

# Holiday Entertaining

## Keep Your Cool During Hectic Holiday Entertaining Use These Hot Ideas From Your Freezer

(NAPSA)—Holiday cooks can't wait to impress their guests with delectable hors d'oeuvres, gourmet meals and festive party dishes. But how can these holiday entertainers create an impressive spread without all the stress? Scott Gerow, executive chef at the hot New York City restaurant ike, says cooks can prepare a gourmet holiday meal like the pros without spending the entire holiday in the kitchen. How? Just visit the freezer aisle.

"One of the most misperceived items in today's kitchens is frozen foods," states Gerow. "The notion that fresh ingredients create a healthier meal of superior quality couldn't be more false. Using frozen foods actually enhances the taste, quality and nutrition of your meal, without the fuss. With frozen ingredients, all of the hard work like cleaning, dicing and chopping is already done so you can enjoy your guests and your holiday."

Many chefs in top restaurants around the country incorporate frozen ingredients to enhance their favorite recipes. "There is universal usage of select frozen items among premier chefs because they can use fresh frozen ingredients year-round without worrying about seasonality. Almost every kitchen uses frozen pastries, berries and very often seafood, too," adds Gerow.

Gerow offers these reasons for incorporating what he calls "Freezer Favorites" into a home cooking routine during the holidays and everyday.

- They are convenient. Picking, cleaning, dicing and chopping takes up valuable time in the kitchen that could be spent with family. With frozen ingredients all the hard work is done!

- They seal in freshness at its peak. Thanks to cutting-edge



flash freezing technology, frozen foods are often fresher than their fresh counterparts because they are picked and harvested at their peak and then processed under optimal conditions.

- You don't need to worry about what's in season with frozen food. You can have your favorite foods all-year-round—strawberries in the winter and apple pie in the summer!

- They are incredibly versatile. Use them as ingredients in traditional recipes or as a high quality substitute when cooking from scratch.

Another holiday tip from Gerow: reduce frozen fruit concentrates over medium heat to create colorful and richly flavored dessert sauces. "To bring your sauces up a notch, add vanilla extract, cinnamon stick or lemon peel for subtle complexity," adds Gerow.

"For a gourmet touch, you can experiment with different colors and textures of frozen vegetables to add a new dimension to usual dishes," says Gerow. "The varieties of frozen foods available today are endless. From frozen fish to frozen appetizers and desserts to frozen herbs, I've learned to incorporate frozen items into my recipes so I can spend more quality time with my family and friends around the holidays."

For recipes and tips on using "Freezer Favorites," visit [www.easyhomemeals.com](http://www.easyhomemeals.com).