

Types of Space Food

There are eight categories of space food:

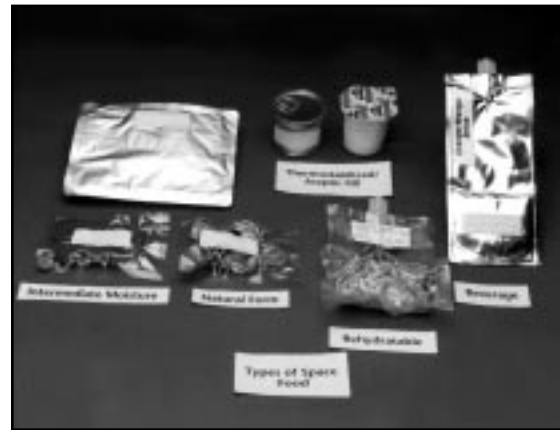
Rehydratable Food: The water is removed from rehydratable foods to make them easier to store. This process of dehydration (also known as freeze drying) is described in the earlier Gemini section. Water is replaced in the foods before they are eaten. Rehydratable items include beverages as well as food items. Hot cereal such as oatmeal is a rehydratable food.

Thermostabilized Food: Thermostabilized foods are heat processed so they can be stored at room temperature. Most of the fruits and fish (tuna fish) are thermostabilized in cans. The cans open with easy-open pull tabs similar to fruit cups that can be purchased in the local grocery store. Puddings are packaged in plastic cups.

Intermediate Moisture Food: Intermediate moisture foods are preserved by taking some water out of the product while leaving enough in to maintain the soft texture. This way, it can be eaten without any preparation. These foods include dried peaches, pears, apricots, and beef jerky.

Natural Form Food: These foods are ready to eat and are packaged in flexible pouches. Examples include nuts, granola bars, and cookies.

Irradiated Food: Beef steak and smoked turkey are the only irradiated products being used at this time. These products are cooked and packaged in flexible foil pouches and sterilized by ionizing radiation so they can be kept



Food on the Space Shuttle comes in several categories. Represented here are: thermostabilized, intermediate moisture, rehydratable, natural form, and beverage.

at room temperature. Other irradiated products are being developed for the ISS.

Frozen Food: These foods are quick frozen to prevent a buildup of large ice crystals. This maintains the original texture of the food and helps it taste fresh. Examples include quiches, casseroles, and chicken pot pie.

Fresh Food: These foods are neither processed nor artificially preserved. Examples include apples and bananas.

Refrigerated Food: These foods require cold or cool temperatures to prevent spoilage. Examples include cream cheese and sour cream.

