

Weekly Thaw Plan & Quick Reference

Sunday: decide each night's protein. Each evening, move tomorrow's meat from the freezer to the fridge.

Sunday Thaw List

Day	Protein for dinner	Zone	Move to fridge (evening before)	Done
Mon			Sun evening	
Tue			Mon evening	
Wed			Tue evening	
Thu			Wed evening	
Fri			Thu evening	
Sat			Fri evening	
Sun			Sat evening	

Thawing Methods

In the fridge (default)	About 1 day for a pound of ground beef or steaks; 1 to 2 days for a roast. On a plate or in a container on the lowest shelf.
Cold water	About an hour for a flat 1-lb portion. Seal the wrapped portion in a stainless steel or glass container, set it in a bowl of cold water, change the water every 30 minutes.
Cook from frozen	Longer cooking time. Thin patties in a skillet on the stovetop, or a roast in the oven.
Forgot to thaw?	Grab a flat 1-lb ground beef backup from the front: cold water, or straight into a skillet over medium heat, breaking it apart as it softens.
Keep in mind	Avoid thawing meat on the counter. If something smells off after thawing, throw it out.

Best Quality in the Freezer

Times are about flavor and texture; use them to decide what to eat first.

Steaks & roasts	4-12 months
Ground meat	3-4 months
Organs	3-4 months
Cooked meat & chili	2-3 months
Bone broth	4-6 months
Fatty fish (salmon)	2-3 months
Butter	6-9 months
Frozen fruit	8-12 months

Every Label Needs

- ☐ Cut and animal ("Beef chuck roast")
- ☐ Weight or number of pieces
- ☐ Date it went into the freezer
- ☐ Source, if you buy from more than one

First In, First Out

New packages go behind or below.

Older packages move to the front or top.

Clean out monthly or before a big shop.

If the Power Goes Out

Keep the door closed	A full freezer stays frozen much longer than a half-empty one. Glass jars of water (with headspace) fill empty space and help hold the cold.
Coin trick	Freeze a small glass or stainless cup of water with a coin on top of the ice. If the coin has sunk to the bottom, the freezer thawed and refroze.
When in doubt, throw it out	If food has thawed and sat warm, or smells or looks wrong, don't risk it.