

Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County
444 Cherrycreek Road, Ste. A, Lincoln, NE 68528

402-441-7180

<http://lancaster.unl.edu>

Email: lancaster@unl.edu • Fax: 402-441-7148

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Food Safety Tips for Electric Multi-Cookers

Cami Wells, MS, RD,
Extension Educator,
Hall County

Have you jumped on the electric multi-cooker (such as an Instant Pot®) craze? These appliances are used for slow-cooking, searing, sautéing, simmering, steaming and much more. Probably the most talked-about use for electric multi-cookers is the pressure-cooking feature.

Digital Thermometer

When looking online for electric pressure-cooking information, a variety of cooking times are listed for foods such as meat, poultry and fish. The cooking time needed varies with the size and model of the multi-cooker, size/cut of meat, amount of liquid, pressure release used and other factors. However, the most important step is often left out — use of a food thermometer to ensure food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature.

Using a food thermometer is the only reliable way to ensure safety of meat, poultry and egg products. Place the food



USDA

thermometer in the thickest part of the food, making sure not to touch bone, fat or gristle. According to USDA, food should be cooked to the following minimum internal temperatures as shown in the chart below. For personal preference, you may choose to cook food to higher temperatures.

If food has not reached the proper temperature after pressure cooking, it is important to continue the cooking process. Whether it is going back to pressure cooking, using the sauté feature on your multi-cooker or switching to using the stovetop or oven, make sure a safe temperature is reached.

Safety Tips

When using a multi-cooker or any other cooking method,

follow these important food safety tips to keep your family safe from a foodborne illness:

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before cooking and after handling raw meat or poultry.
- Make sure your appliances, utensils and work area are clean.
- Keep perishable foods refrigerated until it is time to cook them. Be cautious using a "delayed" cook feature on slow cookers or electric multi-cookers. Bacteria multiply rapidly when food is left at room temperature.
- Place leftovers in shallow containers and refrigerate or freeze immediately. Discard food that has been sitting out longer than two hours.

Sources:

- *Basics for Handling Food Safely*, USDA; www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling/basics-for-handling-food-safely/ct_index
- *Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures*, USDA; www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling/safe-minimum-internal-temperature-chart/ct_index

SAFE COOKING TEMPERATURES

Product	Minimum Internal Temperatures
Beef, pork, veal and lamb (steaks, chops, roasts)	145°F (62.8°C) and allow to rest for at least 3 minutes
Ground meats (beef, pork, veal, lamb)	160°F (71.1°C)
Ham, fresh or smoked (uncooked)	145°F (62.8°C) and allow to rest for at least 3 minutes
Fully cooked ham (to reheat)	140°F (60 °C) for ham packaged in USDA plants 165 °F (73.9 °C) for all other hams
All poultry (whole birds, parts, ground poultry and stuffing)	165°F (73.9 °C)
Eggs	160°F (71.1°F)
Fish and shellfish	145°F (62.8°F)
Casseroles	165°F (73.9°F)



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Cami Wells, MS, RD, Extension Educator, Hall County

SUPER QUICK BROWN RICE PILAF

(Makes 8 servings, 1/2 cup each)

2 cups uncooked brown rice
2-1/2 cups low-sodium chicken broth
2 Tablespoons minced onion
2 teaspoons dried parsley
1 teaspoon garlic powder
Salt and pepper to taste

1. Wash hands with soap and water. Add brown rice, chicken broth and minced onion to multi-cooker. Set device to 22 minutes of pressure cooking time.
2. When time is up, open the multi-cooker after a 10-minute natural pressure release. Add spices; salt and pepper to taste.
3. Stir to combine and serve.

Cook's Notes:

- Fresh onions, garlic and parsley would be delicious if available. Dried fruits or nuts could be added after cooking the rice along with a few vegetables such as cooked carrots or peas.
- Don't have an electric multi-cooker? Simply follow the rice package directions for cooking on the stove or in the microwave substituting chicken broth for water. Add seasonings when cooking is complete.



Cami Wells, Nebraska Extension in Hall County

Each serving contains 123 calories, 0.8g fat, 174mg sodium, 24g carbohydrate and 2g fiber. CACFP: 1/2 cup = 1 ounce equivalent whole grain.