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## Back to Your Root...Vegetables!



**Easy Roasted Veggies—Iowa State University, Spend Smart. Eat Smart. ®**

With fall and cooler weather upon us, fall vegetables are plentiful for many meals. Root vegetables are those that grow underground. They include carrots, radishes, beets, parsnips, turnips, rutabagas and others.

Because of their rough surface, it is important to rinse and scrub root vegetables to remove dirt. Peel them to remove hidden dirt and damaged spots.

Turnips are often used as cover crops in

fields. But they are also grown in home gardens. Harvest them when they are 2-3 inches in diameter and their shoulders are above the soil surface. If allowed to continue growing, they become bitter and woody in texture. Turnip greens can also be used as a savory vegetable. Rutabagas are best harvested after a frost for best flavor.

Store turnip greens separate from the roots and store in the refrigerator 1-2 weeks. Rutabagas can be stored in a root cellar or at a temperature between 32-40°F with 95% relative humidity. Store up to five months. Remove the tops and taproot to increase storage life.

Enjoy any root vegetable in soups, stews, roasted, baked or many other ways. Combine your favorites with some onion, olive oil, and herbs. Place on a sheet pan and roast until soft and light brown.

Sources: [North Dakota State University](http://North Dakota State University) and [University of Minnesota](http://University of Minnesota)

## Food Safety for Holiday Meals

The holidays are almost here! Start planning now for menus, number of guests, and other details.

Keep food safety in mind to keep the uninvited guest of foodborne illness from ruining a great meal.

The basics of cook, chill, clean and separate should guide your meal preparation, serving and clean up. Use a thermometer to verify doneness of meats, casseroles and other dishes.

Many resources can be found in the [Holidays](#) section of the KSRE Extension Food Safety website. The publication [At-Home Safe Food Handling: It's in Your Hands](#) is a concise guide to safe food handling.

## Skip the Rinse, For Any Meat

The concept of clean typically means we wash or rinse items to make them clean. We wash dishes, clothes, cars, etc. So, it may seem that rinsing meat or poultry before cooking makes them clean. This practice, in fact, can cause foodborne illness instead. It is an old practice that is very outdated.

Today's modern food safety system provides

cleaned meat during processing. No rinsing is required at home. If you do, any potential bacteria on the meat can be splashed onto other surfaces. If those are not cleaned, that leads to cross-contamination.

What is the best practice? Simply using a food thermometer to verify doneness and to destroy foodborne illness-causing bacteria. Follow these

temperature guidelines:

- Steaks, roasts, chops—145°F
- Ground meat—160°F
- All poultry—165°F
- Fish and seafood—145°F

Source: [USDA Washing Food: Does it Promote Food Safety?](#)



Insert a food thermometer in the thickest part of the meat and away from bones.

## Food Pantries, Food Banks, and Blessing Boxes

While food pantries and food banks operate year around, they become especially important during the holidays. Food safety is important to give safe food to those in need.

Many communities have Blessing Boxes to offer easy access to foods. Because these are outside and subject to cold temperatures, not all foods are safe to donate. Consider non-food items, can openers, hygiene

supplies, dry mixes, dried fruit, nuts, crackers and granola bars. Never donate perishable foods as they can spoil or attract pests. Avoid glass packaging, damaged cans or any open containers.

Learn more at [www.ksre.k-state.edu/foodsafety/topics/holiday.html](http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/foodsafety/topics/holiday.html)

## Safety of Spaghetti *alla carbanara*

Spaghetti *alla carbanara* is an Italian dish with a sauce made from raw eggs. The eggs are heated by the residual heat from the cooked pasta. But that heat treatment may not be sufficient to inactivate potential *Salmonella* bacteria.

[Research](#) was conducted by inoculating the beaten egg mixture with five strains of *Salmonella*. The recipe was prepared and temperatures were taken at various points to determine if the heat treatment reduced the *Salmonella*. It was found that the *Salmonella* was reduced by about half, but there was still enough viable bacteria to potentially cause foodborne illness.

Without knowing if eggs are contaminated or not, it is best to use pasteurized eggs to effectively reduce contamination risks. This is especially important for older adults and those with immuno-compromised health.



**Spaghetti *alla carbanara***  
Photo: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0023643820301031>

## Pasteurized Eggs

Pasteurized shell eggs are available in some grocery stores. They are gently heated in the shell with a warm water bath at a controlled time and temperature to destroy potential bacteria inside the egg. It does not actually cook the egg. Another method is using [radio frequency \(RF\) waves](#) to heat the eggs. These are beneficial to reduce the risks of foodborne illness primarily from *Salmonella*.



Source: [Egg Products and Food Safety—USDA](#)  
Photo: USDA ARS

Egg products are eggs removed from the shells, including whole eggs, whites, yolks, or egg blends that may have other non-egg ingredients. These are also pasteurized for safety as required by the USDA. The pasteurization process heats them rapidly but does not cook the eggs or affect the color, flavor, nutritional value, or use. Egg products have been around since the late 1800s with dried eggs. The first frozen whole egg product was made in 1903. Frozen egg substitutes were developed in 1973.

Dried eggs are also pasteurized then reconstituted with water when ready to use. Dried egg whites are a good substitute for recipes that call for raw egg whites that are not cooked.



All liquid egg products and reconstituted dried eggs must be refrigerated for safety.

## Desperate for Canning Lids

Sacrificing quality lids for alternative metal canning lids can lead to spoiled food, food waste, loss of time and money, or even foodborne illness.

One recent social media post talks about reusing metal canning lids and adding the rubber sealing

rings from the manufacturer of reusable plastic lids. *This is not recommended!* While it might seal, the seal will likely fail during storage. This combination is just dangerous. Those rubber rings are to be used only with the rigid plastic reusable lids.

Trusted, quality lid supplies are coming. They are working hard to get supplies back into stores. But the supply chain and transportation issues are affecting many items. Please be smart about safe food preservation!

**Metal canning lids are not designed to be used more than once. The sealing compound has been permanently indented by the jar rim and using it again can lead to seal failure.**

## Thawing Turkey Guide



Turkey thawing on bottom shelf  
Photo: USDA

Are you buying a frozen turkey for your holiday meal? Remember to plan ahead to thaw it safely and in time for roasting. The refrigerator is the best choice to safely thaw frozen food. Do not leave it sit on the countertop at room temperature.

Allow about 24 hours for every 4-5 pounds of frozen turkey. It will likely take longer. So for a 12-pound turkey, plan for at least three days thawing time in the refrigerator.

The cold water method can be used in a pinch. Leave the turkey in the wrapper. Submerge it in a clean sink or large container full of cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes and allow about 30 minutes per pound of turkey. Cook immediately.

See [How to Safely Thaw a Turkey](#) from the USDA for more information.

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## Sorting Out Pasteurized Milk



High temperature short time pasteurization

Photo: USDA Flickr

As the holiday baking season approaches, recipes are being dusted off to make favorite goodies for family and friends. When shopping for milk products, they will be labeled as pasteurized.

The terms "pasteurization," "pasteurized" mean heating every milk particle to a specific temperature and time to destroy pathogens in raw milk. There are three methods to

do pasteurization and require refrigeration for storage.

*Vat pasteurization* means the milk is in a large vat and heated to at least 145°F for 30 minutes. For eggnog, the temperature must reach 155°F. This is primarily used for smaller operations or preparing starter cultures for cheese, yogurt and buttermilk. Some ice cream mixes are also vat pasteurized.

*High temperature short time (HTST) pasteurization* is a continuous heating system for a minimum temperature of 161°F for 15 seconds. Some operation use a higher temperature for a shorter amount of time. This method is the most common in the U.S.

*Ultra pasteurization* is a continuous heating system that reaches 280°F for 2.0 seconds. This product will have a longer shelf life.

Source: [International Dairy Foods Association](http://International Dairy Foods Association)

ask  
an EXPERT



Karen Blakeslee, M.S.



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



## Making Pickled Eggs

There are no home canning directions safely pickle eggs. Home pickled eggs stored at

room temperature can lead to botulism.



Pickled eggs  
Photo: Canva.com

For safe pickled eggs, they must be refrigerated. Eggs are hard-cooked, peeled and cooled. Then a pickling

solution is made, boiled and poured over the peeled eggs. Store in a container that can be closed or sealed tightly. Canning jars are a good choice. A quart-sized canning jar will hold about one dozen medium-sized eggs. The eggs should be completely covered with the pickling solution.

See the [National Center for Home Food Preservation](http://National Center for Home Food Preservation) for recipes and instructions.