



Whether you're heading to the beach for the day, away camping for the weekend, or spending your afternoon at a backyard barbeque - an icebox is a must-have for keeping your fresh food and drinks chilled.

Not all iceboxes are made equal. Many look nice on the outside but have inefficient insulation on the inside. In this article, we've put together some pointers on choosing the best icebox for your adventures.

Choosing Your Icebox

Make sure you buy an icebox from a reputable icebox manufacturer, such as Evakool or Dometic. This will ensure you get the most out of your icebox at your next barbecue, or on your next camping trip.

When deciding on your model, it's also important to consider how functional the size will be when it's jam-packed with food and drink. It might be better to have two smaller boxes that you can lift easily, then one that's larger, less manageable.

Now that you've selected the right one, here are our very best tips to help you make your ice last longer in your cooler...

1. Prepare Your Icebox

Spread a layer of crushed ice around your icebox the day or night before you use it. By cooling down your icebox and the internal air inside in advance, you're doing half the job for the ice you'll add in later.

2. Use Block Ice

Crushed ice is full of air, which means there isn't a lot of solid ice. This means it melts quickly, leaving you with an icebox of cold water. On the other hand, block ice is a solid mass. It will keep your icebox as cold as crushed ice, but won't melt as quickly.

You can buy block ice in both soft and hard packs that make handling and packing easy, or as icepacks like those available here. Alternatively, you can make your own using ice cream containers or juice bottles, remembering to only part-fill them to allow for expansion.



Frozen ice blocks - they can be old bottles or ice cream containers if you want - are better than crushed ice.

3. Add Salt to Your Ice

Adding salt to the water before freezing lowers the freezing temperature of the water, which means your ice will actually be colder than frozen fresh water. Using seawater will work even better.



4. Cool Your Food and Drinks First

Your icebox will perform at its best if you cool down the contents to go inside first. Place your food items in a fridge for a few hours first, then put the cold contents into the icebox. This way, you're saving your ice from having to cool the contents down, which in turn means the ice lasts longer.

If you don't have room in the fridge, put your drinks in the crushed ice you're using to cool the icebox down with.

5. Add the Beers!

If you're putting drinks in your icebox, leave the crushed ice in (as described above), even if it's already half-melted. The cold water will help slow your block ice from melting.



Always keep your Icebox away from the sun and under shade as much as possible.

6. Keep Out of the Sun

The sun is your worst enemy in preserving your ice... for obvious reasons. Keep your icebox in the shade as much as possible, and ensure there is good airflow surrounding the box. Sitting the icebox inside your tent or car is like putting it in an oven, as temperatures can often climb 10-20 degrees higher than outside.

You could even cover your icebox with a blanket or towel to shade it from the sun. If you're at the beach, a wet towel will work even better.

7. Avoid Opening Too Often

This is obvious, but every time you open your icebox not only do you let the heat in but you let the cold out. Avoid opening your icebox too often, and do so gently when you need to. Here's a tip: rather than dashing to the main icebox every 10 minutes to grab another cold one, move enough drinks to a smaller icebox or a soft-sided cooler bag to get you through a session. That way, you're only having to open the main icebox once (and you don't go thirsty!).

8. Fill Your Icebox as Much Possible

An icebox packed to the brim will preserve its ice longer than a part-filled icebox of air. The more food or drinks you have in your icebox, the less air you will have - which would otherwise need to be cooled down and kept cold.

What do you do to keep ice longer in your icebox?