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Freezing the Leftovers

Freeze the wine! Are you crazy? That might be your reaction, but it could be a quite sensible thing to do. What do you do with the half bottle of cooking wine left after the holidays? You might want a little for a beef stew in a couple of weeks, but by then it could be soured into vinegar. So, freeze it. The trick is making it convenient to get to next time. If you'll need just half a cup for the stew, freeze it in half-cup containers. If you use just a tablespoon at a time to make a sauce, put it in ice cube trays and freeze it by the tablespoon. When the cubes are frozen, store them in a plastic bag. When it's time to make sauce, just drop one cube in the pot.

How about the half a bunch of parsley left from garnishing the salmon? Or the sprigs of cilantro that you didn't need for the Mexican enchiladas? If you just leave them in the refrigerator they will either mold and turn into slime, or dehydrate and lose all their flavor. If you just freeze them dry they tend to turn brown and still lose their flavor.

Since the culprit that steals the flavor is air, use water to seal out the air. Chop the parsley or cilantro. Put a tablespoonful in each section of an ice cube tray then add just enough water to cover. Freeze. Store the cubes in a labeled container or plastic bag until ready to use. Most recipes will be able to handle the little bit of water from the ice when you add the cube.

Another item that stores better when frozen under ice is citrus zest. Since we are now into the backyard citrus season, you might want to freeze some cubes of lemon and orange zest for future use. Grate or peel just the colored layer off the fruit skin. Use a tablespoon for each cube and freeze the same as the parsley. Come June, you'll still have fresh orange zest thanks to the ice that sealed out the air.

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