

Chow Line

News from the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

When camping, keep food safety in mind

We are planning to go camping for a long weekend this summer and I want to be sure we're smart about the food we bring and prepare. What should we keep in mind regarding food safety?

Food safety rules don't change just because you're experiencing the great outdoors. You want to make sure that you keep perishable foods cold enough, separate foods to prevent cross-contamination, keep your hands clean as you're preparing food, and cook foods thoroughly.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service provides detailed guidelines for Food Safety While Hiking, Camping and Boating online at go.osu.edu/outdoorfsafe.

Recommendations include:

- Bring nonperishable foods: canned tuna, ham, chicken or beef; dried meat or jerky; dry pasta and powdered sauce; and dried fruit and nuts.
- Pack all perishables in a cooler. Always use plenty of ice. If you are using ice cubes, make sure the melted water is contained to prevent cross-contamination from raw foods. Large ice blocks and ice gel packs stay cold longer than ice cubes. Pack the cooler full — that way the cooler will keep cold longer. Keep the cooler in the shade, or cover it with a beach towel or blanket to help further insulate it. The cooler's ability to keep things cold enough drops significantly in direct sunlight. Do not open it very often. Use a separate cooler for beverages, which you can open more often without putting perishable foods at risk.
- If you're taking burgers, hot dogs, or any raw meat or fish, pack them in a separate cooler to keep the raw juices from cross-contaminating food and drinks that won't be cooked. Consider



image: Stockbyte

freezing them before leaving on your trip, and pack them with large ice packs. Bacteria multiply quickly in temperatures between 40 degrees and 140 degrees, called the "danger zone." They can reach dangerous levels within two hours, or within one hour at 90 degrees or above. And don't make the mistake of thinking you'll be safe if you cook the food thoroughly enough: When in the danger zone, microorganisms can produce toxins that remain in the food even after heat kills the bacteria. So, keep raw meat cold.

- Bring a meat thermometer. When you cook meat outdoors, you don't have as much control over the heat source. Meat that is charred on the outside can remain uncooked on the inside. Never rely on color to tell whether a burger is done. A burger can be undercooked even if it is brown in the middle. Cook all poultry products, chicken or turkey burgers, hot dogs and sausages to 165 degrees Fahrenheit, measured with a thermometer at the thickest part of the meat; cook ground beef to 160 degrees F; and cook steaks, chops and seafood to at least 145 degrees F.
- Keep your hands clean. Clean and sanitize utensils and other cookware before and after handling food. Never use a plate that held raw meat for any other food, including cooked meat. Bring plenty of disposable wipes, biodegradable soap and fresh water to clean with.

June 17, 2016

By Martha Filipic
614-292-9833
filipic.3@osu.edu

Editor: This column was reviewed by Sanja Ilic, food safety specialist with Ohio State University Extension. OSU Extension is the outreach arm of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences at The Ohio State University.

Chow Line is a service of the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences and its outreach and research arms, Ohio State University Extension and the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center. Send questions to Chow Line, c/o Martha Filipic, 2021 Coffey Road, Columbus, OH 43210-1043, or filipic.3@osu.edu.

College Marketing and Communications
2021 Coffey Road
Columbus, OH 43210-1043
614-292-2011

208 Research Services Building
1680 Madison Ave.
Wooster, OH 44691-4096
330-263-3780

© 2016, The Ohio State University

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information: go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity.