



## Food & Fitness



Alice Henneman, RD, LMNT, Extension Educator

Pumpkin is a good source of beta-carotene, a nutrient that may help reduce the risk of developing certain types of cancer, and offers possible protection against heart disease.

### Pumpkin Ice Cream Pie

Makes 8 servings

1 can (15 to 16 oz.) pure pumpkin puree  
1/4 cup sugar  
1-1/2 to 2 teaspoons pumpkin pie spice, depending on how "spicy" a flavor you enjoy  
1 quart (4 cups) vanilla ice cream or frozen yogurt, softened  
1 package (9 oz.) 9-inch prepared graham cracker pie crust  
Whipped topping, if desired

#### Directions

Note: Read "Cook's Tips" at the end BEFORE preparing this recipe

- Mix the pumpkin, sugar and spice until well blended.
- Quickly mix pumpkin mixture with the softened ice cream.
- Pour into crumb crust and freeze, uncovered, until firm—a couple of hours.
- When pie is frozen, cover with plastic wrap and then cover with freezer-quality foil or place in a freezer bag and squeeze out the air.
- Thaw pie slightly before serving. Top with whipped topping, if desired.

#### Cook's Tips

- ☞ Use nonfat ice cream or frozen yogurt and fat-free whipped topping for a lighter version.
- ☞ The Good Housekeeping Web site ([www.goodhousekeeping.com](http://www.goodhousekeeping.com)) advises "the best way to soften ice cream is to let it sit out at room temperature for about 15 minutes or in the refrigerator for 30." They also note "low-fat ice creams and frozen yogurts melt faster than full-fat varieties. Avoid repeatedly softening and refreezing ice cream as it gets icy.
- ☞ Be sure the package says it's a "9-ounce" pie shell.
- ☞ If you don't have pumpkin pie spice, for each teaspoon of pumpkin pie spice, you can substitute a combination of
  - 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
  - 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
  - 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
  - 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
 Additional uses of pumpkin pie spice are as a flavoring for sweet potatoes, acorn squash and French toast. Or, add it to baked products such as banana bread, zucchini bread and carrot cake—use about a 1/2 teaspoon per cup of batter.

## FREE Brochure on Preparing Roast Beef

For a free brochure to help you prepare the perfect beef roast during the holiday season, call the Nebraska Beef Council at 1-800-421-5326. "Savor the Season" features beef roast selection and tips plus the four easy steps to a perfect roast. It gives carving and serving steps plus a roasting timetable. It includes some great beef recipes—appetizers, impromptu entrees, elegant entrees and how to make the most of leftover roast. (AH)

# Cooking Ahead for Holiday Meals

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Gathering round the table for a special meal with family and friends can be a source of joy and feed both body and soul. Cooking late into the night before your meal, however, can greatly diminish the pleasures of the table. Cooking too far ahead can decrease the quality and safety of your food.

Here are some tips to put the focus back on family and friends rather than frenzied (and possibly unsafe) food preparation.

### Limit Selection

Begin by limiting the number of foods you serve to a few favorites, so you have less to prepare. For example, do you need two (or more) desserts? Remember: desserts spelled backwards is S-T-R-E-S-S-E-D.

### The Day Before

Unless food will be frozen, it's safest to start preparing most perishable foods no more than a day before a meal. For example:

- Assemble a vegetable casserole a day in advance, refrigerate and then bake the day of your dinner. Plan 15 to 20 minutes additional heating time for the refrigerated cold casserole. Heat until it's hot and

steamy throughout.

- Cut washed fruits and vegetables within a day of your meal for salads and relish trays. Note: Wash fruits and vegetables under cool running tap water. Store all cut fruits and vegetables covered, such as in storage containers or one time use plastic bags in the refrigerator. Store fresh-cut produce above raw meat, poultry and fish and below cooked items. Avoid leaving cut and/or peeled fruit

*"Ponder well on this point—the pleasant hours of our life are all connected by a more or less tangible link, with some memory of the table."*

~Charles Pierre Monselet,  
French author (1825-1888)

and vegetables at room temperature for more than two hours. This includes the total of preparation time and serving time.

- Keep cut fruits, such as apples, pears, bananas and peaches, from turning brown by coating them with an acidic juice such as lemon, orange or pineapple juice. Or use a commercial anti-darkening preparation with fruits, such as Ever-Fresh™ or Fruit-Fresh®; Follow the manufacturer's directions for timing and method of application. Cover and refrigerate cut fruit until ready to serve. Note: Bananas don't keep as long as the other fruits mentioned—cut close to serving time.

- Nonperishable foods such as cakes and cookies can be prepared a few days in advance and still will taste good. Or, they can be frozen for longer storage. For more information on freezing baked goods, such as pies, cookies, cakes, etc. read "Chill Out Over the Holidays: Bake Ahead & Freeze!" at <http://lancaster.unl.edu/food/>

ftnvd99.htm

### Handling Meat

Special tips for handling meat:

- As a general rule-of-thumb, purchase fresh raw meat, poultry or seafood no more than 1 to 2 days before your holiday meal. Freeze for longer storage. These foods taste freshest if cooked the day of your meal.

- If you have frozen your meat, poultry or seafood, plan time for safe thawing in your refrigerator. Allow approximately 24 hours for each 5 pounds of weight. For turkey, make sure you remove the bag containing the neck and giblets from the body cavities.

- To prevent cross-contamination, thaw or store a package of raw meat, poultry or seafood on a plate on a lower shelf of your refrigerator to prevent its juices from dripping on other foods.

- If you prepare meat, poultry or seafood the day before your meal, divide it into small portions. Then refrigerate in loosely covered shallow containers within 2 hours of cooking; limit depth of meat, etc. to about 2 inches. You can place loosely covered foods in the refrigerator while still warm; cover tightly when food is completely cooled. On the day of your meal, reheat thoroughly to a temperature of 165 degrees F until hot and steaming throughout.

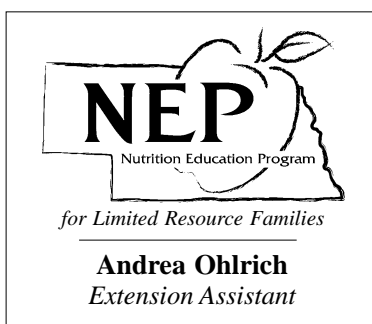
### The Pumpkin Pie

Preparing pumpkin pie ahead of time:

- Pumpkin pie is especially popular around the holidays. A pumpkin pie is a form of custard and must be kept in the refrigerator at 40 degrees F or cooler. Foods which contain eggs, milk, and a high moisture content

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## Monthly Meetings Go Global



"I like the crunchy vegetable which reminds me of a potato," said a NEP participant at Touchstone who sampled a jicama.

The population and racial background of Lincoln is ever-changing, as with many places in Nebraska. These changes are seen in many aspects of life in Lincoln. As just an example, there are over 30 languages spoken in Lincoln Public Schools from students who come from 50 countries. Besides language, the new cultures also bring with them different foods and food practices.

Ethnic foods were recently featured as the Nutrition Educa-



tion Program monthly lesson which was presented to 10 groups throughout the community. The hands-on educational experiences include nutrition, food safety and resource management as related to the monthly topic.

Participants began by sharing their favorite foods that are 'typically' American. The NEP staff encourage the groups to explore why they eat the foods they eat. They also explored why it is important to

new Americans to continue food traditions from their home countries. In the next step they examined African, Arabic, Asian and Hispanic cultures. They divide into small groups and dive into a new culture. Each group receives a 'kit' for their culture containing pertinent information about the culture,

sample foods and pictures. The real learning then begins as the peers teach each other about the new culture.

Each meeting ends with a food experience which included ethnic fruits and vegetables. Participants said this was the first time they had tried fruits and vegetables such as the Asian pear, mango and jicama and they liked the new flavors and textures. They appreciated expanding their knowledge about foods of the world.