

# Paper Towel Magic

One head of Romaine lettuce



One month later, what's not been eaten is still crisp



One box of button mushrooms



Wrap unused mushrooms, put in plastic bag and they will keep much longer



Garlic doesn't dry out before you can use it



Works for celery, hot peppers, small citrus, many other items ...



Use half a large cucumber or zucchini in your salad and what can you do with the other half? Use half a lemon and what do you do with the other half? Well, you can (a) throw these other halves away, or you can (b) put them into a plastic bag in the refrigerator and throw them away in a couple of days when they begin to grow hair (or freckles).

**BUT WAIT!!** there is a better way! You can actually wrap that other half cucumber or zucchini or lemon in a paper towel, then put it into a plastic bag and refrigerate it and it will keep for weeks! Details of this particular application (including photographs) are given on the following page. Please note that cut veggies need to be checked often and the towel replaced if it appears more than merely damp. Also please note that paper napkins will not work, *you must use paper towels*.

The paper towel wicks up all of the moisture that molds and other rotting agents require to do their nefarious work, *while leaving behind the moisture your vegetables need to stay crisp and fresh*. Works with small citrus, too. Works with mushrooms, with this caveat: you may need to check often and replace the paper towel if it starts to feel wet. (You need to check mushrooms often because they exude a lot of moisture.) The towel keeps garlic from drying out because you can then put the garlic in a plastic bag and refrigerate it. Works with garden lettuce (never tried it on iceberg head lettuce, since I never buy it).

Works with celery (I use a newspaper's plastic wrapper). Works for peppers, both green and red – though I generally quarter these and freeze them because I try to buy them in quantities when they are on sale. Works for hot peppers, too – I've even made hot serrano peppers turn red ripe by wrapping them thus and leaving them at room temperature.

Of course, the normal rules of hygiene apply in that you must never re-use a paper towel or the same plastic bag. It also helps to keep your refrigerator temperature as close as you can get to 32° without freezing anything.



I used to get very aggravated when I had to throw away mixed greens when only a few leaves were spoiled but couldn't be separated out. Now I dump the whole bag soon as I open them up, put in two sheets of paper towel and stuff the greens back in. The toweling blots up *all excess moisture*, thus inhibiting any rotting agents, leaving the greens crisp and fresh.

# Paper Towel Magic *continued . . .*

I use a recipe that asks for the juice of half a lemon; I make it once a month or less. The other half always developed some wild colors when I just put it into the fridge in plastic.

Of course lemons are cheap, but it goes against my grain to throw away good food unnecessarily, and the paper towel saves the other half of the lemon until I'm ready to use it. Placing the two halves of the lemon together as shown holds the towel away from the cut face of the lemon, keeping the towel from draining the lemon of its juice, while the towel still holds the lemon away from the plastic and does not allow moisture on which mold could form.

The other half of a cucumber can be saved in a similar fashion – simply take your first half out of the middle and the remainder can be wrapped face to face, bagged and refrigerated.



**Towel Magic also works with cheese!**



Have you ever gone into your refrigerator and pulled out a hunk of brick cheese only to find out it was grown over in a gross blue mold?

Paper towels stops that mold from forming. Simply wrap the cheese after you've cut off some for your first use, wrap it in a paper towel, put it in a plastic bag and stick it back in the fridge. Each time you cut off succeeding amounts for use, wrap the remainder in the same paper towel, put it back in the same plastic bag and put it back in the same refrigerator.

Works with crumbled cheese also – except that crumbled cheese doesn't wrap as neatly. Instead, fold the paper towel twice and use a pair of scissors to cut a circle of the folded towel just slightly larger than the lid. Place the towel on top the cheese remaining in the container. Put the lid back on and place the container of cheese back in the refrigerator *upside down* so that if any moisture should form, gravity will pull it to the paper towel.

