

Storing Bread

Kitchen

Where bread should and should not go, and why.

Bread stales through starch retrogradation, in which cooked starch recrystallises and expels water. The process is fastest just above freezing — which is exactly fridge temperature.

FRIDGE
worst

FREEZER
best

BIN
2–3 days

- Refrigeration speeds staling; it does not slow it.
- Freezing halts it almost entirely.
- Freeze sliced, and toast from frozen.
- A paper bag or bread bin suits crusty loaves.
- Plastic keeps it soft but softens the crust.
- Reheating briefly at 180°C reverses staling temporarily.

LOOK FOR IT

A loaf frozen on the day of baking and toasted from frozen is close to fresh.

Stale is not the same as mouldy. Stale bread is perfectly good for toast, croutons, breadcrumbs and pudding.