



## Have You Heard?

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**Plan For Safe Party Leftovers**  
The party's over. It was great seeing old friends and neighbors, but they didn't eat as much as you'd planned. What are you going to do with all those leftovers?

The answer depends on the type of food left over and, if perishable, how carefully it was kept cold or hot during preparation and serving.

The chips and crackers will be good as long as they don't become too stale. Leftovers should be repackaged in airtight containers

and stored in a dry place.

Raw relishes may be a little limp but can be revived if washed in cold running water and kept in the refrigerator in cold water.

Most bakery goods that don't have a cream cheese or fruit filling also should be saveable. This includes breads, rolls, non cream-filled cakes, candies and cookies. Since these items tend to dry out quickly, the best place to store them is in the freezer.

Dips, spreads, cheese balls, quiches, cold cuts, meatballs, egg nog and other moist protein-rich foods may be another matter.

While you partied, bacteria may have been growing on these to the point where it's more economical to put the food down the garbage disposal than risk missing work because you put the food down your stomach and ended up with food poisoning.

Through careful planning, you can avoid having to throw out food at the end of a buffet, open house or party.

Bacteria that cause food poisoning need a moist food source to grow on, time, and a temperature conducive to growth. Bacteria grow best on moist protein foods. Each year, many cases of food poisoning are reported from holiday dishes such as cold meat cuts, turkey stuffing, potato and meat salads, cheese and meat dips, cream or pumpkin pies and egg nog that have been left at room temperature too long. Not only do these foods contain meat, poultry, eggs or dairy products in the moist medium that bacteria love, but because they are handled more than other foods during preparation, it's easy for germs to spread

from our hands to the food in the first place.

Bacteria grow at temperatures between 40 and 140 degrees F. To avoid such growth, moist protein-containing foods should be kept hot (above 140 degrees F.) or cold (below 40 degrees F.) during preparation and serving.

If you are preparing a hot dish long ahead of serving time, place it in the refrigerator in a shallow container within 30 minutes after cooking; then reheat thoroughly just before serving. Cream pies also should be refrigerated if they are to be served more than two hours after coming out of the oven.

Egg nog is food that needs special care. Concerns about raw eggs can be handled by using pasteurized eggs, commercial egg nog or a recipe that cooks the egg-milk mixture to 160 degrees F.

These precautions, however, still are not enough to prevent a punch bowl of egg nog that has been allowed to set at room temperature on a buffet table all afternoon or evening from becoming a health hazard. To insure safety, egg nog needs to be kept and served well chilled. One way to

keep it well chilled without diluting it with melting ice is to fill ice cube trays with the egg nog mixture and freeze; then use the frozen cubes in the punch bowl to keep the egg nog cold. Also, it is wise to use a small punch bowl that will need to be replenished often from the refrigerator.

Like egg nog, other cold, moist protein foods should be kept cold throughout the serving time. If this is not possible, at least serve the food in a small enough serving container that is not left standing at room temperature for more than an hour or two.

For a simple yet elegant finale to a holiday dinner, serve a dessert cheese 'n fruit tray: Place a wedge of Blue cheese to the side and bank with green grapes and small round crackers. At the front of the tray, arrange an assortment of Cheddar cheese slices and Brick cheese sticks. Complete the cheese arrangement with a whole, red-waxed Gouda and half-moon slices of Provolone cheese. Round out the fruit selection with slices of pear, grapes and apple.



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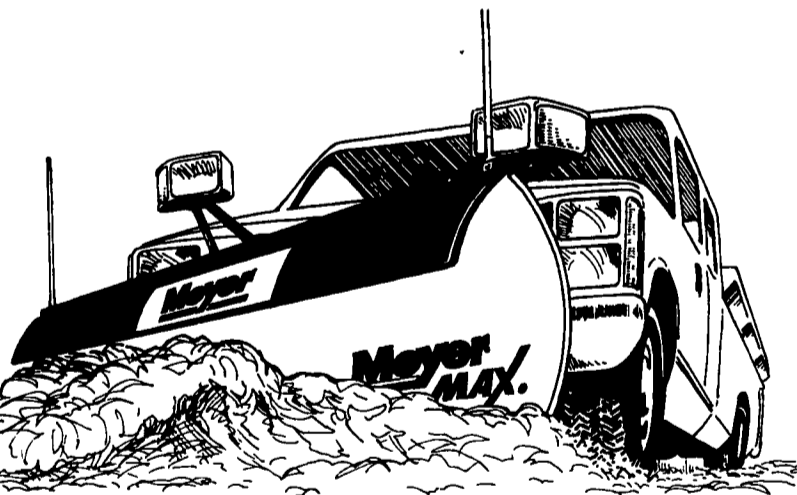
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