

## KEEPING FOODS COLD FOR PICNICS, GRILLING, AND CAMPING



Keeping food safe to eat is as simple as keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Several options exist for keeping coolers cold.

- **Ice:** Commercial ice is available in cubes or blocks. A block will last longer than equal weight ice cubes. Ice can be made at home. Fill clean half-gallon milk cartons, juice cartons or jugs 2/3 full of drinking water. Put lids on. This water when thawed can then be used to make coffee or tea. Do not drink water from dry ice.
- **Sealed refrigerant (Blue Ice TM):** These purchased blocks or bags are several degrees colder than ice and can be used in place of ice. In addition, they can be re-frozen and reused. Discard any broken or torn blocks or bags so that the content does not contaminate your food or fresh water.
- **Frozen Food:** Freezing meat and juices before packing them in a cooler will also help keep other foods cold. Frozen food will thaw gradually and be ready for grilling or cooking. Wrap meat thoroughly so juices won't drip on other foods. Keep foods cold. Food-borne illness bacteria may be present on raw animal foods. Do not let them make you and your family sick.
- **Perishable foods:** Pack these foods closest to the ice in a cooler. If you are using a plug in cooler make sure that perishable foods are closest to the cooling mechanism. Pack the foods you will eat first on the top so you can work your way down during your meal. Store the cooler in a shady area and avoid unnecessary opening of your cooler.
- **Leftovers:** After grilling, store leftovers as soon as possible. Return to refrigerator or ice chest. Food left out over 2 hours should be thrown out. If the temperature outside is above 90 degrees F, then food should be thrown out after 1 hour. Once canned foods are opened, put them in the cooler.

- **Keep foods Clean:** Since bacteria live all around us and even on our bodies, always wash and dry your hands before handling food or cooking.

For other questions about Food Safety or food-borne illness, contact your county Cooperative Extension office.

### Sources

Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS), USDA. Food Safety while Hiking, Camping and Boating.

[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Food\\_Safety\\_While\\_Hiking\\_Camping\\_&\\_Boating/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Food_Safety_While_Hiking_Camping_&_Boating/index.asp). July 2005.

Food Safety Inspection Service (FSIS) USDA. Handling Food Safely on the Road.

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**This information has been reviewed by university faculty.**  
[cals.arizona.edu/pubs/health/az9718.pdf](http://cals.arizona.edu/pubs/health/az9718.pdf)