

Keeping Holiday Foods Safe

By Hazel Jackson
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Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences



Food safety becomes increasingly important around the holidays because we often prepare larger meals, leave food out of the refrigerator longer and can overcook the refrigerator.

Never thaw a turkey or other frozen meat on the counter. The preferred method is to thaw it in the original wrapping on a tray in a refrigerator set at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. When thawing a large piece of meat or poultry, allow 24 hours for each five pounds. So you'll need to plan ahead if you have a big turkey or ham.

Do not cook a turkey overnight in an oven set at less than 200 degrees F, because it takes too long to kill disease-causing bacteria that may be present in the center of the bird. Instead, cook turkey, or any

other meat, no longer than 325 degrees F.

Use a meat thermometer to be sure meat dishes are thoroughly cooked. The thermometer should reach 180 degrees F on a whole turkey, and 170 degrees F for turkey parts or a breast. A ham should cook to a minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees F, a leg of lamb, to 160 degrees F.

It's best to bake stuffing separately in a casserole dish for uniform doneness and safety. Place a food thermometer in the center to be sure stuffing reaches a safe internal temperature of 165 degrees F.

If you do decide to cook stuffing inside the turkey, remember the stuffed bird will take longer to properly cook than one that's not stuffed. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the turkey and the stuffing. Open mail-order food gifts

immediately and read the storage and handling instructions. Perishable meat products should be partially frozen; cheese, cold to the touch. If a food gift is labeled "Keep Refrigerated," it must be stored at a temperature of 40 degrees F or below to prevent growth of any bacteria that may be present.

Putting leftovers away probably is the last thing you want to do after eating a big holiday dinner. However, if turkey and trimmings and other perishable foods are left at room temperature for more than two hours, harmful bacteria can rapidly multiply to levels that can cause foodborne illness.

Remove meat from the carcass or bone and cut it into small pieces to allow it to cool quickly in the refrigerator. Put leftover foods in small containers, or wrap them in small aluminum foil packages, so they will cool quickly when refrigerated.

Putting too many large containers in the refrigerator can overload its cooling capacity,

resulting in an unsafe temperature. If you're traveling with food, remember to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

It's not safe to travel with a stuffed turkey or warm stuffing. Remove stuffing and put it in small, shallow containers that will chill quickly.

Pack all perishable foods in a pre-chilled, insulated cooler with a cold source such as ice or frozen gel packs.

Immediately transfer foods to a refrigerator when you reach your destination.

Reheat foods in an oven set at 325 degrees F, or a microwave oven, until they reach an internal temperature of 165 degrees R, or are steaming hot.

For more information on parenting contact the Rockcastle County Cooperative Extension Service at 256-2403.

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Happy
85th
Birthday
to
Maxine
Moore
of
Brookhead



"This Thanksgiving, We Should Thank God For"

Written by William Jerry Ayers

This Thanksgiving, we should thank God for.

The great God that we share and eat.

For old friends and new ones that we meet.

For the beauty of a clear blue sky.

And snowy white clouds that drift by.

That we can feel the sunshine warm and bright.

Watch the dark of night slowly turn to light.

For family and friends those old and new.

And for loved ones who always see us through.

This Thanksgiving, we should thank God for.

Sounds of lovely birds as they gayly

sing.

For a cold Winter that turns into spring.

The beauty of twinkling stars that shine each night.

The sight of winged things upon their flight.

This Thanksgiving, we should thank God for.

The gift of his understanding and great love.

Sent down to us from heaven way up above.

For the church where we can go to sing and pray.

For family who helps us get through each day.

Add for loving memories of our past.

For friendship and love we pray will always last.

Farm News

By Tom Mills
County Extension Agent for
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Goat Producers Meeting

Rockcastle County goat producers are invited to attend the local Goat Producers Association Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, December 2, 2003, 6:30 p.m. at the Extension Office.

Guest speaker will be Terry Hutchens. Terry's topic will be: Breeding seasons to meet marketing times for greatest sale prices. Details will also be given

on the cost-share program for meat-type doe purchase.

For more information, contact Jeff Whitaker or the Extension Service at 256-2403.

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Extension Office news

If you have sewing skills and would like to help others, come assist Extension Homemakers in constructing quilts for Lane Deer Island Reservation in Montana. A workshop will be held at the Extension Office on Dec. 2 from 9:00am-2:00pm. All materials for the project are provided. Call 256-2403 for details.

A Holiday Ideas class will be taught at the Rockcastle County Library on Dec 3 at 1:00pm. Hazel Jackson, County Extension Agent will be sharing ideas for decorating gifts, and foods. Participants will make an easy ornament. Those attending will also receive an idea booklet. The class is free and open to anyone. Call the library at 256-2388 or Extension Office at 256-2403 for details.

Rockcastle Extension Homemakers will sponsor a Baked Drive on December 11, 1:00-6:00 p.m. at the Extension office.

Anniversary Reception

Mrs. Vira Dailey, Ms. Shirley Bullen and Ms. Brenda Merritt request the honor of your presence at the Seventieth Wedding Anniversary reception of their parents, Nathan and Katherine Clark. The reception will take place Sunday, November 30, 2003 at 2 o'clock until 4 o'clock in the afternoon at Wildlife Christian Church.

No gifts please, only gifts of your special memories of the couple are requested.

Taco Bell

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Mt. Vernon 256-4463

Bee Garbage

will be closed Thursday, November 27 for the Thanksgiving holiday.

All customers scheduled for Thanksgiving pickup will be picked up on Friday, November 28.

Have a safe & happy Thanksgiving

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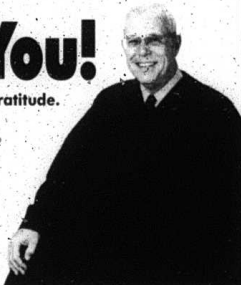
Thank You!

Please accept my sincerest gratitude.

Your overwhelming support has truly been amazing and humbling. I will never be able to thank you enough.



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