Leftovers – Healthful Advise from USDA

Often when we cook at home or eat in a restaurant, we have leftovers. Take care to handle leftovers in a safe manner. Bacteria grow rapidly between the temperatures of 40° F and 140° F. After food is safely cooked, hot food must be kept hot at 140° F or warmer to prevent bacterial growth.

*Within 2 hours of cooking food or after it is removed from an appliance keeping it hot, leftovers must be refrigerated. Throw away all perishable foods that have been left in room temperature for more than 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature is over 90° F, such as at an outdoor picnic during summer).*

Cover leftovers, wrap them in airtight packaging, or seal them in storage containers. These practices help keep bacteria out, retain moisture, and prevent leftovers from picking up odors from other food in the refrigerator. Immediately refrigerate or freeze the wrapped leftovers for rapid cooling.

Leftovers can be kept in the refrigerator for 3 to 4 days or frozen for 3 to 4 months. Although safe indefinitely, frozen leftovers can lose moisture and flavor when stored for longer times in the freezer.

Sometimes there are leftover "leftovers." It is safe to refreeze any food remaining after reheating previously frozen leftovers to the safe temperature of 165° F as measured with a food thermometer.

If a large container of leftovers was frozen and only a portion of it is needed, it is safe to thaw the leftovers in the refrigerator, remove the needed portion and refreeze the remainder of the thawed leftovers without reheating it.

Leftovers – When in Doubt – Throw it Out!
SPINACH PASTA
Makes: 4 servings

Ingredients:
6 ounces uncooked pasta (like penne, spirals, or macaroni)
½ cup onion, peeled and sliced
1 clove garlic, finely sliced
¾ teaspoon dried basil (if you like)
1 tablespoon vegetable or olive oil
1 medium bell pepper, cut in strips
1 can (about 13 ounces) chopped spinach, well drained; or chop up other types of low-sodium canned spinach
2 tablespoons Parmesan cheese (or other cheese, if you like)

Directions:
1. Cook pasta according to package directions; drain.
2. In a skillet, cook onion, and garlic in oil until onion is soft. If using basil, add that too. Add pepper strips; cook 3 minutes.
3. Stir in spinach; heat through.
4. Toss in pasta. If using cheese, add that too.
5. Serve immediately.

Nutrition information for 1 serving:
230 calories, Fat 35g, Saturated Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg, Carbohydrates 40g, Protein 8g, Fiber 4g, Sodium 180mg, Vitamin A 60 RAE, Vitamin C 80mg, Calcium 8mg, Iron 20mg.


EAT SMART LIVE LONG

The program “Eat Smart Live Long” developed for older adults, list two key behaviors that will improve your health and quality of life.

1. Eat at least 3 ½ cups of fruits and vegetables every day (1 ½ cups fruit and 2 cups vegetables).
2. Participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activities most days of the week.

While the oven’s hot, make two loaves!

PEANUT BUTTER BREAD
Yield: 10 servings

Ingredients:
2 eggs
1 ½ cup UHT milk or reconstituted Instant milk
1/3 cup sugar (granulated)
1 cup peanut butter
1 ¾ cups flour (all purpose)
1 tablespoon baking powder
½ teaspoon salt

Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease or spray with non-stick spray, a loaf pan.
2. In a large bowl, beat eggs. Add milk, sugar and peanut butter. Mix well.
3. In a separate bowl combine flour, baking powder, and salt. Mix thoroughly.
4. Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients. Mix only enough to moisten all ingredients.
5. Pour into prepared pan. (Pan will be half full). Bake 1 hour.

Nutrition information for 1 slice, 1/10 of recipe:
260 calories, Fat 14g, Saturated Fat 3g, Cholesterol 40mg, Carbohydrates 24g, Protein 11g, Fiber 2g, Sodium 300mg, Vitamin A 2%, Vitamin C 0%, Calcium 15%, Iron 10%.


Tip

The fruit juice from drained peaches or other canned fruit can be thickened with flour or cornstarch and used as a fruit sauce for pancake, waffles, or ice cream.