

'Tis the Season for Potlucks

Why are we concerned about keeping potluck meals safe?

Potlucks are popular during the holiday season and are a great way to share recipes. Preparing foods safely keeps potlucks fun by reducing the risk of foodborne illness.



How can I make sure the food I bring to a potluck is safe?

- **Thaw frozen foods safely** - Thaw food in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave.
- **Keep clean during preparation** - Use warm, soapy water to wash hands before preparing food, after handling raw meat or eggs, sneezing/coughing, using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets. Clean surfaces with hot, soapy water. Use separate utensils and plates when handling and preparing raw meat or eggs.
- **Cook meats thoroughly** - Use a meat thermometer to ensure pork is cooked to at least 145°F (degrees Fahrenheit), red meats to at least 160°F, and poultry to 165°F. Never partially cook raw meats to warm later.
- **Transport foods safely**—Use ice packs to keep cold foods at or below 40°F. If you cook a casserole at home, take it straight from the oven and either place it in an insulated bag or wrap it in several layers of foil followed by newspaper and a towel. If you can't serve it as soon as you arrive, return it to the oven.
- **Serve it safely** - Always serve with clean utensils. Never leave perishable food out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours. Keep cold foods cold (keep on ice) and hot foods hot (use warming trays or a crockpot) when serving.

For more information go to: www.foodsafety.gov

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