

Smart Bites

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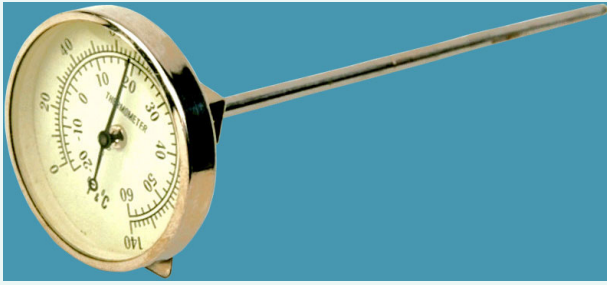
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The fall season is a pleasant time for picnics with the kids and football barbecues. As winter approaches, we gear up for holiday celebrations with family and friends. During all these fun and busy events, it is still important to prepare foods safely. Follow these safety tips when preparing food at home and when taking food items into the outdoors or the homes of families and friends.

- 1. Keep it Clean:** Wash hands and surfaces often with hot, soapy water.
 - Bring water for preparation and cleaning if cooking outdoors where clean water is not available. Also, pack clean cloths and wet towelettes for cleaning surfaces and hands.
- 2. Separate foods:** Don't cross-contaminate.
 - When carrying food to a cookout away from home, place packages of raw meat and poultry in sealed plastic bags that you can throw away after use.
 - If you plan to use some of the marinade as a sauce on cooked foods, set aside the amount you will need in a separate closed container before placing raw meat and poultry in the rest of the marinade. Place marinated foods in the refrigerator for 30 minutes or more.
 - Use only clean plates for cooked foods. Never reuse plates that held raw meat, poultry, and seafood for serving cooked foods without thoroughly washing the plate first.
- 3. Cook foods thoroughly.**
 - Use a thermometer (for safe temperatures, see *Let's Be Thermometer Savvy* on the back of this issue). Do not rely on color to tell you the meat is fully cooked.
 - Avoid partially cooking foods. Foods should be cooked to doneness at one time. If you use a microwave to thaw foods, they must be cooked immediately.
- 4. Chill.**
 - Keep cold refrigerated perishables (foods that can spoil or "go bad") in an insulated cooler with several inches of ice or ice packs.
 - Store the cooler in the coolest part of the car and out of the sun.
 - Take along two coolers. Use one for beverages, which will be opened often and the other for perishables.
 - Thaw foods in the refrigerator or in the microwave oven but never at room temperature.
 - Put food away immediately. Never leave food out of refrigeration for more than 2 hours. If the outside temperature is above 90°F, food should not be left out for more than 1 hour.

Let's Be Thermometer Savvy

Place the thermometer inside the meat to take a temperature reading. The following chart shows the minimum internal temperature for commonly grilled foods:



Ground Beef	160°F
Ground chicken/turkey	165°F
Beef Steaks	
(medium)	160°F
(well-done)	170°F
Pork Chops/Ribs	160°F
Chicken (not ground)	180°F
(Breast 170°F)	

Marinated Veggies

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup zucchini, thickly sliced
- 1/2 cup red bell pepper, sliced
- 1/2 cup sliced yellow bell peppers
- 1/2 cup yellow squash, sliced
- 1/2 cup sliced red onion
- 16 large fresh button mushrooms
- 16 cherry tomatoes
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 cup reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 1/2 clove crushed garlic

Directions

1. Place the zucchini, red bell peppers, yellow bell peppers, squash, red onion, mushrooms, and tomatoes in a large bowl.
2. In a small bowl, combine olive oil, soy sauce, lemon juice, and garlic; mix together. Pour over the vegetables. Cover bowl, and marinate in the refrigerator for 1/2 hour.
3. Preheat grill for medium heat.
4. Lightly oil grate. Remove vegetables from marinade, and place on preheated grill. Cook for 12 to 15 minutes, or until tender.

To Grill or Not To Grill?

Some scientists have linked the eating of grilled meat, chicken, and fish with possibly increasing the risk of certain cancers, such as breast, colon, stomach, and prostate cancers. Eating moderate amounts of grilled meats probably does not pose any real danger, but it is wise to take a few steps to protect yourself.

- Prevent charring or burning:
 - Remove visible fat.
 - Cook food in the center of the grill and move coals to the side to prevent fat and juices from dripping on them.
 - Cut off the charred portions of meat and throw away.
- Marinate foods before grilling.
- Reduce the time food is on the grill:
 - To retain the grilled flavor but reduce grilling time, pre-cook meat in the oven or microwave immediately before grilling.
 - Chop food into smaller pieces and place on kabobs.
- Raise the grill rack a few inches to lower the cooking temperature.
- Cover the grill rack with foil that has been pierced to allow for draining.

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