

Top Summer Food Safety Tips

Food spoils faster in the summer. Why? Bacteria grow fastest in the heat and humidity. Also, more people cook outside at picnics, barbecues and on camping trips, where refrigeration and washing facilities can be hard to find.



Fortunately, you can take steps to make sure your food is safe to eat, even during the summer heat.

Plate it safe!

- Keep beverages in a separate cooler, since it will be opened more frequently.
- Pack perishable foods (such as luncheon meats, cooked meats and chicken, and potato or pasta salads) in an insulated cooler in sealed plastic bags under several inches of ice, ice packs or containers of frozen water. If packing raw meats, do not allow raw meat juices to touch ready-to-eat food. Do not partially cook food ahead of time.
- Pack just the amount of perishable food that you can use.
- If a cold insulated cooler is not available, do not take perishable foods. Instead, pack foods such as hard cheeses, canned meats, chicken and tuna; nuts, peanut butter, dry cereals, bread, crackers, fruits and vegetables.
- Keep the cooler in the coolest part of the car. Place it in the shade or shelter it from the sun at the picnic site. Preserve the cold temperature of the cooler by replenishing the ice as needed.
- When planning a picnic, barbeque or camping trip, find out if there will be a source of safe drinking water. If not, take water for preparation and cleaning.
- Pack disposable washcloths and/or hand sanitizer. Use them to clean your hands.
- Pack a food thermometer. Check meats with a food thermometer to be sure they reach an internal temperature of 145° F. for steaks and chops, 160° F. for ground meats, and 165° F. for poultry.
- Wash all plates, utensils and cutting boards that held raw meat or poultry with hot soapy water before using them again for cooked food.
- Perishable food that is not kept cold for more than 2 hours is not considered safe to eat. When summer heat gets above 90 degrees, foods left out of the cold cooler for more than 1 hour should be thrown away.

For additional information, contact the Wildcat Extension District, Crawford County, 620-724-8233, Labette County, 620-784-5337, Montgomery County, 620-331-2690, Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Our website is <http://www.wildcatdistrict.k-state.edu/> or follow us on Facebook: Wildcat Extension District.

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Lemon Tortellini-Spinach Salad

1 pkg. (9 oz.) refrigerated cheese tortellini, cooked, rinsed
1 cup coarsely chopped fresh spinach
1/2 cup crumbled feta cheese
1/2 cup yellow (or red) cherry tomatoes, halved
1/4 cup finely chopped red onions
1/4 cup zesty Italian dressing
1/2 tsp. zest and 2 tsp. juice from 1 lemon
1/4 tsp. dried oregano leaves, crushed

1. Combine ingredients.
2. Refrigerate 30 min.

