

## FOOD SAFETY TIPS

Out with the Old, In with the New: 'Tis the Season to Ring in New Home Food Safety Traditions. Eat, drink and be merry with these simple home food safety tips from the American Dietetic Association.

### Reckless Thawing

**Old Habit:** More than one out of four Americans admit to thawing their frozen turkey or other main meat dish on the kitchen counter, in the oven or even under hot water in the kitchen sink.

**New Tradition:** To prevent the spread of harmful bacteria, frozen meats should be thawed — and marinated, for that matter — in a refrigerator set below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Or, if pressed for time, you can thaw a wrapped frozen turkey (breast-side down) in a sink filled with cold tap water, making sure to change the water every 30 minutes.

### Holding Out on Hot Stuff

**Old Habit:** When preparing a cooked dish that needs to chill (for storage or serving purposes), nearly four out of five home cooks think it's necessary to wait until foods cool before putting them in the refrigerator.

**New Tradition:** Once upon a time, placing hot foods in the refrigerator could lower the overall temperature of the fridge and cause foods to spoil. Not anymore! To ensure the freshness and safety of your freshly cooked foods, place them promptly in the refrigerator after cooking...no need to wait.

### Covered Dish Delivery

**Old Habit:** Three out of five holiday revelers typically travel for at least one hour with their homemade holiday dish to a relative or friend's home.

**New Tradition:** Pay close attention to how much time passes from the time you leave your door until your dish is eaten. If it's more than two hours, consider packing your cold dish in a cooler or hot dish in an insulated bag to keep it safe and bacteria-free.

### Rocking the Gravy Boat

**Old Habit:** While a majority (71 percent) of home cooks remember to bring gravy to a boil before serving it, many forget the same rule also applies during the encore

presentation. In fact, more than half just reheat leftover gravy in the microwave until it's hot before serving again.

**New Tradition:** In order to eliminate harmful bacteria, always bring leftover gravy to a boil on the stove before serving it a second or even third time around.

## **Festive Floor-grazing**

**Old Habit:** Nearly one out of four Americans say they abide by a specific "rule" to determine how long food is safe to eat after it falls on the floor, with the majority giving a green light to food rescued within three seconds.

**New Tradition:** Tragic as it may be when a holiday treat topples to the floor, it's never a good idea to eat it. In the spirit of "out with the old, in with the new," toss it.

--- Reprinted from American Dietetic Association

<http://www.homefoodsafety.org>

For more information regarding food safety, contact Michigan State University Extension at 517-887-4588

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