

How to Store Your Beverages

How long will that soda stay fizzy in the pantry? And does water expire?

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From ice-cold beer on a hot summer day to a perfect cup of coffee on a winter afternoon, the right drink can boost your mood, help you enjoy time with friends, and keep you going at work or at play. Stocking up on your favorite drinks makes it easy and less expensive to keep yourself quenched, your family happy, and your friends entertained. Before you buy that case of juice boxes or that pound of tea leaves, though, ask if you can get through it all before it spoils or goes stale.

This drinkable installment of Use By takes a look at the shelf life of drinks from milk to vodka and everything in between so you can make the best buying decisions.



Keep your favorite drinks fresher for longer

“When Does Juice Go Bad?” and Other Drink Expiration Dates

Beverages like milk and fruit juice can spoil and become unsafe to drink. Others, like water, soda, and beer, lose flavor or can take on the taste of the container after their expiration date. And some, like liquor and properly cooled wine, can last nearly forever until they're opened. And all the drinks in this chart can be repurposed once they're past their prime. So pour yourself a glass of something you like and read on.

Beverage	Cabinet Storage	Refrigerator Instructions	Freezer Instructions	Uses for expired or excess
Beer	3-6 months in dark for most beers, almost forever for beers with higher alcohol content and yeast in the bottle	6 months unopened for most beers	A few hours, but proceed with caution to avoid bottle cracks or can explosion	Polish furniture with flat beer, buff dry
Coffee	2 weeks ground, 1 month whole in airtight container in cool, dark, dry place	Not recommended	Not recommended	Mulch shrubs or add to garden soil to boost acidity
Juice	By expiration date unopened	1 day fresh made, 7-10 days opened bottle	Not recommended	Soak fingernails in lemon juice to whiten tips
Kefir, bottled	By expiration date unopened	By expiration date opened	1 year, transfer to ice-cube tray first	Add to compost pile
Liquor	6-12 months opened, indefinitely unopened	Not recommended	Not recommended	Mix vodka with water, spray on as mosquito

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				repellent
Milk	No	By date on package	1 year	Use as sour milk in recipes
Pedialyte	By date on package, unopened	2 days opened, by date on package, unopened	Not recommended	Add to compost pile
Shakes, diet and protein	1 hour opened, by date on package unopened	Not recommended for opened cans, by date on package unopened	Not recommended	Add to compost pile or water plants with diluted shakes
Soda	1 year unopened	1 day or less opened, 1 year unopened	Not recommended, container will explode	Remove grease stains from laundry – add along with detergent
Sports drinks	9 months, unopened	3-5 days opened, 9 months unopened	1 year, shake after thawing to mix electrolytes	Clean toilets – let drink sit for 2 hours to remove stains
Tea, brewed	8 hours opened bottle or fresh brewed	2-3 days covered	1 year, thaw in refrigerator	Clean wood floors (black tea)
Tea, leaves or bags	6-12 months stored in airtight container away from heat, moisture, light, and strong odors	Not recommended	Not recommended	Absorb fridge odors (green tea)
Water, bottled	6 months or by printed expiration date, unopened	2 weeks opened, 6 months or by printed date unopened	Indefinitely	Water plants
Wine	6 months at room temperature, unopened on side, away from light and heat. Indefinitely in properly set wine cooler or cellar	Re-cork or stopper open bottles, store upright, 1 day reds, 3 days whites	Freeze leftover wine for cooking, freezing full bottles not recommended	Clean produce and glass

Where Should I Store Bulk Beverages?

It may take some creative reshuffling to find the storage space you need, but it can be worth it to buy in bulk.

Store glasses and cookware closer to the oven and stovetop to make room for beer, wine, coffee, and tea in cabinets that will stay cooler.

Mark the purchase date on cases of soda, protein shakes, and beer to help you use the oldest items first.

If you're storing emergency supply items like bottled water, make sure to shop for fresh supplies twice a year — that emergency may not happen for a decade, but you'll want fresh supplies if it does!

Now that you know how long your coffee, tea, and kefir will last, it's time to start thinking about those great items you can always rely on—the ones that never expire. We'll look at those in an upcoming Use By post. And if you missed our posts on [fruits](#), [veggies](#), [herbs](#), and more, check them out for

smarter shopping and storage ideas.

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