Food Prep When the Power Goes Out

Spring is just about here which brings warmer weather as well as severe weather. If you lose power, handling food can be tricky. If you don’t have a generator, then consider these options to prepare food without power from University of Minnesota Extension.

Keep a food thermometer handy. Remember these three temperatures when cooking meats: 145°F for steaks, roasts, chops; 160°F for ground meat; and 165°F for all poultry. If you have limited fuel for cooking, choose quick-cooking foods to reserve fuel.

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Handwashing is still important! Use bottled water and soap if running water is not available. Use disposable utensils and plates for easy clean up. Heat water on the outdoor grill to wash other items.

For more information on food safety during a power outage, see www.ksre.k-state.edu/foodsafety/topics/disaster.html

Stock up on foods that do not require any cooking or refrigeration. Examples include peanut butter, canned meats, whole grain chips or crackers, fresh fruit, canned fruit, dried fruit, and many others. Don’t forget your pets! They also need nourishment in an emergency.

As National Nutrition Month® wraps up in March, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025, are now available in Español.

These resources are for professional educators and for consumers. There are figures and infographics also. These resources are helpful to promote healthy eating from birth to older adulthood.

Start simple. Every healthy bite counts over time to improve overall health.

Learn more and download many tools and resources at https://dietaryguidelines.gov/resources.
Pickled Asparagus Problems

A favorite spring garden perineal is asparagus. As weather starts to warm, those tasty fresh shoots will soon be popping out of the ground.

A great way to preserve asparagus is to pickle it for a tangy addition to meals. Here’s a pickled asparagus recipe that is formulated for 12-ounce jars or pint jars from the National Center for Home Food Preservation.

Pickled asparagus is safely canned in a water bath canner.

But after preserving your prized asparagus, have you noticed some little yellow/white spots form on the surface? Is it safe to eat?

The answer is yes, it is safe to eat. These little specks are called rutin. According to the University of California Extension, when asparagus is heated with vinegar, the bioflavonoid rutin is drawn out of the asparagus. It becomes insoluble and crystallizes, leaving the spots on the surface of the asparagus. Commercially made pickled asparagus has an additive added to prevent this reaction.

Creating Food Safe Videos

The Partnership for Food Safety Education recently presented a webinar on creating videos with food safety content.

To follow up, the information presented and more can be found at www.saferecipeguide.org which includes the webinar recording, a style guide for creating videos, and a food safety stock library to help enhance your videos.

Studies have shown that when people are given basic food safety instructions, they are more likely to follow them and improve safe food handling behaviors. Whether in print or video, these tips can make a change!

Tips to Dehydrate Stone Fruit

Dehydrated fruit is an easy way to have ready-made snacks or to add a pop of fruit to cereal, yogurt, or homemade cookies. Dehydrating is the oldest food preservation method to remove moisture from food which prevents bacterial growth.

When drying stone fruits, such as apricots, plums, or halves of peaches and nectarines, first rinse them in running water. Remove the pits. The skin can be left on or removed. Pretreat as directed to reduce discoloration. Press the rounded side, or outside, inward to invert the fruit half. This helps expose the inside flesh and the fruit will dry faster. If the skin is still on, place the fruit skin side down on the dehydrator tray. Optimum dehydrating temperature is 140°F while air circulates to pull moisture out of the fruit. Dry until pliable and leathery.
Spring Leafy Greens

A gardening favorite to plant in the spring is leafy vegetables such as lettuce, spinach, arugula, and many others. They provide a lot of crunch and color to any meal. Packed with nutrients, they can help protect you from some chronic diseases.

Handle and prepare all leafy greens safely before consuming as there have been foodborne illness outbreaks associated with these fresh foods. Most of these are never heated prior to eating, so it is important to rinse them under running water. Do not soak in water as this can spread contamination. Research has shown that rinsing in water helps remove most bacteria and dirt. Use these steps.

- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after preparing leafy greens.
- Remove bruised or damaged leaves. Remove outer layers of cabbage and lettuce heads.
- Rinse leaves under running water. Rub gently with your fingers for better results.
- Dry leaves in a salad spinner or with a clean paper towel to remove moisture.

From Cabbage to Sauerkraut

Cabbage is popular in the spring, so try turning it into sauerkraut! But how do you know when fermentation is complete? Fermentation naturally stops as acids accumulate to the extent that further growth of desirable bacteria cannot take place. The bubbling ceases and the color should have changed from green/white to tan. It should be tart but still have a firm texture. The brine should not be cloudy.

If mold is present, has a slimy texture, or has a bad odor, do not eat. Fully fermented sauerkraut can be stored in the freezer, canned or frozen.

Use 3 tablespoons canning salt for 5 pounds shredded cabbage to control pathogen growth.

Source: [extension.psu.edu/lets-preserve-fermentation-sauerkraut-and-pickles](https://extension.psu.edu/lets-preserve-fermentation-sauerkraut-and-pickles)

Buying Guide for Kansas Fruits and Vegetables

As local farmers markets make plans to open for the growing season, shoppers can plan ahead by knowing what is available at different times of the year.

The K-State Research and Extension Buying Guide for Kansas-Grown Fruits and Vegetables is a great tool to help you choose many nutritious seasonal fruits and vegetables. Local farmers can also answer questions about the foods they grow to help you try something new or find a new way to enjoy the tasty treats. Within the publication are charts you can print out for a handy reference.

Looking for a farmers market near you? The Kansas Department of Agriculture From the Land of Kansas program has a list of registered markets at [www.fromthelandofkansas.com/market/list](http://www.fromthelandofkansas.com/market/list).
**Easter Ham Preparation**

- **Ham that requires cooking before consumption or fresh, raw ham must reach an internal temperature of 145°F (with a three-minute rest time). Set the oven no lower than 325°F.**

Cooked canned ham and cooked vacuum-packaged ham, both from federally inspected plants, can be eaten right out of the package. All of these along with spiral-cut cooked ham are safe to eat cold or can be warmed to an internal temperature of 145°F, as they are already fully cooked. For cooked hams that have been repackaged in any other location outside the processing plant, heat to an internal temperature of 165°F, measured with a food thermometer, before you serve it.

**Let the Easter Egg Hunt Begin!**

Sometimes eggs are decorated, used as decorations, and hunted at Easter. Here are some safety tips.

- **Dyeing eggs:** After hard cooking eggs, dye them and refrigerate within 2 hours. Use a food-safe coloring.

- **Blowing out eggshells:** Use caution when blowing out the contents to hollow out the shell for decorating. Use eggs that have been kept refrigerated and are uncracked. To destroy bacteria that may be present on the surface of the egg, wash the egg in hot water and then rinse in a solution of 1 teaspoon liquid chlorine bleach per half cup of water. After blowing out the egg, refrigerate the contents and use within 2 to 4 days.

- **Hunting Eggs:** If hard cooked eggs have been lying on the ground, they can pick up bacteria, especially if the shells are cracked. If the shells crack, bacteria could contaminate the inside. The total time for hiding and hunting eggs should not exceed 2 hours. Refrigerate and use "found" eggs within 7 days of cooking.