

Chill

CHILL FACTS

Bacteria grow most rapidly in the Danger Zone—the unsafe temperatures between 40 °F and 140 °F—so it's important to keep foods out of this temperature range. And since cold temperatures keep most harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying . . . be sure to refrigerate foods quickly!

The Top 4 Cool Rules

- **The Chill Factor**—Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods, and leftovers within 2 hours of purchase or preparation, or within 1 hour if the temperature is above 90 °F. Marinate foods in the refrigerator.
- **The Thaw Law**—Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator. For quick thawing, put food in cold water in airtight packaging, or thaw food in the microwave if you'll be cooking it immediately.
- **Divide and Conquer**—Separate large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.
- **Avoid the Pack Attack**—Don't over-stuff the refrigerator. Cold air must circulate to keep food safe.

Serve & Preserve

When serving cold food at a buffet, picnic, or barbecue, keep these "chilling" tips in mind.

- Cold foods should be kept at 40 °F or colder.
- Keep all perishable foods chilled right up until serving time.
- Place containers of cold food on ice for serving to make sure they stay cold.
- It's particularly important to keep custards, cream pies, and cakes with whipped-cream or cream-cheese frostings refrigerated. Don't serve them if refrigeration is not possible.

Hit the Road!

When traveling with food, be aware that time, temperature, and a cold source are important. Here are some tips to help keep your travels cool!

- Keep frozen foods in the refrigerator or freezer until you're ready to go.
- Always use ice or cold packs and fill your cooler with food. A full cooler will maintain its cold temperatures longer than one that is partially filled.
- When traveling, keep the cooler in the air-conditioned passenger compartment of your car, rather than in a hot trunk.
- If you've asked for a doggie bag to take home from a restaurant, it should be refrigerated within 2 hours of serving.