



STORING AND REHEATING LEFTOVERS

With families eating more homecooked meals, chances are they will have leftovers. Many leftover food items are often just as good, and sometimes even better, the second day. It is important to store leftovers properly to prevent foodborne illness.

Follow these simple tips to ensure that leftovers remain safe to eat:

- Keep food out of the temperature “danger zone,” where harmful bacteria multiply rapidly. Keep hot foods hot (above 140 degrees Fahrenheit) and keep cold foods cold (below 40 degrees). Refrigerate or freeze leftovers within two hours of cooking.
- Cool foods quickly to prevent bacteria from growing. Divide large quantities of food into small, shallow containers, which will allow the food to cool quickly. Freeze leftovers in small portions that can be thawed as needed.
- Store leftovers in airtight containers.
- Use freshly cooked, refrigerated leftovers within three or four days. Use frozen leftovers within three or four months.



- Reheat leftovers to 165 degrees. Reheat soups, gravies and sauces to a rolling boil. When using a microwave, cover and rotate food for even heating. Proper reheating will help to destroy harmful bacteria.

Leftovers are a great idea. Cooking some meals like soups, stews and casseroles in larger quantities may help save time in the kitchen while also stretching your food budget.

Source : USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service

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