

What do the Dates on Food Packages Mean?

“Expiration Date” (Examples: “Expires 11/15/11” or “Do not use after 11/15/11”)

- Look for it on: Baby food and formula, medicines, vitamins, yeast, baking powder.
- What it means: Do not distribute infant formula, baby food, vitamins, or medicines after the expiration date! Yeast and baking powder work less well after expiration but are safe to eat.

“Pack Date” (Examples: “Packed on 03/01/2012” or “22:5306412” or “KL064”)

- Look for it on: Canned food, crackers, cookies, spices.
- What it means: This is the date the food was packaged. A code is often used that cannot be understood by the general public, often numbering days sequentially such that January 1 is day 001 and December 31 is day 365. Usually this food is of good quality and safe to eat for a long time past the date.

“Sell By” Date (Example: “Sell by January 1, 2012”. Also called “Pull Date”)

- Look for it on: Refrigerated foods such as milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, eggs, lunch meat, packaged salad mixes.
- What it means: The store must sell these foods before the code date listed and often donates these foods when they are close to date. If the food has been handled properly it is still safe to eat and the quality is good. Food bank staff monitors this food to ensure that the quality remains good.

“Use By” or Quality Date (Examples: “Best if used by 1/1/12” or “Use Before 1/1/12”)

- Look for it on: Crackers, cookies, cold cereals, and other dry, shelf stable food.
- What it means: This date is the manufacturer’s recommendation for how long the food will be at peak quality. After the quality date, the food is still safe to eat but slowly begins to lose nutrients and the quality begins to lessen.

EXPIRATION DATE EXTENSIONS



**OZARKS
FOOD HARVEST**
THE FOOD BANK

AUGUST 2021

Shelf stable/Dry Product	Exp. date Extension
Baby Food: Fruit, veggie, cereal & formula	no extension
Boxed Dinners:	
Hormel (Compleats)	1 year
Taco Bell with Shells	2 months
Taco Bell without Shells	1 year
Pasta Salads	6 months
Canned Goods	18 months
EXCEPT for canned meats	12 months
Condiments, Sauces, Syrups	
Apple Butter	3 months
BBQ sauce, Cocktail sauce	6 months
Dry mix packets, gravy, taco	1 year
Frosting, canned	6 months
Honey	1 year
Jelly/Jam, Fruit	1 year
Jelly/Jam, Sugar Free	9 months
Ketchup, Chili sauce	1 year
Mayonnaise	3 months
Molasses	2 years
Mustard	1 year
Olives, Pickles	6 months
Salad Dressing	6 months
Salsa	3 months
Syrup, corn, pancake	1 year
Syrup, chocolate	18 months
Vinegar	2 years
Dry Goods	
Baking Mixes: biscuit, pancake, cake, brownie, bread	6 months
Baking powder	no extension
Baking soda	2 years
Beans, dried	1 year
Cereal, bars, cream of wheat, rice	2 months
Cereal, boxed	6 months
Cereal, oatmeal	no extension

Shelf stable/Dry Product	Exp. date Extension
Dry Goods continued	
Cookies	4 months shelf/ 6 months frozen
Cornmeal, cornstarch	6 months
Crackers	4 months
Croutons	6 months
Flour	6 months
Fried Onions, canned	3 months
Fruit Roll Up, By the Foot	3 months
Jello mix	2 months
Jerky, beef, turkey, etc.	12 months
Mac n Cheese	2 months
Nuts, jar or can	1 year
Oil, olive or vegetable	18 months
Oil, Walnut, Macadamia, nut oils	1 year
Pasta, dry with egg	2 years
Pasta, dry without egg, rice or soy	3 years
Peanut Butter	1 year
Pie Crust ready to bake	1 month
Popcorn, kernels	2 years
Popcorn, microwave packets	1 year
Potato Chips and other salty snacks	3 months
Potatoes, instant	6 months
Protein bars	3 months
Pudding mixes	6 months
Rice, white, wild or brown	1 year
Shortening/solid	6 months
Soups, broths, shelf stable cartons	6 months
Spices	1 year
Stuffing mix	1 year
Sugar, brown	4 months
Sugar, granulated or confectioners	2 years
Sugar, substitutes	1 year
Toaster pastries	3 months
Tortillas	2 months
Vanilla and other extracts	4 years
Yeast, dry	no extension

