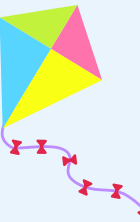


A Guide to Picnic Food Precautions



Picnic season offers lots of opportunities for outdoor fun with family and friends. But these warm weather events also present opportunities for foodborne bacteria to thrive. As food heats up in summer temperatures, bacteria multiply rapidly.

To protect yourself, your family, and friends from foodborne illness during warm-weather months, safe food handling when eating outdoors is critical.

Tips for Picnic Site Preparation

Food safety begins with proper hand cleaning — even when in outdoor settings. Before you begin setting out your picnic feast, make sure hands and surfaces are clean.

- **Outdoor Hand Cleaning:** If you don't have access to running water, use a water jug, some soap, and paper towels. Consider using moist disposable towelettes for cleaning your hands.
- **Utensils and Serving Dishes:** Take care to keep all utensils and platters clean when preparing food.

Keep Cold Foods Cold and Hot Foods Hot

Keeping food at proper temperatures — indoor and out — is critical in preventing the growth of foodborne bacteria. The key is to never let your picnic food remain in the “Danger Zone” — between 40 °F and 140 °F — for more than 2 hours, or 1 hour if outdoor temperatures are above 90 °F. This is when bacteria in food can multiply rapidly and lead to foodborne illness.

Cold Food: Cold perishable food should be kept in the cooler at 40 °F or below until serving time.

- Once you've served it, it should not sit out for longer than 2 hours, or 1 hour if the outdoor temperature is above 90 °F. If it does — discard it.
- Foods like chicken salad and desserts in individual serving dishes can be placed directly on ice, or in a shallow container set in a deep pan filled with ice. Drain off water as ice melts and replace ice frequently.

Hot Food: Hot food should be kept hot, at or above 140 °F.

- Wrap it well and place it in an insulated container until serving.
- Just as with cold food — these foods should not sit out for more than 2 hours, or 1 hour in temperatures above 90 °F. If food is left out longer, throw it away to be safe.

For more information on safe food handling for outdoor events, visit:

www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/handling-food-safely-while-eating-outdoors



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