



### Inside this issue:

Turkey Fryer Safety 2

Cooking More than One Turkey 2

Preserving Tomatoes 2

Freezing Pie 3

American Diabetes Month® 3

*Clostridium perfringens* 3

Rinsing Poultry 4

All Things Turkey 4



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## Food Safety When Hunting Wild Game



Photo: USDA Flickr

Hunting season is in full gear for a variety of wildlife. Whether you are a new or experienced hunter, safety is key in many aspects, including [food safety](#).

The handling of the meat from harvest to preparation can make a major difference in flavor and safety of the end product. Here are some resources from North Dakota State University Extension called the “Wild Side of the Menu.”

- **[Wild Side of the Menu No. 1—Care and Cookery](#)**— Information on proper care and cookery of wild game so you can fully enjoy the wild

game you hunted.

- **[Wild Side of the Menu No. 2—Field to Freezer](#)**—Wild game that is properly handled in the field and correctly cooked to enhance its distinctive flavors holds a special place for many cooks. The purpose of this publication is to describe how to properly handle your game from harvesting through processing.
- **[Wild Side of the Menu No. 3—Preservation of Game Meats and Fish](#)**—Recommendations for safely preserving game meats and fish for later enjoyment. Freezing meat and fish is the most accepted way to maintain top quality. Other methods for preserving game meats include curing and smoking, drying, corning, canning and sausage making. Fish also may be pickled or canned.
- **[Handling Game Birds from Field to Table](#)**—A challenge to hunt, but a tasty meal is the reward.

## Preserving Winter Squash, Pumpkins

Winter squash and pumpkins can be preserved by canning, freezing or drying. The only method for canning is to use cubed pieces of flesh. See directions at in our [Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe: Vegetables](#) publication.

Do not can any mashed or pureed products. These forms of winter squash can be frozen for later use. The USDA recommendations to can mashed winter squash were removed in the 1970s because of too

much variation in density between batches to provide a consistent processing recommendation.

Source: [University of Minnesota Extension](#)

## Turkey Fryer Safety

Keep your Thanksgiving memorable for giving thanks for family and friends. If you plan to fry a turkey, keep these tips in mind to prevent a disaster.

- Buy a fresh turkey 1-2 days before the meal and keep refrigerated.
- Thaw frozen turkey completely to reduce oil splattering and burning. It takes at least 24 hours to thaw 4-5 pounds of turkey. Plan for extra time.
- Test the fryer capacity by placing the turkey in the pot and add water to cover it 1-2 inches.
- Smaller birds of 12 pounds or less are best. If larger, cut it into pieces.
- Heat oil to 350°F. Measure with a thermometer to monitor the temperature during cooking.
- Cook time is about 3-5 minutes per pound. Do not stuff! Use a food thermometer to verify it is cooked to 165°F. Remove from oil and rest at least 20 minutes before carving.



Source: [www.usda.gov/media/blog/2017/11/06/dont-make-turkey-frying-disastrous-situation-thanksgiving](http://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2017/11/06/dont-make-turkey-frying-disastrous-situation-thanksgiving)  
Photo: Canva.com



### Let's Talk Turkey!

Learn more tips on roasting turkey as well as thawing frozen turkey, storing leftovers and more.

## Cooking More Than One Turkey

Cooking two turkeys of about the same weight does not double the roasting time. Cooking time is determined by the weight of one bird. Just make sure there is sufficient oven space for proper heat circulation.

All poultry should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 °F as measured with a food thermometer. Check the internal temperature of each bird in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thick-

est part of the breast. For reasons of personal preference, consumers may choose to cook poultry to higher temperatures.

Source: AskUSDA

## Preserve the Best Tomatoes

When preserving any food, use the best food possible for the safest results. This includes tomatoes. During the fall, many gardeners still have tomatoes on the vines. But once a frost or freeze happens, these tomatoes are not safe to preserve by canning.

When tomatoes are left on the vine towards the end of the growing season, the pH increases above 4.6. This is the dividing point whether a food is a high acid or low acid food. When the pH is above 4.6, it is a low acid food. These tomatoes are also more susceptible to other microbial damage. Tomatoes that have signs of blight or other fungus related infestations have a higher pH making them a low acid food. All of these are not safe for canning.

For information on preserving tomatoes, see [www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF1185.PDF](http://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/MF1185.PDF).

**A FALL FREEZE IS COMING!**

Still have tomatoes on the vine?  
Pick them before a frost or freeze to finish ripening.

After a frost or freeze, the **acidity** of tomatoes still on the vine **decreases**. This **increases** the risk for **botulism** if these tomatoes are canned.

Learn more at [www.rrc.ksu.edu/preservation](http://www.rrc.ksu.edu/preservation)

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## Prep and Freeze Pie Now, Save Time Later

As the holidays approach, now is the time to plan for holiday meals. If the menu includes pie, make and freeze it now to save time later. Here are some tips from [Penn State Extension](#).



Photo: Canva.com

For unbaked pie, it is best to freeze the filling and crust separately for better crust quality later. The filling can be frozen in a freezer bag and placed in a pie pan to get the pie shape. When ready to use, unwrap the frozen filling, place in an unbaked pie crust. Add an extra 20-25 minutes of baking time.

For the crust, make the pie dough and roll into flat circles to freeze. Several pie crusts can be stacked with parchment paper or foil between the layers. Pie dough can also be placed into pie pans and frozen in the pan.

When freezing a whole double-crust pie, do not cut vents in the top crust in an unbaked pie before freezing. Make those cuts just before baking.

Fruit, pecan or pumpkin pie freezes best. Custard, meringue or cream pies do not freeze well. See more tips at [Michigan State University Extension](#) and [Oregon State University Extension](#).



## November is American Diabetes Month®

Diabetes is an epidemic and it is likely you or someone you know has this chronic disease.

The American Diabetes Association designates November to help educate everyone about dia-

betes and how to identify the risks.

The theme this year is **Today's Diabetes Hits Different!** It is important to show what life with diabetes is like and how to manage it every

day. Information on this promotion will be available on November 1, 2022 at <https://diabetes.org/get-involved/community/american-diabetes-month>.

**K-State Research and Extension Diabetes resources can be found at [www.ksre.k-state.edu/humannutrition/nutrition-topics/eatingwell-diabetes/index.html](http://www.ksre.k-state.edu/humannutrition/nutrition-topics/eatingwell-diabetes/index.html).**



Divide large amounts of food into smaller containers for faster cooling.

Photo: USDA FSIS

## What is *Clostridium perfringens*?

You may not hear it about it much, but *Clostridium perfringens* is one of the most common foodborne illness sources with about 1 million cases in the U.S. each year. Common symptoms are diarrhea and stomach cramps within 6-24 hours of eating contaminated food.

Where is it commonly found? In foods that have been temperature abused. This means the food was kept at unsafe temperatures, between 40°F–140°F, and pathogen grows and multiplies. Common food sources include soup, stews, gravies, meat, poultry, casseroles and other large amounts of food. Outbreaks tend to happen where large groups of people are served the meal. These outbreaks occur mostly in November and December.

So, as you plan your holidays, remember to keep hot food hot, cold food cold, and cool leftovers safely by dividing large quantities into small quantities to cool quickly. Do your part to [prevent illness from \*C. perfringens\*](#)!

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## Rinsing Poultry Not Worth the Risk



The practice of washing or rinsing raw poultry can actually put you and others at a higher risk of food-borne illness. Quite simply, there's no need to do this.

Participants in an observational study were observed in handling and preparation practices to see how bacteria moves from raw foods to other foods or surfaces. They were divided into a control group and a treatment group. Food safety messages were sent via email prior to observation sessions to learn how effective those messages were in preparing chicken.

Some reasons consumers feel rinsing raw poultry is necessary is to remove blood/slime, because a family member said to do so, or it washes off the germs or bacteria. Most do this under the faucet with water running without any other container. Because of this, water splashes onto other items or food causing cross contamination. Then, many improperly washed their hands by not using water or soap, or did not rub their hands with soap at least 20 seconds. They also were ineffective at cleaning and sanitizing equipment and countertops.

Bottom line. There is no need to wash any poultry or meat prior to cooking. Cooking to safe temperatures is the best and safest defense against foodborne illness. All poultry should reach 165°F; ground meat should reach 160°F; and roasts, steak, chops and fish should reach 145°F.

ask  
an EXPERT



Karen Blakeslee, M.S.



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



## All Things Turkey



Turkey is about to become front and center on many holiday tables. Here are some resources to help keep the gift of food-borne illness away from your celebrations.

**Let's Talk Turkey**—A guide to safely prepping and roasting turkey.

**Stuffing and Food Safety**—Whether you call it stuffing, filling or dressing, it requires safe handling and cooking. It is best to cook this tasty side dish outside of the turkey.

Other tips include:

- [Safe thawing methods](#)
- Set oven temperature to no less than 325°F.
- [Turkey cooking timetable](#)