

LEFTOVERS

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gets sick.

Say farewell to your food and leave perishable leftovers at the restaurant if you can't refrigerate or freeze them within TWO hours. Or eat defensively and divide larger entrees with your tablemates so there are no leftovers.

2) Cool Leftovers Quickly in Shallow Containers in Your Refrigerator.

Key points in cooling hot leftovers include:

- Refrigerate and cool leftovers in shallow containers; limit food depth to about 2 inches.

- Let the refrigerator cool leftovers. Protect hot leftovers from cross-contamination from other foods by storing them on the top shelf of the refrigerator. Cover them LOOSELY so the food cools faster; then, cover them tightly when they're cool. Or, you can place them uncovered on the TOP shelf of the refrigerator in a location where you won't have to reach over them for other foods and possibly spill other foods onto them; again, cover them when they're cool.

- Cold leftovers such as salads, pies, etc. should be covered and refrigerated immediately.

- Store packages of raw meat, poultry, or seafood on the BOTTOM shelf of your refrigerator so their juices don't drip onto your leftovers and other foods.

- Food keeps best if your refrigerator temperature is 40 degrees F or less. Buy appliance thermometers for your refrigerator and for your freezer as a present for yourself for the holidays. They're available at many hardware, discount, kitchen supply, and grocery stores. At \$5 to \$10, this might be one of the best investments you can make to help assure your food stays safe and of good quality.

3) Eat Leftovers in One to Two Days or Freeze Them for Longer Storage

For best safety and quality, eat leftovers in a day or two. Or, freeze them at 0 degrees F if you'd like to keep them longer.

Thaw frozen leftovers in the refrigerator, as part of the cooking process, or in your microwave.

If food is thawed in the microwave, cook it right away.

Unlike food thawed in a refrigerator, microwave-thawed foods reach temperatures that encourage bacterial growth.

At 0 degrees F, frozen leftovers are safe indefinitely; however the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service (USDA/FSIS) recommends most foods will have best quality if used within two to four months.

4) Reheat Leftovers to 165 Degrees F.

Reheat leftovers to 165 degrees F until they're steaming hot THROUGHOUT. At this temperature, harmful bacteria should be destroyed. Stir to promote even heating. However, remember as described in action step 1, certain toxins formed by bacteria can be heat resistant. It's still important to follow the "two-hour rule," regardless of how high and how long you heat a food.

If you reheat foods in your microwave, follow these guidelines based on the USDA/FSIS's August 2000 publication, "Cooking Safely in the Microwave Oven" (http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/pubs/fact_microwave.htm).

Beware of microwaving leftovers in the original take home container. At high temperatures, certain containers, such as foam containers, may not be stable. It's possible melting or warping may cause harmful chemicals to migrate into the food. USDA/FSIS gives these recommendations for safe containers and wraps:

- Only use cookware especially manufactured for use in the microwave. Glass, ceramic containers, and all plastics should be labeled for microwave use.

- Plastic storage containers such as margarine tubs, take-out containers, whipped topping bowls, and other one-time use containers should not be used in microwave ovens. These containers can warp or melt, possibly causing harmful chemicals to migrate into the food.

- Microwave plastic wraps, wax paper, cooking bags, parchment paper, and white microwave-safe paper towels should be safe to use. Do not let plastic wrap touch foods during microwaving.

- Never use thin plastic storage bags, brown paper or plastic grocery bags, newspapers, or aluminum foil in the microwave.

Here are some general guidelines for microwave reheating:

- Cover the container with microwavable lid or plastic wrap. Loosen or vent the lid or wrap to let steam escape. The moist heat that is created will help destroy harmful bacteria and ensure uniform cooking.

- Stir and/or rotate food midway or as needed throughout the microwaving time to eliminate cold spots where harmful bacteria can survive and for more even cooking.

- Reheat until steaming hot throughout (165 degrees F). Allow a few minutes standing time at the end to promote even heat distribution and complete the cooking. Using a clean food thermometer to check the food in several places helps assure it has reached 165 degrees F.

5) When in Doubt, Toss Leftovers Out.

Suppose you:

- 1) left your leftovers on the car seat overnight;

- 2) let your leftovers sit over a week in the refrigerator; **OR**

- 3) forgot your frozen leftovers on the kitchen counter all day.

Is there any way to know if they're still safe to eat?

You can not SEE or SMELL most bacteria that might make you sick.

TASTING is risky and also won't tell if a food is unsafe.

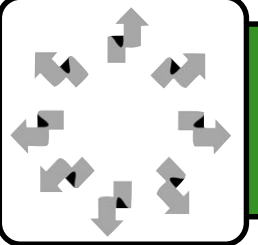
For some bacteria, such as *E. coli*, even a tiny taste may be enough to make you sick. Plus, depending on the food-borne illness, it may take from 1 hour to 6 or more weeks to get sick from contaminated food. By the time you know for sure a food was probably safe, it would be too old to eat!

That's why the advice most frequently given is: **WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!**

If you get sick soon after a meal, remember it isn't always the food that's the culprit. Overindulging during the holidays can cause some of the same symptoms as a food-borne illness, such as an upset stomach or nauseous feeling.

"Ring out the old, ring in the new" is an oft-quoted phrase from Tennyson on the passing of the old year and the coming of the next. Apply that to old leftovers!

Miscellaneous



Extension Office Welcomes New EFNEP Employee

Patrice Broussard, EFNEP Nutrition Advisor joined the NEP team November 1. Previous experience includes planning and preparing meals for 145 children at a daycare center for nine years. She's also been an LPN. She and her husband have nine children (the youngest is a junior in high school) and 12 grandchildren. Besides enjoying cooking, she has taught Sunday School and has directed a senior choir at her church. Before moving to Lincoln this May, she lived in Oklahoma her entire life. (MB)



Patrice Broussard helps Elliott fifth graders make peanut butter bites as a nutritious snack.



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in NEP and 4-H. After receiving the program, an Elliott student even made the "bites" for the school's Heritage Feast.

It is very rewarding to see the students' faces light up when they explain what they learned through the kit activities.

Peanut Butter Bites

You need:

- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon dry milk
- 1 tablespoon quick oatmeal
- 1 tablespoon raisins
- 1/2 tablespoon honey

Mix in a bowl. Make into

four small "bites." Wrap leftovers in waxed paper and store in refrigerator.

For family size (or 16 servings):

- 2 cups peanut butter
- 2 cups dry milk
- 2 cups oatmeal
- 2 cups raisins
- 1/2 cup honey

Note: NEP has nutrition kits available for first and fourth grade classrooms. For further information, contact Karen Wobig at 441-7180. (KW)



BIOTECHNOLOGY

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effectively should expect to receive a premium for adding value to the product. (TD)

Excerpted from: "Agricultural Biotechnology: What's all

the fuss about?" by Marshall A. Martin, Professor and Associate Head, Purdue Agricultural Economics Report, March 2000.

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Are college graduates leaving Nebraska for greener pastures? Is it possible for Nebraska employers to successfully recruit graduates who are being aggressively pursued by employers in other states? In this presentation, Dr. Routh will explore recruitment and retention strategies that can work for Nebraska employers interested in keeping graduates in Nebraska.

John Rupnow, Professor of Food Science and Technol-

ogy

Functional Foods

"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food." This 2,500-year-old quote from Hypocrites hold true today as food and medicine are no longer separate topics and the lines between them continue to blur. Rupnow's presentation focuses on the nontraditional health-promoting and disease-preventing components in common foods that led to some of them being coined as "functional foods" and

the real and perceived consumer needs and desires for them.

Gregory Snow, Associate Professor of Physics and Astronomy

News Flash! Nebraska High School Students Detect Cosmic Rays!

The High Energy Physics group at the University of Nebraska has initiated a state-wide education and outreach project that involves Nebraska high school students, teachers,

and college undergraduates in a multi-faceted, hands-on research effort to study extended cosmic-ray air showers. Snow's presentation will explain how the Internet is used to share and compare data recorded at different school sites across Nebraska while University of Nebraska professors guide participants in actively contributing to fundamental research.

Darryl White, Professor of Trumpet

Jazz: An American Art Form

Jazz is America's classical music and considered by many to be America's greatest overall contribution to music. The impact of jazz on American society has been enormous, and its influence on world culture has been far reaching. In this presentation, White will explain what jazz is, how it has evolved, why it is important, and some of the key figures in its development. (GB)