

Food Safety in a Power Outage

If there's one thing Oklahomans know about it is dicey weather that can cause power outages. There's something else Oklahomans know about ... the importance of being prepared.

As we come into the season of freezing weather and possible ice storms that can render entire towns without electricity, Christi Evans, Oklahoma State University Extension assistant food safety specialist, has some tips for both before and during an outage.

"As in most circumstances, being prepared ahead of time is important. Consumers who don't have an appliance thermometer in both the refrigerator and the freezer should purchase them now," Evans said. "Refrigerators should run at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below, while the freezer should be set at 0 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Knowing and monitoring the temperature in the refrigerator and freezer will help determine if food is safe after the power goes out."

No matter what news channel Oklahomans watch, the weather professionals on the local news will keep residents informed with up-to-date severe weather forecasts. In the event of severe weather, Evans suggests checking the refrigerator to see if any items such as meat, poultry or leftovers can be moved to the freezer. Frozen foods will keep longer when the power goes out.

It's a good idea to have ice and ice packs on hand which may be useful later on to help keep foods cold.



"Consumers can make their own ice containers by repurposing empty water or milk jugs by filling them with water and freezing," she said. "These containers can be stored in the freezer to fill space. This will help keep foods safe longer during a power outage. They can also be used in coolers to keep foods cold."

When the power goes out, try to keep the refrigerator and freezer doors shut to maintain the cold temperature inside. If a refrigerator remains closed, it will keep foods at the proper temperature for about four hours. Evans said if the outage is prolonged, refrigerated foods such as meat, eggs, milk, poultry, fish, soft cheeses, salads made with mayonnaise, cooked pasta and other leftovers should be discarded.

Foods in a full freezer should stay safe for up to 48 hours. The time limit is 24 hours for a half-full freezer.

"Be sure to check the appliance thermometer in the freezer. If the food is at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below or has ice crystals, the food can be refrozen or thawed and cooked," she said. "Check each package of food individually. Any foods that have an unusual odor, color or texture should be discarded. Never taste food to determine if it's safe."

A good rule of thumb to follow is if perishable foods have been kept at 40 degrees

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Pickled Pepperoncini Deviled Eggs

Fahrenheit or above for two or more hours, they should be discarded. Evans said this timeframe is cut to an hour when the temperatures are above 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

“Whether it’s during a power outage or not, it is important to always wash your hands before handling foods,” Evans said. “Foods such as meat, poultry, fish and eggs must be cooked to a safe minimum temperature to help ensure food safety.”

Here is a handy internal food temperature chart.

Ingredients

6 hard-boiled large eggs
 1 jar (16 ounces) garlic and dill pepperoncini
 1 medium ripe avocado, peeled and pitted
 1 tablespoon minced fresh cilantro, divided
 1/4 teaspoon salt
 1/8 teaspoon pepper
 1 tablespoon minced sweet red pepper
 1/4 teaspoon chili powder

Directions

1. Cut eggs lengthwise in half. Remove yolks, reserving whites. Mash yolks. Stir in 1 teaspoon minced garlic from the pepperoncini jar and 2 teaspoons pepperoncini juice. Add 3 tablespoons minced pepperoncini and the whole avocado; mash with a fork until smooth. Stir in 2 teaspoons cilantro, salt and pepper.
2. Cut a small hole in the tip of a pastry bag or in a corner of a food-safe plastic bag; insert a medium star tip. Transfer avocado mixture to bag. Pipe into egg whites, swirling it upward to resemble Christmas trees. Sprinkle trees with minced red pepper, chili powder and remaining cilantro.
3. Cut open and seed one larger pepperoncini; slice into 12 small diamond shapes to top Christmas trees. Refrigerate, covered, until serving. Save remaining pepperoncini for another use.

Yield: 1 dozen

Nutrition

1 stuffed egg half:
 59 calories
 4g fat (1g saturated fat)
 93mg cholesterol
 125mg sodium
 1g carbohydrate (0 sugars, 1g fiber)
 3g protein



| Product | Minimum Internal Temperature & Rest Time |
|---|--|
| Beef, Pork, Veal & Lamb Steaks, chops, roasts | 145 °F (62.8 °C) and allow to rest for at least 3 minutes |
| Ground Meats | 160 °F (71.1 °C) |
| Ground Poultry | 165 °F |
| Ham, fresh or smoked (uncooked) | 145 °F (62.8 °C) and allow to rest for at least 3 minutes |
| Fully Cooked Ham (to reheat) | Reheat cooked hams packaged in USDA-inspected plants to 140 °F (60 °C) and all others to 165 °F (73.9 °C). |
| All Poultry (breasts, whole bird, legs, thighs, wings, ground poultry, giblets, and stuffing) | 165 °F (73.9 °C) |
| Eggs | 160 °F (71.1 °C) |
| Fish & Shellfish | 145 °F (62.8 °C) |
| Leftovers | 165 °F (73.9 °C) |
| Casseroles | 165 °F (73.9 °C) |

Financial Wellness Month

January is Financial Wellness Month. Financial Wellness Month encourages us to take a step back and reset our financial practices after the holiday season and focus on building our funds up. Financial Awareness Month isn't only about the money we budget on a day-to-day basis, though: it also includes the opportunity to learn more about support options and systems, retirement plans, health savings, and more. Investing in financial knowledge is invaluable, and January offers the perfect time to take advantage of our financial learning opportunities. Join us this month as we celebrate!

Budget Blast Challenge



This month, we'll put our budgeting skills to practice with this challenge.

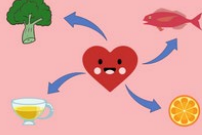
1. Chart your weekly spending every week this month.
2. Collect coupons for necessities like groceries and household items.
3. Cut out anything that isn't absolutely necessary.
4. Sell unwanted items and save the money you earn.
5. Start a "fun fund" for dining out, movies, or events.
6. Select versatile grocery ingredients that can be used in up to five recipes this week.
7. Start a family finance practice with a classic cash piggy bank or jar to help any kids visualize their savings.

February is Heart Month

For more information on National High Blood Pressure

HEART HEALTH MONTH

What food makes your heart happy?



1 in every **4** people die of heart disease each year in the United States.



Your heart is the hardest working organ in your body



Visit the American Heart Association, www.heart.org, for more information.

Family & Consumer Sciences helps communities, families, youth and individuals address issues of health, wealth and well-being through research-based Extension education and programs that are proven to work.



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Fireplace Safety



As with any appliance that works with high heat, regular maintenance of both the appliance and chimney is necessary for proper operation and to make sure there are no potential fire hazards.

- Screens should be used in front of open fireplaces, to keep sparks from flying out onto combustible materials.
- Fireplaces should be inspected each year to verify firebox integrity. Masonry fireplaces should not have cracks in the mortar or brick.
- With catalytic wood stoves, the combustor needs to be in good working order.
- In non-catalytic stoves, baffles should be inspected.

If you are not sure what should be inspected, contact a professional. If you have someone clean your chimney, they are often trained to inspect the stove or fireplace as well.

Strengthening Oklahoma Families is a bi-monthly publication of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service. The information given herein is supplied with the understanding no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Cooperative Extension is implied.

Dates to Remember

January

- ❖ 10th - OHCE Executive Meeting 10 a.m.
- ❖ 15th - Office Closed Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- ❖ 19th - OHCE Craft Day - Ugly Quilt Demonstration
- ❖ 24th - OHCE Winter Council

February

- ❖ 14th - OHCE Executive Meeting 10 a.m.
- ❖ 14th-17th - Wagoner County Livestock Show
- ❖ 19th - Office Closed President's Day

March

- ❖ 15th - OHCE Craft Day
- ❖ 26th - NE District Meeting in Glenpool
- ❖ 29th - Office Closed Good Friday

April

- ❖ 10th - OHCE Executive Meeting 10 a.m.
- ❖ 19th - OHCE Craft Day
- ❖ 24th - OHCE Spring Council

Winter Weather weather for January/February/March

- If at 8 a.m. on the day of program it is below 32 degrees F and there is no precipitation the program will go as planned.
- If at 8 a.m. the temperature is below 32 degrees F and any form of precipitation is falling the program will be postponed.

Wagoner County OHCE Groups

In-Towners

2nd Tuesday of Month, 10 a.m.
Yorkshire Village, Wagoner

Shahan

3rd Wednesday of Month, 10 a.m.
Wagoner County Fair Building

Starlight

1st Thursday of month, 7 p.m.
Individual homes



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