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## How Many Calories are on the Menu?



When you eat in a restaurant, do you generally know how many calories you're consuming? The answer is most likely, "no," according to research findings examined by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).



The good news is that FDA is now taking an important step to provide consumers with more information to help them make more informed choices about the food they eat away from home.

The menu labeling rules cover:

- Sit-down and fast-food restaurants, bakeries, coffee shops and restaurant-type foods in certain grocery and convenience stores.
- Take-out and delivery foods, such as pizza.
- Foods purchased at drive-through windows.
- Foods that you serve yourself from a salad or hot-food bar.
- Alcoholic drinks such as cocktails when they appear on menus.
- Foods at places of entertainment, such as movie theaters.

Learn more at [www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm423082.htm](http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm423082.htm).

## Energy Drinks and Kids

Energy drinks are popular, but can be dangerous. The National Poison Control Center reports that 40 percent of reports to their center are related to these drinks and children under age six.

The major problems cited include cardiovascular problems and seizures. Some energy drinks have up to 400 mg of caffeine per serving compared to 100-150mg in one cup of coffee. Poisoning can oc-

cur in children under 12 at a rate of 2.5 mg per every 2.2 pounds of body weight.

Learn more about this at [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory\\_149490.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_149490.html).



## Can I Can in a Multi-Cooker?

Electric multi-cooker appliances advertise their use in canning, but be aware that this may not be a safe practice. These appliances perform functions such as a cooking rice, pressure cooking, frying, and slow cooking.

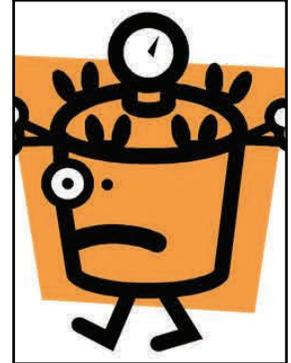
No USDA thermal process recommendations have been done with any electric multi-cooker. What matters is the tem-

perature that is reached inside the appliance as well as inside the jars of food. A manufacturer may say it reaches the pressure required for canning, but that does not prove the food in the jars heats at the same rate as recommended canners for canning.

Other concerns with these appliances include how the user adjusts for

altitude changes and how the appliance responds to power changes.

Remember that food preservation is a science, not an art. Using safe procedures and equipment will help ensure the best safety of the canned foods.



Learn more at <http://preservingfoodathome.com/2014/11/25/can-i-can-in-a-multi-cooker/>

## Are You Prepared for Winter?



It is the season for ice and snow! These weather events can lead to power outages for long periods of time. To help you prepare, a recorded webinar is available.

Go to <https://learn.extension.org/events/1711#.VICwTnufXT8> and click on "Watch recording."

For more tips and information related to power

outages and other disasters, see [www.ksre.ksu.edu/foodsafety/p.aspx?tabid=20](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/foodsafety/p.aspx?tabid=20).

## Toast New Year with Safe Eggnog

Homemade eggnog is a tradition during the holiday season. But each year this creamy drink causes many cases of *Salmonella*. The ingredient responsible? Usually raw or undercooked eggs.

To prevent this ingredient from causing harmful infections, try one of these options for safer eggnog.

- Make a cooked egg base by gently cooking the eggs and half the milk to 160°F. Chill and add remaining ingredients.
- Use egg substitute products in place of the eggs.
- Use pasteurized eggs in place of the raw eggs.



Learn more at [www.foodsafety.gov/blog/eggnog.html](http://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/eggnog.html)



Learn more at [www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov](http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov)

## What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl

Now available, this new interactive tool is designed to help educators, health professionals, community leaders, and consumers find nutritious and budget-friendly recipes. The USDA Mixing Bowl includes:

- Search by specific USDA programs, course, cooking equipment and cuisine
- "Themed" nutrition focus searching in areas specific to food groups and nutrients
- Nutrition information for many recipes, including [MyPlate](#) food group amounts
- Access to the [USDA Foods Fact Sheets](#) and corresponding recipes
- [Quantity recipes](#) for USDA programs or to feed larger crowds
- The ability to share recipes on social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- Option to select recipes to create a personal cookbook to print or download



## Creating Consistent Flavors

One flavor company has created new technology to consistently flavor meat and poultry for the food industry.

*Seasoning Transfer Technology* uses seasoning

sheets, casings, transfer netting, and roasting bags. These products are made from liquid sugar to form an adhesive. Spices adhere to these products in customer-specific blends.

The spice transfer occurs when the spices contact the moist meat or poultry. The sheets and bags help reduce waste, saves time, and provides even spice application.



**Spice seasoning sheets on poultry**

**Photo courtesy [Food Technology, Nov. 2014](#)**



Source: <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/chestnuts-history-and-roasting-tips>

## Chestnuts Roasting on an Open Fire

Chestnut trees once covered over 200 million acres in the U.S. before a destructive fungus destroyed almost all of the trees. Today, the American chestnut tree is slowly being restored.

Once chestnuts are picked, refrigerate them until ready to use. They should have a shiny brown exterior and must be firm, not soft.

Roasting is the most popular method of cooking chestnuts. Puncture the shells with one or two holes. This helps release steam pressure while roasting. They are done when they peel easily.

Chestnuts can also be steamed, boiled or cooked in the microwave. Once cooked, refrigerate in a sealed container one to two months or freeze up to one year.

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## January is Oat Month



Caption describing picture or graphic.

Oats are purchased more often in January than any other time of year. It is the number one breakfast food and number three on the satiety index measuring fullness and satisfaction.



Oats are deemed a whole grain as

the bran and germ are never removed during processing. Oats are steamed and flattened to make rolled oats. The more they are steamed and flattened, the faster they cook (e.g. quick oats.)

Steel-cut oats are chewier and nuttier. The whole oat is sliced once or twice into smaller pieces. When cooked, they are called porridge.

Oats helps lower LDL cholesterol and can help lower blood pressure. The soluble fiber helps control blood sugar to reduce type 2 diabetes.

Learn more about oats at <http://wholegrainscouncil.org/whole-grains-101/oats-january-grain-of-the-month>



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On the Web at  
[www.rrc.ksu.edu](http://www.rrc.ksu.edu)



## The Power of Onions

Onions add big flavor to many recipes. But they also add many health benefits.



Source: Tufts Health & Nutrition Letter, Dec. 2014

Onions contain the flavonoid quercetin in amounts twice that of tea and three times the amount found in apples. Quercetin can have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory benefits.

While sulfur compounds produce pungency in onions, the

sulfur can improve blood thinning and prevent platelet aggregation. Sulfur also lowers colorectal, laryngeal and ovarian cancer.

Onions can improve gut health to reduce ulcer formation and possibly protect your bones.

Store unpeeled onions in a cool, dry, dark location with air circulation. Peel onions carefully to not remove too many outer layers where healthy compounds are found. Store peeled onions in a closed container in the refrigerator up to one week.