

Have a Food Safe Summer!



Vacation! Oh, how we long for that eight letter word every summer, when millions of us eagerly get away from school and work. We take to the road in cars or recreational vehicles; spend time on boats; relax on the beach and camp. No matter where we go or what we do, there is a common denominator that runs through all of our summer travels and relaxation — it's called **food!**

Plan Ahead

If you are traveling with perishable food, place it in a cooler with ice or freezer packs. When carrying drinks, consider packing them in a separate cooler so the food cooler is not opened frequently. Have plenty of ice or frozen gel-packs on hand before starting to pack food. If you take perishable foods along (for example, meat, poultry, eggs, and salads) for eating on the road or to cook at your vacation spot, plan to keep everything on ice in your cooler.



If the cooler is only partially filled, pack the remaining space with more ice. For long trips, take along two coolers — one for the day's immediate food needs, such as lunch, drinks or snacks, and the other for perishable foods to be used later in the vacation. Limit the times the cooler is opened. Open and close the lid quickly.

When Camping...

Remember to keep the cooler in a shady spot. Keep it covered with a blanket, tarp or poncho, preferably one that is light in color to reflect heat. Keep hands and all utensils clean when preparing food. Use disposable moist towelettes or hand sanitizer to clean hands. When planning meals, think about buying and using shelf-stable food.



When Boating...

If boating on vacation, or out for the day, make sure the all-important cooler is along. Don't let perishable food sit out while swimming or fishing. Remember, food sitting out for more than 2 hours is not safe. The time frame is reduced to just 1 hour if the outside temperature is above 90 °F.

Now, about that "catch" of fish — assuming the big one did not get away. For fin fish: scale, gut and clean the fish as soon as they are caught. Wrap both whole and cleaned fish in water-tight plastic and store on ice. Keep 3-4 inches of ice on the bottom of the cooler. Alternate layers of fish and ice. Cook the fish in 1-2 days, or freeze. After cooking, eat within 3-4 days. Make sure the raw fish stays separate from cooked foods.



When at the Beach

Plan ahead. Take along only the amount of food that can be eaten to avoid having leftovers. If grilling, make sure local ordinances allow it. Bring the cooler! Partially bury it in the sand, cover it with blankets, and shade it with a beach umbrella. Bring along disposable moist towelettes or hand sanitizer for cleaning hands.



If dining along the beach, make sure the food stands frequented look clean, and that hot foods are served hot and cold foods cold. Don't eat anything that has been sitting out in the hot sun for more than 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F) — a real invitation for foodborne illness and a spoiled vacation.