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To add flavor to tender cuts of meat, poultry and fish without adding salt or fat, try a rub. Here are two suggestions from registered dietitian Roberta Duyff in her new book, *American Dietetic Association Complete Food and Nutrition Guide* (2nd Edition).

Meat, Poultry and Fish Rubs

Pepper-Garlic Rub. Combine garlic powder, cracked black pepper and cayenne pepper.

Italian Rub. Combine fresh or dried oregano, basil and rosemary with minced Italian parsley and garlic.

Directions

To apply a rub, Duyff advises you, "gently press the mixture onto the surface of the meat prior to cooking."

Cook's Tips:

- If you don't have all the spices for making the Italian rub, you might try Italian seasoning.
- No set proportions are needed for a rub. Just sprinkle each separate seasoning on the food according to personal preference.

Bowl Them Over with Pears!

Pears are one of those fruits that continue to ripen after you pick them. (Other fruits include apricots, bananas, cantaloupe, kiwi, nectarines, peaches, plantains and plums.) One of the easiest ways to ripen pears is to set them in a pretty bowl on a cupboard or table and enjoy viewing them as they ripen. To determine if a pear is ripe, gently press it at the stem end. Most types yield to pressure when ripe.

To speed the ripening of pears, put them in a ripening bowl or in a loosely closed brown paper bag at room temperature. Plastic bags don't work for ripening.

Refrigerate when ripe in an open or a perforated plastic bag in your refrigerator crisper drawer. If you don't have access to commercial perforated bags, use a sharp object to make several small holes in a regular plastic bag.

Store fruits in a separate refrigerator crisper drawer from



vegetables. Fruits give off ethylene gas which can shorten the storage life of vegetables. Some vegetables give off odors that can be absorbed by fruits and affect their quality.

After you cut into pears, keep them (and other 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[®], and follow the manufacturer's directions. Cut fruits as close to serving time as possible.

Refrigerate peeled/cut pears and other peeled/cut fruits and vegetables so the TOTAL time they're at room temperature is less than two hours.

Learn more about the flavor and uses of the various types of pears from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/SADay/month/pear.htm.

Handling Food Safely on the Road

V-A-C-A-T-I-O-N! Oh, how we long for that eight letter word every summer, when millions of us eagerly get away from school and work. We take to the road in cars or recreational vehicles; live on boats; relax in beach or mountain vacation homes; and camp.

No matter where we go or what we do, there is a common denominator that runs through all of our summer travels and relaxation — it's called F-O-O-D!

The "road" to food safety, however, can either be a bumpy one or smooth — depending on what precautions are taken handling meals as we travel this summer.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's nationwide, toll-free Meat and Poultry Hotline reminds everyone that some simple, common-sense food safety rules can save a vacation from disaster. Following this advice could make the difference between a vacation to remember and one remembered because people got sick from improperly handled food.

First, some general rules, while traveling this summer:

Plan Ahead

If you are traveling with perishable food, place it in a cooler with ice or freezer packs. When carrying drinks, consider packing them in a separate cooler so the food cooler is not opened frequently. Have plenty of ice or frozen gel-packs on hand before starting to pack food. If you take perishable foods along (for example, meat, poultry, eggs and salads) for eating on the road or to cook at your vacation spot, plan to keep everything on ice in your cooler. Are there refrigerators at the beach house or other vacation home?

Pack Safely

Pack perishable foods directly from the refrigerator or



freezer into the cooler. Meat and poultry may be packed while it is still frozen; it stays colder longer. Also, a full cooler will maintain its cold temperatures longer than one partially filled. Be sure to keep raw meat and poultry wrapped separately from cooked foods or foods meant to be eaten raw such as fruits.

If the cooler is only partially filled, pack the remaining space with more ice or with fruit and some non-perishable foods such as peanut butter and jelly and perhaps some hard-like Cheddar cheeses. For long trips to the shore or the mountains, take along two coolers — one for the day's immediate food needs, such as lunch, drinks or snacks and the other for perishable foods to be used later in the vacation.

Keep the cooler in the air-conditioned passenger compartment of your car, rather than in a hot trunk. Limit the times the cooler is opened. Open and close the lid quickly.

Now, follow these food safety tips:

When Camping

Remember to keep the cooler in a shady spot. Keep it covered with a blanket, tarp or poncho, preferably one light in color to reflect heat.

Bring along bottled water or other canned or bottled drinks. Always assume streams and rivers are not safe for drinking. If camping in a remote area,

bring along water purification tablets or equipment. These are available at camping supply stores.

Keep hands and all utensils clean when preparing food. Use disposable towelettes to clean hands. When planning meals, think about buying and using shelf-stable food to ensure food safety.

When at the Beach

Plan ahead. Take along only the amount of food to be eaten to avoid having leftovers. If grilling, make sure local ordinances allow it.

Bring the cooler! Partially bury it in the sand, cover with blankets and shade with a beach umbrella.

Bring along moist towelettes for cleaning hands.

If dining along the boardwalk, make sure the food stands frequented look clean and hot foods are served hot and cold foods cold. Don't eat anything that has been sitting out in the hot sun — a real invitation for foodborne illness and a spoiled vacation.

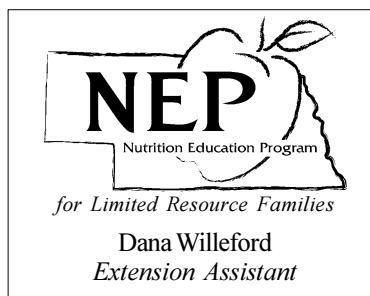
When in the Vacation Home or the Recreational Vehicle

If a vacation home or a recreational vehicle has not been used for a while, check leftover canned food from last year. The Meat and Poultry Hotline recommends canned foods which may have been exposed to freezing and thawing temperatures over the winter be discarded.

Also, check the refrigerator. If unplugged from last year, thoroughly clean it before using. Make sure all food preparation areas in the vacation home or in the recreational vehicle are thoroughly cleaned.

Source: United States Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service, July 2002 (AHI)

Moms Learn About Good Nutrition at Good Neighbor Center



"My child won't eat anything I cook!" "She doesn't like vegetables except corn!" "He only drinks milk!" Feeding families can be a real challenge. Good Neighbor Center's (GNC) moms group have experienced these situations at one time or another. But no matter what the challenge GNC moms find ways to fit good nutrition into their families' meals.

How do we know if our families are getting the right nutrients to grow healthy? Each month these questions were addressed with a variety of



nutrition topics presented by Nutrition Education Program staff. Healthy, creative and tasty meal ideas were prepared which also incorporated fun, healthy recipes to entice picky eaters. One child-friendly menu

prepared included: Lady Bug Salad, Meatloaf Muffins, Carrot Pennies and Apple Pizza. Participants enjoyed preparing meals.

Most importantly, participants learned it takes patience to teach a family good eating habits but can be a fun learning experience too.

Lady Bug Salad

Lettuce leaf
1/2 cored apple
12 raisins
1 teaspoon peanut butter
5 grapes

On lettuce leaf, place cored apple, red side up. Stick raisins on apple with dab of peanut butter. Use grapes for head and feet of ladybug.

Web Resources of the Month

Check out the "Weight Control Tips" section of our Web site at lancaster.unl.edu/food/#weight

View a Cook It Quick in Action tip on "Enjoying Fresh Herbs at the Table" at lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciqherbplate.htm

Discover an easy alternative when all you feel like fixing is a bowl of cereal at lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciqparfait.htm

To keep up-to-date on new tips, resources and recipe ideas to help you prepare healthy foods in a hurry, sign up for our monthly **Cook It Quick** e-mail messages at lancaster.unl.edu/food/ciqupdat.htm

