Food Safety

The following information was provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Safety and Inspection Service.

Food Safety on the Road

By Marianne H. Gravely

Here we go! Mom, Dad, the kids and everything but the kitchen sink and cat! We're taking a family vacation. Picnicking on the side of the road. Like many families, we'll be taking food with us for picnics and to keep little stomachs (and mouths) full in the car.

But improperly stored food could result in an unwanted vacation souvenir—foodborne illness.

Packing and storing food with food safety in mind can prevent this vacation disaster, and isn't that difficult. Just remember the Five Rules of Traveling with Food.

1. Plan Ahead. A well-stocked cooler is a must. Have plenty of ice or frozen gel-packs on hand before you start packing

What to take? Some foods don't require refrigeration—peanut butter and jelly and some cheeses, for example. Perishable foods, like meat, poultry, eggs and fish do, so if you're taking summer salads, making sandwiches on the road or bringing food to cook over the course of your vacation, plan to keep them on ice in your cooler throughout the trip.

2. Pack Safely. Pack perishables directly from the refrigerator to the cooler. You can pack meat and poultry while it is still frozen. It will thaw during the trip, extending its safety and shelf-life.

A full cooler will maintain its cold temperature longer than one that is only partially filled. Pack the remaining space with more ice or with fruit and non-perishable foods.

Securely over wrap or bag foods that may drip or leak, particularly raw meat, poultry or fish.

For longer trips take two coolers—one for the day's lunch and snacks, the other for perishables to be used later. Keep big and little hands out of the perishables cooler.

Put the cooler in the passenger section of the car instead of in the hot trunk.

3. Preserve the cold temperature of the cooler by replenishing the ice as soon as it starts melting.

4. Pitch any foods that warm above refrigerator temperature (40°F). Food poisoning bacteria grow rapidly at warm temperatures. At the end of the day, if the ice has melted and the food feels warm, discard any meat or poultry left. Non-perishables, like fruits, vegetables, breads and drinks do not require refrigeration and should be okay.

5. Protect your family from disease causing bacteria by keeping hands and utensils clean. If soap and water will not be available, pack some moist towelettes. Bag and set aside dishes and utensils to wash with hot soapy water when you reach your destination.

Packing food for the trip is a money-and time-saver for today's road warriors. Re-sealable bottles of juice or sodas are more economical than individual cans or bottles. Bring a plastic cup for each member of the family. Store ice for drinks in a leak-proof, re-sealable container in the cooler. After lunch, repack the cooler with non perishables to fill it up.

Family-sized bags of chips and snacks save money over lunch-size bags and also cut down on your trash. Offering a small snack every hour or tow will prevent boredom during long car trips. Offer a snack before your children announce that they're hungry!

Some snacks are better than others in the car—fresh and dried fruit, cheese and soft cookies are fairly easy for little hands to manage without making a mess.

For more information on summer trekking or other food handling questions, call USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline, 1-800-535-4555, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays Eastern Time. Washington, D.C. area residents call 202-720-3333.

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Food Safety at the Beach

by Barbara O'Brien, R.D.

Food safety is another critical factor you don't want to forget at the beach. It's as important as water and boating safety.

Here are some tips to help ensure that the worst problem you or your family comes home with is sand in everything!

1. Plan Ahead. Keep your menu simple and take only the amount of food you will use. Plan some take-along foods that do not require refrigeration like peanut butter, hard cheeses, fruits and dried meats. Pack perishables in a cooler.

If grilling is your thing, check ahead to make sure your beach area allows outdoor cooking. Consider buying your perishable food at a store near the beach and putting it in an ice-filled cooler.

Ready-made sandwiches or cooked foods are fine too. Just put them in the cooler until you're ready to eat.

2. Pack Safe. At home, pack right from the refrigerator. Freeze sandwiches ahead and add tomatoes, lettuce and mayonnaise later. Use an insulated cooler with ice or frozen gel-packs to keep the temperature inside under 40°F. Note: Large blocks of ice melt more slowly than cubes.

Put all perishables in one cooler; keep beverages and plain water in a separate cooler. This keeps the perishable foods safer as the drinks cooler is opened more.

3. At the Beach. When you've found the perfect spot—preferably away from trash containers, real magnets for flies and bees—put the coolers under a beach umbrella and cover them with blankets. Or you can partially bury the coolers in the sand, again shading them with a blanket and umbrella.

Make sure everyone washes their hands before handling food or eating. Moist towelettes or wash cloths in re-sealable bags are good when running water is not available.

Put perishable foods back in the cooler right after eating; do not let them sit out, even under the umbrella, while you go for a swim. Perishable foods left out of refrigeration for over 2 hours—1 hour when it above 90°F—are not safe and should be discarded.

If insects are a real problem, there are netting devices available to place over food to keep it bug-free. Spray insect repellents away from the food.

4. Leftovers? If there is still ice in the cooler when you get home, *and* the food did not sit out for over 1 hour, the food is okay to save. If the cold source has melted or is only cool, do not use any of the perishable leftovers.

5. Boardwalk dining. A stroll down the boardwalk often leads to food. Make sure the food stand you choose looks clean and well-managed and that the hot foods are served hot and cold foods are served cold. DON'T eat something that may have been sitting on display in the hot sun.

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Recipe of the Month

The following recipe was taken from Team Nutrition's *Food, Family & Fun: A Seasonal Guide to Healthy Eating.* Turn to page 104 for ordering information.

Barbecued Beef

45 Minutes to 1 Hour, Serves 4
Serve on crusty Kaiser rolls or hamburger buns.

1 pound lean beef stew meat, cut into 1″ to 2″ pieces
1 Tbsp. vegetable oil

Barbecue Sauce
1 cup catsup
1 Tbsp. water
2 Tbsp. cider vinegar
3 Tbsp. brown sugar
2 tsp. yellow prepared mustard
1 Tbsp. minced onion
1 tsp. Worcestershire Sauce (optional)
1/2 tsp. chili powder
1 tsp. cumin powder

Preheat over to 375°F

1. In a medium sauce pan over medium high heat, add oil and brown beef stew meat on all sides until well browned. Remove from heat and add remaining barbecue sauce ingredients to beef. Stir well.
2. Place into an over proof baking dish, cover and bake for 45 minutes to 1 hour or until beef is tender and shreds easily.

Nutrients per serving (1/2 cup)

Calories	136	Saturated Fat	1.9 g	Iron	1.4 mg
Protein	9 g	Cholesterol	26 mg	Calcium	14 mg
Carbohydrate	12 g	Vitamin A	36 RE	Sodium	394 mg
Total Fat	6.2 g	Vitamin C	5 mg	Dietary Fiber	1 g

Recipe of the Month

This recipe was developed for The School Lunch Challenge, the 1994 American Culinary Federation National Championship. Adjustments have been made by USDA for institutional use.
Turn to page 104 for more information on this resource.

Crispy Chicken Salad

	50 Servings		100 Servings	
Ingredients	**Weight**	**Measure**	**Weight**	**Measure**
Boneless, skinless, chicken breast	8 lb., 15 oz		17 lb., 14 oz	
Whole wheat bread crumbs	10 oz	1 qt 1/4 cup	1 lb., 4 oz	2 qt 1/2 cup
Fresh iceberg lettuce, chopped	2 lb., 14 oz	1 gal 2/3 cup	5 lb., 12 oz	2 gal 1⅓ cups
Fresh kale, chopped	8 oz	2 qt 1/3 cup	1 lb.	1 gal 2/3 cup
Fresh carrots, julienned	1 lb., 9 oz		3 lb., 2 oz	
Fresh radishes, sliced	1 lb., 1 oz	50 ea	2 lb., 2 oz	100 ea
Fresh alfalfa sprouts	12 oz	1 qt, 1/2 cup	1 lb., 8 oz	2 qt 1 cup
Ranch dressing, optional		1 qt, 2¼ cup		3 qt, 1/2 cup

Directions:

1. Dredge the chicken in bread crumbs. Bake in a conventional over at 350°F for 15 minutes or in a convection oven at 325°F for 15 minutes.
2. Cut chicken vertically into thin slices.
3. Mix greens.
4. Place 1/2 cup of greens on each plate with 1/2 oz (1 Tbsp.) of carrots.
5. Place 2¼ oz of cooked breaded chicken on top.
6. Garnish each salad with a radish and 1/2 oz (1½ Tbsp.) of sprouts.
7. Serve each salad with 1 Tbsp. of Ranch dressing.

Crispy Chicken Salad

Serving: 2¼ ounce portion of chicken on 1/2 cup of greens, with carrots, radish, and sprouts (105 grams). Provides 2 ounces of cooked poultry and 3/4 cup of vegetable.

Yield: 50 Servings: 7 lb., 1 oz chicken (3164 grams)
100 Servings: 14 lb., 2 oz chicken (6328 grams)

Nutrients Per Serving*

Calories	118 kcal	Saturated Fat	.3 g	Iron	1.1 mg
Protein	20 g	Cholesterol	47 mg	Calcium	32 mg
Carbohydrate	6 g	Vitamin A	3761 IU	Sodium	95 mg
Total Fat	1.4 g	Vitamin C	11 mg	Dietary Fiber	1 g

** without dressing*

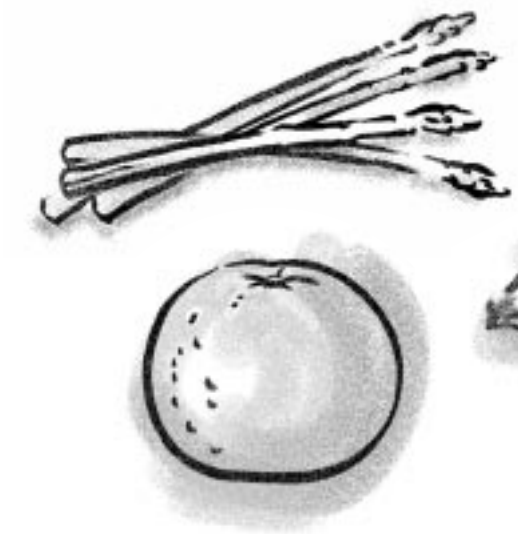
Highlights & Resource Information

National Beef Steak Month

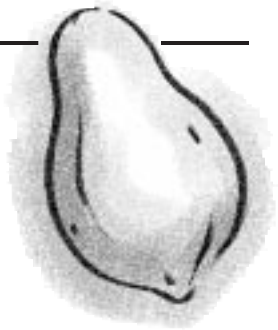
Celebrate one of America's favorite foods—beef steak! Beef is the number-one protein choice in America, and steak leads the pack when it comes to how consumers eat beef at home. It's also a popular choice when dining out-consumers are ordering over 8.7 million servings of steak a year. Contact: Marlys Bielunski, National Cattlemen's Beef Association, 444 N Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60611. Tel: (312) 670-9253 or (312) 670-9250.

National Fresh Fruit And Vegetable Month

To illustrate to Americans the abundance, variety, good taste, good value and importance to good health of fresh fruits and vegetables. Contact: Marketing Manager, United Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Association, 727 N Washington St., Alexandria, VA 22314. (703) 836-3410.



National Papaya Month



To celebrate the peak of the Hawaiian papaya season and encourage consumers to enjoy Hawaiian papaya for its taste and nutritious value. Contact: Papaya Administration Committee, PO Box 48051, Los Angeles, CA 90048.

Turkey Lovers' Month

Month-long campaign to promote awareness and increase turkey consumption at a non-holiday time. Contact: Paige McMahon, Director of PR, National Turkey Federation, 1225 New York Ave., NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005 (202) 898-0100.