

Smart Choices

A Community Nutrition
Education Program



Food Safety

Microwave Musts

For food safety, cover food that you cook in the microwave oven. To make sure you heat the food to 165 degrees F, stir and rotate the dish by hand once or twice during cooking, or use a turntable.



Boil and Bubble

When you reheat a sauce, soups or gravy, make sure it comes to a rolling boil for at least 1 minute. This will kill bacteria.



Do Not Defrost on the Counter!

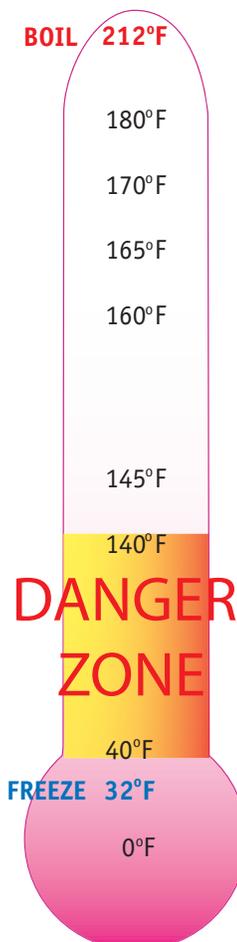
Room temperature is ideal for bacterial growth. Plan so that you have time to defrost frozen meats, poultry and seafood in the refrigerator. If you are in a hurry, thaw them in a well-sealed package in cold water. Change the water often to make sure that it stays cold. You may use a microwave oven to defrost. Cook the food right after you thaw it. (See the warning on partially cooked food.)

Do Not Partially Cook Food.

Partially cooked food reaches the temperature at which bacteria grows, not the temperature that kills it. In other words, it will be in the "danger zone." Are you planning to precook food that you will finish on the grill or in the oven? Transfer the food to the other heat source right away.

Your Refrigerator Needs Your Attention!

1. Once a week, throw out perishable foods that should no longer be eaten.
2. Wash refrigerator surfaces with hot, soapy water.



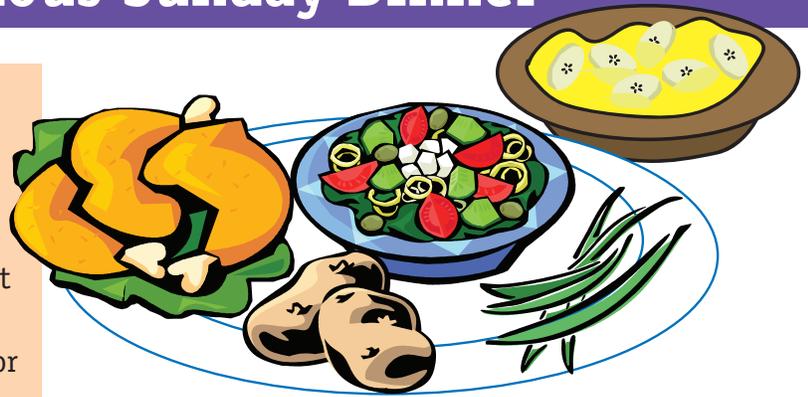
When serving food at a picnic, keep these tips in mind:

- Keep cold food at 40 degrees F or below.
- Keep all perishable foods chilled right up until serving time.
- Place containers of cold food in a bowl or bucket of ice for serving to make sure the food stays cold.
- Keep custards, cream pies and cakes made with dairy ingredients (whipped cream or cream cheese frostings) or eggs (custards and puddings) refrigerated, or avoid them for picnics.
- Serve and eat foods within the 2-hour period in moderate weather, 1-hour in hot weather. Store them in an ice chest after this time or discard.

Food Safety Hints for a Delicious, Nutritious Sunday Dinner

Baked Chicken

- Purchase chicken, and take it right home.
- Raw chicken tends to drip; store it carefully so that it doesn't drip on other foods.
- Cook the chicken within 2 days of purchase. If it will be longer before you prepare it, freeze it.
- If chicken is frozen, thaw it in the refrigerator or in a sealed bag in cold water.
- Be careful not to cross-contaminate when you prepare chicken.
- Cook the chicken until a thermometer inserted between the leg and thigh reaches 165 degrees F.
- After serving, cool chicken quickly and refrigerate.
- Eat within 2-3 days.
- Reheat leftovers until they are 165 degrees F.



Snap Beans

- Wash the snap beans before you snap them and prepare.

Baked Sweet Potatoes

- Scrub before cooking.

Banana Pudding

- Cover and refrigerate the pudding immediately after preparation.
- Eat within 2 days of preparation.
- Don't leave the pudding out on the counter for longer than 1 hour in the summer.

Tossed Salad With Tomato Wedges

- Wash the salad greens well and pat dry.
- Wash the tomato before cutting.
- Have a clean preparation area, and use a clean knife that hasn't been contaminated by raw animal foods or chemicals

When you eat at a restaurant and get a doggy bag, think about how long it's been in the danger zone. Refrigerate in 2 hours from when it was served, or throw it away!

Danger Zone = 40 degrees F to 140 degrees F

For more information, go to
www.fightbac.org or www.foodsafety.gov

Authors:

Judy Myhand, MS
Heli Roy, PhD, RD, LDN
April Cintron, MS, RD, LDN
Annrose Guarino, PhD, RD, LDN
Beth Reames, PhD, RD, LDN
Emily Whelan, MS, RD

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Louisiana State University Agricultural Center, William B. Richardson, Chancellor
Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station, David Boethel, Vice Chancellor and Director
Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service, Paul D. Coreil, Vice Chancellor and Director

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