



Heat Your Food Thoroughly for Safe Eating!

Last month I attended a microwave seminar. Two of the subjects we discussed are important, so I wanted to share them with you right away. The first is a matter of food safety.

During microbiological studies in the microwave, scientists put microorganisms, such as salmonella or trichina, on the food to see how well they would be destroyed by microwave heating. These bacteria might be on our food and should be killed or inactivated by heating or cooking food before serving.

The scientists discovered that microwave heating of food might not kill bacteria as completely as range heating. This happened because some of the ovens had problems with uneven heating. So not all areas of the food got as hot as they should have in the short heating times.

They also pointed out that people tend to eat microwaved food at lower temperatures than range heated food. (Because we're in a hurry and expect it faster?) Therefore, even if the oven heated evenly, the food might not have reached the safest temperature.

Now don't panic! This doesn't mean that a microwave oven is unsafe. It does mean, however, that you need to make sure the food you are heating in the microwave gets thoroughly hot before serving. Food that has reached a uniform temperature of 165 degrees will be much safer to eat than food that has only been warmed to 145 or 150 degrees.

The following steps were recommended to increase the safety of food in your own kitchen:

— Use lower microwave power levels (50% to 70%) for cooking or reheating food. These lower power levels will take longer, but give you more evenly heated food.

— Cover the food during warming; any cover is better than none. Casserole lids, plastic wrap, and oven cooking bags trap the steam in with the food. Waxed paper, paper towels, napkins, etc. help hold the heat near the surface of the food, but let steam escape.

— Stir or rearrange the food at least once during heating. This is especially important if you do use high power.

— Make sure the food is really hot, 160 to 170 degrees. Don't eat it lukewarm just because you are "starving" or in a hurry!

— If you have leftovers, or fix a plate to reheat for someone later, refrigerate the food immediately and keep refrigerated until you reheat it.

Here is one other bit of informa-

tion to share with those of you who have micro-convection or combination ovens: Don't use any plastic cookware in your oven when you are cooking with both microwaves and heat together. The combination of the hot air and microwave energy may cause the plastic cookware to melt, since the utensil may reach extremely high temperatures.

Plastic cookware is safe for microwaves alone. Some plastic cookware is also safe in hot oven temperatures (the safe temperature is marked on the bottom of the container). It's the combination of hot air and microwaves that may cause the melting.

For combination cooking, use heatproof glass or ceramic cookware. In some combination ovens, metal pans may also be used. Follow your oven manual recommendations.

Enough of this hot and heavy stuff, it's summer! Use your microwave for this light, cool, and delicious dessert.

Light Strawberry Pudding
 1 cup water
 1 3-ounce package strawberry gelatin
 5 large ice cubes (or 3/4 cup cold water)
 1 8-ounce carton nonfat strawberry yogurt
 1 cup sliced fresh strawberries
 4 to 5 whole berries for garnish, if desired

1. Microwave water on high for 2 to 3 minutes, until boiling. Pour over gelatin (in a bowl!) and stir until dissolved. Add ice cubes and stir until melted. Chill in refrigerator for about 30 minutes until partially set (will mound in soft floppy lumps if you stir it).

2. Beat gelatin with an electric mixer for about a minute until full of air bubbles and fluffy. Beat in yogurt until smooth. Stir in strawberries.

3. Spoon into serving dishes. Garnish top with whole strawberry, if desired. Chill. Makes 4 large or 5 medium servings.

Variations: Other fruit flavors may be substituted. Plain yogurt may be substituted for the fruit-flavored, but makes a tarter dessert. Sugar-free gelatin may be used. Sliced fruit may be omitted.

— If you are in a hurry, and want to eliminate the 30 minute chilling time in step 1, this dessert can be mixed in a blender, but the final texture is not as smooth. Mix gelatin and boiling water on low speed in a blender until dissolved. Stir in ice cubes until partially melted, then blend. Add yogurt and blend until smooth, stir in fruit. Pour into serving dishes and chill.

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NorlebcO 4-H Dairy Club

The NorlebcO 4-H Dairy Club held its annual showing and fitting day June 20 at Vince Wagners. The Elco dairy clubs also participated.

Club leaders gave a demonstration on trimming hooves and clip-

ping show cattle. Members clipped an animal as they would for a show. Later in the day, members showed cattle for preparation for the local fair.

The club's next meeting will be held later this month

Montgomery 4-H's Win Horse Judging Awards

CREAMERY ~ Jennifer Meyer of Gilbertsville won top honors in her class at the Southeast Pa. 4-H Horse Judging Contest. Jennifer

was named the winner in the senior "Oral Reasons" category and placed as second high individual in the contest.

Michele Roth of Collegeville was named third place individual in the contest and also won fourth place in senior "Oral Reasons." Dani Douglas of Royersford placed ninth Overall in the contest.

In the junior division, ages 8 to 13, Jill Johnson of Gilbertsville took fourth place honors while Jamie Meyer of Gilbertsville won fifth place.

The Montgomery County team placed second overall in the program, just 4 points behind the winning team from Cumberland County. The team was coached by Joan McFarland of Collegeville and Deb Specht of Norristown.

According to County Agent Nancy Kadwill, horse judging helps members to learn about proper horse confirmation, what the judge looks for in performance classes, decision-making skills and public speaking.

In the contest, members actually judge and place several classes and then must tell the official judge why they placed the class the way they did. The senior team members are continuing to practice and hope to compete in the state-level judging contest to be held at Penn State in August.

Delaware Teen Conference Set For August

NEWARK, Del. ~ A Delaware 4-H Teen Conference will be held at the University of Delaware campus in Newark, Aug. 7 to 9. The theme of the conference is "Discover Yourself: Live, Learn and Lead." It is designed to help teens learn about themselves and others.

The event will include workshops, discussion groups, guest speakers and visits with University of Delaware faculty members to learn about their research and education programs. Topics to be discussed will be self-esteem, drug

and alcohol abuse, personal attitudes, self-image and setting and achieving goals.

In addition to a Saturday night dance, participants will be given time for free recreation.

The 4-H conference is a chance for teens to have fun, spend time with others and share ideas. 4-H is the youth education branch of the Cooperative Extension System. For more information and registration forms contact a county extension office.

Registration for the event is due by July 20.

4-H's Host Exchange Participants

During the week of July 6 Cumberland County 4-H's participated in an Interstate Exchange. A group of county 4-H's hosted a delegation from Thomas County, Georgia.

The group arrived Sunday evening, July 5 at the Cumberland County Agricultural Extension office. During their stay, they toured the state capitol, attended a musical at Allenberry Playhouse,

took a walking tour of Carlisle and toured a local farm. The group left Friday, July 10.

The visitors will host the Cumberland 4-H's on an exchange next summer.

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 22
 Placing of Exhibits 1-9 P.M.
 (Made or Grown Between July 1986-1987)
 (An Entry Fee of \$2.00 will be charged for an exhibitor's number)

Bar-B-Q Chicken 6 P.M.
 Pie Eating Contest 7 P.M.
 Demolition Derby (\$5.00) . . 7 P.M.
 Music by "John Hambley Band" 8 P.M.

THURSDAY, JULY 23
 Judging of Entries . . Starts 9 A.M.
 Placing of Baked Goods and Flowers 9:30-11 A.M.
 Black and White Cattle Judging 10 A.M.
 Bar-B-Q Chicken 6 P.M.
 BMX Bike Races 7 P.M.
 Music by "Broadway Buckaroos" 8 P.M.

FRIDAY, JULY 24
 Cattle Judging (4-H and FFA) 10 A.M.
 Steer Entries (4-H and FFA) 4 P.M.
 Bar-B-Q Chicken 6 P.M.
 Tractor Pull 7 P.M.
 (Purse B Modified & Stock—\$5 00)
 Music by "Sonny Miller" . . . 8 P.M.

SATURDAY, JULY 25
 Sheep Show Open 9 A.M.
 Safe Tractor Driving (4-H and FFA) 9 A.M.
 Steer Show (4-H and FFA) . 1 P.M.
 Bar-B-Q Chicken 5 P.M.
 Parkettes Gymnastics Team 6:30 P.M.
 Lehigh Valley 1/4 Midget Racers 7 P.M.
 Watermelon Eating Contest 7 P.M.
 Music by "Twitty Fever" . . 8 P.M.
 50/50 Drawing— Plainfield Farmers Assn. Midnight