes crystallizes; putting the container in boiling water for 10 minutes will liquefy it.
Dairy products	Butter (margarine), cheese, yogurt, sour cream	A minimum of 2 to 4 weeks	Keep these in the coolest place on the boat, usually in the bilge. Butter does better than poor-quality margarine, which turns soupy in a week. Store in plastic container because oil leaches through other packaging. Purchase small, sealed plastic packages of cheese. Harder cheeses keep longer.
Meat and eggs	Fresh meat; packaged cold cuts; dried salami, pepperoni, etc., in links; eggs	Up to 1 week for fresh meat if deep-frozen; 1 to 2 weeks for cold cuts; 2 months or more for eggs and for dried meats	Buy fresh meat from a gourmet butcher and ask them to vacuum-bag and deep-freeze it. Purchase small, sealed plastic packages of cold cuts. Vacuum-sealed salami-type meats keep almost as long as dried meats sold in links. Buy eggs fresh, unwashed, and unrefrigerated; turn them every other day, and stow them in plastic or foam cartons.
Other	Yeast, bread	2 to 4 months for yeast; 1 week for bread	Jars of yeast don't keep once they're opened unless they're refrigerated; buy individual foil packages and check the expiration dates. Lightly coat whole-grain bread in vinegar and wrap in aluminum foil. After a week at sea, most cruisers bake their own.

# PRODUCTS WITH LONG SHELF LIVES

Category	Products	Expected Shelf Life	Notes
Milk	Ultra-heat-treated milk (whole or skim), dried milk (whole or skim)	A minimum of several months. Use within 24 hours once it's mixed or opened.	UHT milk usually comes in liter packages. We prefer the 250-milliliter size when we can get it because that's just enough for two bowls of cereal or several cups of coffee. Dried milk is much less expensive than UHT and can be used for cooking, making yogurt, etc.
Juice	UHT juice, glass-packed juice	A minimum of several months. Use within 2 to 3 days once it's opened.	UHT juice lasts the longest, and the empty packaging is the easiest to stow when garbage facilities are few and far between.
Butter/margarine	Canned butter or margarine	A minimum of several months; use within a few days of opening.	Canned butter tastes as good as fresh and can be purchased on many tropical islands. Canned margarine tastes oily; we much prefer the butter.
Yogurt	UHT yogurt, home-made yogurt	A minimum of a month for UHT. Use immediately once it's made or opened.	UHT yogurt can be purchased on many tropical islands. Kits for homemade yogurt can be purchased in developed countries, or get directions off the Internet and use a thermos, yogurt culture, and dried milk.
Meat, fish, and one-pot meals	Canned meats and fish; canned soups, stews, etc.; freeze-dried soups, stews, etc.; pressure-cooker canned meat, fish, and one-pot meals	Indefinitely	Brinkman Turkey Farms ( <a href="http://www.brinkmanfarms.com">www.brinkmanfarms.com</a> ) supplies canned turkey, beef, and chicken. The Internet lists many vendors for freeze-dried foods. Sample food items before buying in bulk. For information on pressure-cooker canning, go to Beth and Evans' website ( <a href="http://www.bethandevans.com">www.bethandevans.com</a> ); click on "Articles," then "Article Downloads."
Fruits and vegetables	Canned fruit and vegetables, dried fruit and vegetables, pressure-cooker canned vegetables	Indefinitely	American Harvest and Mister Coffee make inexpensive dehydrators for preparing your own dried fruits and vegetables. For information on pressure-cooker canning, see above.