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& Lancaster Extension Education Center Conference Facilities
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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ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES OFFICER
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NEBLINE

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Thanksgiving Food Safety

Cindy Brison, MS, RDN
Extension Educator,
Douglas-Sarpy Counties

Thanksgiving is a time for families to gather and enjoy each other — not suffer from food poisoning! Here are a few tips to keep your family healthy:

- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends thawing the turkey in the refrigerator. It takes 24 hours for every 5 pounds of turkey, not including the day you cook it. Therefore, a 20–24 pound turkey would take 6 days to thaw.
- Do not stuff your turkey. Place stuffing in a separate bowl to cook.
- USDA recommends an oven temperature no lower than 325°F for cooking a turkey along with using a thermometer to make sure the thickest part of the turkey reads 165°F. A 20–24 pound turkey may take about 5 hours to cook.
- Avoid cross-contamination by using separate cutting boards, plates and utensils when handling raw turkey. Wash items that have touched raw meat with warm soap and water, or place them in a dishwasher.
- Refrigerate leftovers within



two hours to prevent bacteria from growing on the food. Eat leftovers in the refrigerator within 3–4 days. Use the freezer to store leftovers for longer periods.

- Do not over-fill your refrigerator as it causes it to work too hard and may not keep it at 40°F or below.

Healthy Holiday Safety Tips

- Frequently wash your hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds.
- Use a calibrated food thermometer.
- Clean out your refrigerator the week before Thanksgiving to make room for thawing items and storing leftovers.
- Store leftovers in shallow containers to decrease cooling time. This prevents food from spending too much time at

- unsafe temperatures.
- Do not prepare food when you are ill.
 - Simplify the day by preparing foods the day before.
 - Keep leftovers in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs if the food is traveling home with a guest who lives more than two hours away.

Sources:
1. Thanksgiving Food Preparation and Food Safety Tips, Nebraska Extension
2. Turkey Foodsafety.gov
3. Thanksgiving, Foodsafety.gov

This article has been peer-reviewed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Nebraska Extension has compiled numerous resources on Thanksgiving food preparation and food safety tips at <http://go.unl.edu/thanksgivingtips>



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Kayla Colgrove, MS, RDN, ACSM-CPT, Extension Educator, Lancaster Co.

I'm highlighting this recipe by Cami Wells, Extension Educator in Hall County, because it is a quick and tasty recipe to enjoy at breakfast or as a snack. Make them anytime and freeze to enjoy on Thanksgiving without extra prep work during the holiday.

PUMPKIN WHOLE WHEAT PANCAKES

(Makes 10–12 pancakes)

2 eggs
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1-1/2 cups low-fat milk
3/4 cup canned pumpkin or pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie filling)
2 tablespoons brown sugar
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup white whole-wheat flour
2 tablespoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
1 teaspoon cinnamon

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Break eggs into a clean, medium bowl and beat with a fork. Wash hands with soap and water after cracking raw eggs.
3. Add the oil, milk, pumpkin and brown sugar to the bowl with the eggs. Combine all-purpose flour, whole wheat flour, baking powder and spices in a small bowl.
4. Add dry ingredients to pumpkin mixture. Stir until combined. Pour 1/4 cup of batter for each pancake on a lightly oiled and heated griddle or skillet.
5. Cook until the pancakes are full of bubbles and the under-surface is lightly browned. Use a spatula and flip. Lightly brown the other side. Refrigerate leftovers.



Cami Wells, Nebraska Extension in Hall County

Each pancake contains 128 calories, 3.5 g total fat, .7 g saturated fat, 21 g carbohydrate, 4.4 g sugars, 2 g fiber, 270 mg sodium, 4.7 g protein.

Notes:

- These pancakes are soft and moist — perfect finger-food for little ones when cut into bite-sized pieces.
- You can substitute regular whole wheat flour for the white whole wheat flour listed in the recipe.
- Try freezing leftover pancakes by simply placing in a freezer bag and popping in your freezer. The frozen pancakes can be heated in the microwave or placed in the toaster for a quick breakfast or snack.