



Tips for Handling Leftovers

When in doubt, throw it out!

Discard any perishable food that has been left at room temperature for more than 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature is above 90°F).



Storing leftovers

Refrigerate or freeze other remaining leftovers immediately. Use low shallow containers to help cool foods more quickly. Avoid stacking containers in the freezer or refrigerator. This keeps cold air circulating.

Length of storage

Use cooked leftovers stored in the refrigerator within 3-4 days. Freeze foods that will not be consumed within that time. Frozen foods can remain safe indefinitely, however not all foods retain the same quality when frozen. Refer to the [Cold Food Storage Chart](#) for more information.

Thawing leftovers

Never thaw food at room temperature.

- Thaw food in the refrigerator.
- Thawing in the microwave and cook immediately.
- If food is in an airtight wrapper:
 - Make sure the sink or container that will hold food is clean, fill with **cold** water, and then submerge food. Change the water every 30 minutes or
 - Submerge the food in constantly running cold water.

Remember to refrigerate or cook food immediately after thawing.

Reheating leftovers

It is important to reheat leftovers rapidly to 165°F or hotter before serving. Check temperature using a food thermometer to make sure an adequate temperature is reached. To reheat:

- Place on the range.
- Use the oven, set no lower than 325°F.
- Use the microwave. Be sure to stir, cover and rotate for even heating.

