



HEAT-AND-EAT NATION

Hot Tips for Heatable Eatables



Whether you're a leftover lover or more the take-out type, heat, eat (and repeat!) with home food safety "dish" from the American Dietetic Association



Refrigerator Raider

When it comes to refrigerating leftovers, Americans are losing their cool! More than a third of people typically keep their refrigerator set at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or higher, and 41 percent admit they don't know the proper temperature to which their refrigerator should be set. Don't let bacteria shorten your leftovers' life — use a refrigerator thermometer to make sure your fridge is always set below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Repeater Eater

Nearly nine out of 10 people consistently reheat leftovers before eating them — versus nibbling them cold right out of the fridge. But 97 percent of leftover lovers do not use a meat thermometer to ensure doneness of foods. Next time you reheat, use a meat thermometer to make sure food reaches the proper internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit before you eat.



Pizza Prowler

Believe it or not, 36 percent of people admit to eating leftover pizza from the night before...even if it hasn't been refrigerated! Pizza, like all perishable foods, follows the two-hour rule: If pizza has been sitting at room temperature for more than two hours, toss it!

Dinner Defroster

Nearly half of Americans use their microwaves to defrost frozen meat. Since juices from raw meat may carry harmful bacteria, dinner defrosters should take special precautions to avoid cross-contamination. Use separate plates — one to defrost meat and another to serve cooked meat — or wash plates in warm, soapy water between uses to eliminate bacteria.

Doggie Bag Diner

Who says you can't take it with you? When eating out, nearly 40 percent of restaurant patrons leave at least some of the time with a doggie bag or leftovers to eat for another meal. If you're a doggie bag diner, write the date of purchase on your take-out container — and remember to discard leftovers within three to five days.



Microwave Maniac

The most popular use for microwaves is reheating leftovers — but if your microwave isn't equipped with a turntable, you may need to take extra precautions to make sure leftover food is cooked throughout. Rotate food one-half turn midway through the heating time and give it a stir to eliminate cold spots where bacteria can survive. Then let food stand for one minute before inserting a meat thermometer to ensure food has reached the proper internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

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