



## Ladies Have You Heard?

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### Food Alert

An old method of caramelizing sweetened condensed milk to make caramel pudding is experiencing a new surge of attention. This potentially dangerous method calls for heating an unopened 14-ounce can of sweetened condensed milk in the oven or in a kettle of boiling water. Borden, Inc., the leading manufacturer of the product, reports that this method of caramelization may cause injury and should not be used.

Because heat causes expansion, if any unopened can of food (no matter what the contents) is heated in boiling water, in an oven, in an electric cooker or over a flame, the can could explode. Serious injury to anyone nearby could result. Each can of Eagle Brand Sweetened Condensed Milk is labeled with a caution that says "Never heat unopened can."

To prepare the delicious and well-known caramel pudding easily and safely, simply follow these simple instructions. Oven Method: Preheat the oven to 425°F. Open one 14-ounce can of sweetened condensed milk and pour contents into a glass pie plate. Cover with aluminum foil; place in

a shallow pan of hot water and bake for one to one and one-half hours, or until thick and light caramel-colored. Remove the foil; cool, then chill before serving.

Stovetop Method: Open one 14-ounce can of sweetened condensed milk and pour contents into top of double boiler; cover. Place over boiling water; simmer water one to one and one-half hours or until thick and light colored. Beat until smooth. Cool. Chill thoroughly.

### Be Safe Not Sorry

Summer weather means picnics and other outdoor meals. Don't spoil an enjoyable event by making people sick from food poisoning.

On a three-hour trip to a picnic site on a 90-degree day, food that starts out chilled can become dangerously warm. If you wait an hour or two to serve it, there is an even greater opportunity for harmful bacteria to grow — and a greater chance of food poisoning. Remember that bacteria grows best in warm, moist conditions.

For picnics and long distance trips, plan meals with less perishable foods or transport foods in insulated containers with plenty of ice.

When preparing food for picnics,

wash your hands after handling raw chicken to prevent the spread of bacteria to other foods. Clean your cutting board with soap and hot water after each use.

Carry perishable foods such as fried chicken, potato salad, tuna salad and hamburger in insulated bags or chests. Be sure to use plenty of ice, dry ice or reusable cold packs. An insulated container alone is not enough, especially on a hot summer day.

Cold foods such as cream pies, seafood and dishes made with eggs, meat and poultry must be kept COLD (below 40°F.). Do not allow these foods to stand at room temperature more than two hours.

Foods meant to be served hot, such as meats, seafood, and poultry must be kept hot (above 140°F.). Bacteria grow best in lukewarm foods. Never let these foods stand at room temperature for more than two hours.

Food poisoning can cause diarrhea, vomiting, stomach cramps and other unpleasant symptoms which can last for several hours or several days. In young children and elderly people, the symptoms can be more severe. Often people mistake food poisoning for a simple "bug" or virus. The real cause may be food that was not properly handled, prepared or served.

Picnics and outdoor meals are fun, but need careful planning. Decide how many people you can

## Vegetables shouldn't be blanched in microwave

NEWARK, Del. — Should microwaves be used to blanch vegetables? No, says University of Delaware extension foods specialist Dr. Sue Snider.

Although microwave blanching may seem to save time, effort and energy, procedures currently available do not always result in a desirable quality after freezing. Because of uneven heating, Snider says, parts of some vegetables may be adequately blanched while others are underblanched. Rapid

heating may also produce an overcooked product.

All fresh vegetables except onions and green peppers must be blanched before freezing to preserve nutrients, flavor, texture and color. Traditionally, blanching is done in boiling water or steam for specified times. Although commercial literature promotes blanching vegetables in the microwave, Snider says three recent research studies show the results to be inferior to blanching by water or steam.

Asparagus, green beans, peas and sweet corn all retained more vitamin C and better color when blanched conventionally, the foods specialists says. Microwave blanching tests produced tough broccoli, carrots and cauliflower as well as limp zucchini. Green beans were not only tough, but had a grassy odor and off-flavor.

safely serve by preparing food quickly and keeping it cold (or hot) until serving time. Also consider where the food will be prepared, the size and number of your cooking utensils and your supply of insulated food containers. With careful planning and preparation, you can prevent food poisoning.



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