



Cooking for Groups and Potlucks - Food Safety Guide

Food Safety in [4 Steps](#):

1. Clean:

- Wash hands, utensils, and surfaces often.
- Wash hands with soap and water, scrub for 20 seconds.
- Wash fruits and vegetables, but **not** meat, poultry, or eggs.

2. Separate:

- Use separate cutting boards for raw meat.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs away from other foods.
- Store raw meat in sealed containers in the refrigerator.

3. Cook:

- Use a food thermometer to make sure your food is [cooked properly](#).
- Hold food above 135°F after cooking.
- Follow microwave cooking instructions written on packaging.

4. Chill:

- Refrigerate food promptly.
- Keep refrigerators at 41°F or below.
- Thaw food in the refrigerator or under cold running water.

Plan Ahead:

- Have extra utensils on hand for serving.
- Divide the amount of food you've made into small, portioned containers and replace them on your serving station often.
- Keep additional containers cold in the refrigerator.
- Keep hot dishes in a crock pot or Nesco roaster.
TIP: use your stove top or oven to cook/reheat food to 165°F before placing it in the crock pot or Nesco roaster.

Temperature Tips:

- Hot foods: Keep at 135°F or warmer. Use a thermometer.
- Cold foods: Keep at 41°F or less. Use ice if food will be out for more than 2 hours.

Keep It Fresh:

- Don't add new food to an already filled serving dish; replace empty dishes with fresh ones.
- Provide tongs and serving utensils for each dish. Bacteria can spread from hands.

4-Hour Rule:

- Throw away food that has been sitting out.
- Food left out at room temperature—without being kept hot or cold—is only safe to eat for up to 4 hours.

Safer Recipes:

- Start with pasteurized eggs or heat egg mixtures to 160°F.
- Purchase prepared food from a store, deli, caterer, etc.; food from licensed kitchens is often safer.
- Use preformed hamburger patties and pre-cooked brats.