



Eating Outdoors

To protect yourself and others from foodborne illness, practice safe food handling techniques when preparing, storing, and cooking food for picnics or barbecues. This involves keeping food out of the danger zone, avoiding cross-contamination, grilling safely, and following general sanitation principles.

The Danger Zone

The **danger zone** for food is 40°F – 140°F. Food that is allowed to stay in this temperature range for too long is at risk for bacteria growth.

The safe time to leave prepared food in the danger zone is only two hours. If the external temperature is above 90°F, the safe time is only one hour. If prepared food sits out past the safe time, consider it to be contaminated with bacteria and throw it out.



To keep food safe longer, use temperature controls.

Temperature Controls

Keep cold food cold (under 40°F):

- Use a cooler packed with ice or frozen gel packs.
- Pack meat, poultry, or seafood while still frozen.
- Avoid opening the cooler more than necessary by storing beverages in a separate container so they can be accessed without affecting the temperature of the food.
- Marinate raw meat, poultry, or seafood in cold temperatures.

Keep hot food hot (over 140°F):

- Wrap hot food and place in an insulated container.
- Move grilled food to the side of the grill surface to keep it warm.



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Avoiding Cross-Contamination

Assure that there is no cross-contamination between raw meat, poultry, or seafood and other foods. To prevent raw juices from contaminating cooked food or foods that will be eaten raw:

- Wrap raw meat, poultry, or seafood securely.
- Never reuse marinades.
- If platters or utensils touch raw meat, poultry, or seafood, do not reuse them for cooked food unless they have been washed in hot, soapy water first.

Grilling Safety

- Cook foods thoroughly, using a meat thermometer to assure that grilled food reaches the proper internal temperature.
- If foods must be partially cooked before grilling, do so right before adding them to the grill: do not let items sit in a partially cooked state.
- Check food for foreign objects after removing them from the grilling surface.

Appropriate internal temperatures for food:

Beef, pork, lamb, or veal steaks or roasts	145° F
Fish	145° F
Ground pork or beef	160° F
Poultry (breasts or whole poultry)	165° F



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Sanitation

- Rinse fresh fruit and vegetables before packing them, and scrub items with firm skins.
- Wash your hands before eating, either with soapy water and paper towels or with moist towelettes.
- Keep eating surfaces, serving platters, and utensils clean.