

# Food and Fitness

## Cleaning Your Refrigerator Before the Holiday

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Have you ever gone to someone else's house and been served food made from spoiled cheese? I know I sure have on more than one occasion. Now, I am not going to name names, but the fear of eating spoiled food at their house always has me on edge when a gathering is at their home. It is basically a running joke of who is going to try the food first.



In all seriousness, making sure your refrigerator is cleaned properly before going into the holiday season can eliminate or reduce the issue of having spoiled food being served to your guests. It is important to clean out your refrigerator on a regular basis because dirty refrigerators can become breeding grounds for bacteria that can cause foodborne illnesses.

Refrigerator cleaning is often a neglected chore. It requires many steps and detailed cleaning work. The first step is emptying out the refrigerator. While you are emptying the refrigerator, you need to inspect all of the contents. Looking for expired food to throw away is an obvious one. Also, double checking all items — even ones that are not expired — because they can still sometimes go bad before the expiration date. Often, if you have something lurking that has become rotten or spoiled, it can easily transfer to the other items. Once you have inspected all the food items, place the items into a thermal bag or cooler while you begin the detailed work of cleaning. Some packages or contain-

## Cleaning Your Refrigerator Before the Holiday

Next, you will remove any shelves and drawers and wash those with hot, soapy water. You can dry them with a towel or let them air dry while you work on the inside of the refrigerator. Then, you want to use soapy water and clean all of the surfaces with a sponge or cloth, cleaning from the top down. Start with the ceiling and walls, then the shelves (both top and bottom), and work your way to the bottom of the refrigerator. Using a cheap, clean toothbrush or scrubber to get into cracks can be a helpful trick. If you have any stains, you can mix equal parts of baking soda and white vinegar and apply it to the stained area and scrub. Towel dry any areas that are wet once completed.

Once you have cleaned with soapy water, close the refrigerator, and clean the outside, including the door seal, with a surface-safe cleaner depending on the type of refrigerator you have. If you have a water dispenser, use a vinegar-based cleaner, and then dry the surface. If there is a removable tray, wash it with hot soapy water.

The next step is to sanitize. Even though you have cleaned your refrigerator, sanitizing is an important step because cleaning removes dirt and germs, while sanitizing reduces the number of germs that are on the surface to a safer level. Use a solution of 1 tablespoon of bleach in one gallon of water and sanitize the inside of refrigerator, working from the top down. Once you have cleaned and sanitized, make sure it is fully dry before adding the items back into the refrigerator.

Food safety is a very important part of hosting a gathering or an event for the holiday. We already know that this time of year getting sick is more common, but let's keep our guests free from getting sick from unsafe food by preparing ahead of time and cleaning out the refrigerator.



# YOUR MAP TO A FOOD-SAFE HOLIDAY

Follow some simple food safety advice to keep you and your guests feeling festive this winter.

## PROPER PREPPING

Just as you have a procedure for storing your holiday gifts when you get home, you should have a system for storing your food.

**CHILL**  
Make sure your fridge is set at or below **40 °F**  
Chill perishable groceries within two hours of shopping

Store raw meats in a container or dish to prevent juices from leaking and set below ready-to-eat foods.

**CLEAN**  
Wash your hands for **20 SECONDS** with warm water and soap!

**SEPARATE**  
Be sure to separate raw meat from ready-to-eat foods and dishes.

**Don't forget:** You need two thermometers. One for the fridge to ensure food is stored at 40 °F. One for food, particularly meat, to ensure it's cooked to the right temperature.

## WELCOME TO Roastville

Always use a food thermometer to check that different holiday meats have been cooked to the right internal temperature.

- GROUND BEEF 160 °F
- DUCK 165 °F
- TURKEY 165 °F
- GOOSE 165 °F
- VEAL\* 145 °F
- PORK\* 145 °F
- LAMB\* 145 °F
- STEAK\* 145 °F

**YIELD**

\*Don't forget resting time!  
Beef, veal, lamb, and pork should rest for **3 MINUTES** before carving or consuming.

## HITTING THE ROAD

If you're bringing a dish to a get-together with coworkers, family or friends this holiday season, make sure you are transporting food safely.

40 °F

140 °F

## DANGER ZONE



Perishable food kept in the Danger Zone (between 40 - 140 °F) for longer than 2 hours should be thrown out.

140 °F + 40 °F = 2 hours

### KEEP COLD FOOD COLD

When transporting cold dishes, place items in a cooler with ice or gel packs to keep food at or below

**40 °F**

### KEEP HOT FOOD HOT

Keep hot foods at or above

**140 °F**

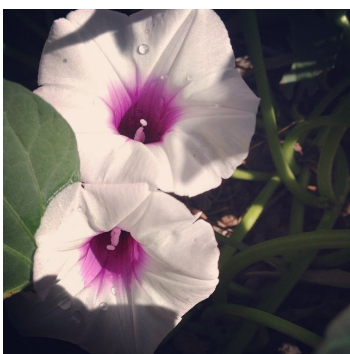
by wrapping dishes in insulation bags or towels and newspaper.

### EXCEPTIONS

to Danger Zone include ready-to-eat items like



For more food safety tips, go to [FoodSafety.gov](http://FoodSafety.gov)



## Vegetable—Sweet Potato

A sweet potato is a large, edible root that belongs in the morning glory family. It is different than a white potato that belongs in the edible tuber of the nightshade family. They are also different than a yam, which belongs in the edible tubers in the lily family. However, often yams in the grocery store are actually a variety of the sweet potato.

Sweet potatoes can be grown in a mix of colors. They can be white, cream, yellow, orange, reddish purple, and deep purple, orange being the most popular color of all the varieties grown. The orange sweet potatoes are the richest in beta-carotene, which has many healthy benefits. Even though we typically eat the root, the stems are shoots of the sweet potato and are often eaten in other countries.

When cooking a sweet potato, it can often enhance the natural sweetness, like when roasting. Boiling sweet potatoes with the skin will help them to retain more nutrients like beta-carotene and vitamin C.

As for nutrition, the sweet potato contains vitamins such as beta-carotene, vitamin A, vitamin C, and a number of B vitamins. It also contains minerals such as manganese, copper, potassium, and phosphorus.

WHAT IS THIS FOOD MADE OF?



- 76.8% Water 151.6g
- 2% Protein 4g
- 21% Carbs 41.4g
- 0.2% Fat 0.3g
- 0% Alcohol 0g

WHERE DO THE CALORIES COME FROM?



180  
CALORIES

- 9% Protein
- 90% Carbs
- 1% Fat
- 0% Alcohol

### Minerals

	— = missing data	%DV
Weight	200g	
Calcium	76mg	6%
Iron, Fe	1.4mg	8%
Potassium, K	950mg	20%
Magnesium	54mg	13%
Phosphorus, P	108mg	9%
Sodium	72mg	3%
Zinc, Zn	0.64mg	6%
Copper, Cu	0.32mg	36%
Manganese	0.99mg	43%
Selenium, Se	0.4mcg	1%

# Nutrition Facts

## Baked Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potato, cooked, baked in skin, flesh, without salt

Serving Size:

1 x 1 cup ( 200g) ▼



### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size

1 cup (200g)

**Calories 180**

% Daily Value \*

Total Fat 0.3g	0%
Saturated Fat 0.1g	1%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 72mg	3%
Total Carbohydrate 41.4g	15%
Dietary Fiber 6.6g	24%
Total Sugars 13g	26%
Includes --g Added Sugars	--%
Protein 4g	8%
Vitamin C 39.2mg	44%
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Iron 1.4mg	8%
Calcium 76mg	6%
Potassium 950mg	20%
Phosphorus 108mg	9%

\*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

### Vitamins

	-- = missing data	%DV
Weight	200g	
Vitamin A, RAE	1922mcg	214%
Vitamin C	39.2mg	44%
Thiamin (B1)	0.21mg	18%
Riboflavin (B2)	0.21mg	16%
Niacin (B3)	3mg	19%
Vitamin B5 (PA)	1.8mg	35%
Vitamin B6	0.57mg	34%
Biotin	--mcg	
Folate (B9)	12mcg	3%
Folic acid	0mcg	0%
Food Folate	12mcg	3%
Folate DFE	12mcg	3%
Choline	26.2mg	5%
Vitamin B12	0mcg	0%
Retinol	0mcg	
Carotene, beta	23018mcg	213%
Carotene, alpha	86mcg	0%
Cryptoxanthin, beta	0mcg	0%
Vitamin A, IU	38436IU	
Lycopene	0mcg	
Lut + Zeaxanthin	0mcg	
Vitamin E	1.4mg	9%
Vitamin D	0mcg	0%
Vitamin D2	--mcg	
Vitamin D3	--mcg	
Vitamin D (IU)	0IU	0%
Vitamin K	4.6mcg	4%

## Recipe—Healthy Sweet Potato Casserole with Pecan Oat Streusel

### Ingredients

- For the potatoes:
- 3 pounds sweet potatoes (about 3 large or 5 medium sweet potatoes)
- 2 1/2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- 1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk (or milk of choice)
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 egg (or can leave out if vegan)
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- pinch of allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- For the topping:
- 1/4 cup whole wheat pastry flour or regular flour (if GF, use gluten free oat flour)
- 1/3 cup rolled oats (gluten free if desired)
- 1/3 cup packed brown sugar (or coconut sugar)
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped pecans
- 3 tablespoons melted butter (or sub vegan butter or coconut oil)



Recipe Received From: [Healthy Sweet Potato Casserole | Ambitious Kitchen](#)

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F .
2. Wash sweet potatoes and use a fork to poke holes in sweet potatoes; about 4-5 pokes per potato used. Place sweet potatoes on a baking sheet lined with foil and roast for 45 minutes-1 hour or until very fork tender. Allow potatoes to cool for 5-10 minutes. Lower oven heat to 350 degrees F .
3. Spray an 8x8-inch pan, 9-inch pie pan, or a 1 1/2 quart or 2 quart oven-safe baking dish with nonstick cooking spray; set aside .
4. Cut open sweet potatoes and discard the skin, place sweet potato flesh in a large bowl and add in maple syrup, almond milk, vanilla, egg, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice and salt. Use an electric mixer to beat until smooth, adding a splash more almond milk if you want them to be creamier. Pour into prepared baking pan and smooth top .
5. To make the topping: Whisk together flour, oats, brown sugar, and pecans. Use a fork to stir in melted butter until a nice crumb forms. Sprinkle all over the top of the sweet potato mixture .
6. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until the top is slightly golden brown. Remove from oven and let cool for 5-10 minutes. Serves 8.

# Brain Exercise

Don't just exercise your body — work out your brain!

**DIRECTIONS:**  
Find and circle the  
vocabulary words  
in the grid. Look  
for them in all  
directions including  
backwards and  
diagonally.

## Harvest Festival Word Search



ANNUAL  
APPLES  
AUTUMN  
CELEBRATION  
CONTESTS  
CORN  
CORNUCOPIA  
CROPS  
FARMER  
FEASTING  
FESTIVAL  
FIELDS  
GAMES  
HARVEST



HAYRIDE  
LEAVES  
MERRIMENT  
MUSIC  
OCTOBER  
PUMPKINS  
REGIONAL  
SCARECROW  
SEPTEMBER  
SQUASH

# November 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 <i>World Vegan Day</i>	2 <i>Deviled Egg Day</i>
3 <i>Sandwich Day</i>	4 <i>Check Your Blood Pres- sure Day</i>	5 <i>U.S. General Election Day</i>	6 <i>National Nacho Day</i>	7 <i>Men Make Dinner Day</i>	8 <i>Cook Something Bold Day</i>	9 <i>World Freedom Day</i>
10 <i>Forget-Me- Not Day</i>	11 <i>Veterans Day</i>	12 <i>National French Dip Day</i>	13 <i>Caregiver Apprecia- tion Day</i>	14 <i>World Diabetes Day</i>	15 <i>Clean Your Refrigerator Day</i>	16 <i>National Fast Food Day</i>
17 <i>Homemade Bread Day</i>	18 <i>Occult Day</i>	19 <i>Play Monopoly Day</i>	20 <i>Beautiful Day</i>	21 <i>World Hello Day</i>	22 <i>Go For a Ride Day</i>	23 <i>Eat a Cranberry Day</i>
24 <i>Evolution Day</i>	25 <i>National Parfait Day</i>	26 <i>Shopping Reminder Day</i>	27 <i>National Jukebox Day</i>	28 <i>Thanksgiv- ing</i>	29 <i>Square Dance Day</i>	30 <i>Small Business Saturday</i>

## MONTHLY OBSERVATIONS

- Adoption Awareness Month
- Caregivers Appreciation Month
- Diabetes Awareness Month
- Epilepsy Month
- Model Railroad Month
- Novel Writing Month
- Native American Heritage Month
- Peanut Butter Lovers Month
- Real Jewelry Month
- Sleep Comfort Month
- World Vegan Month





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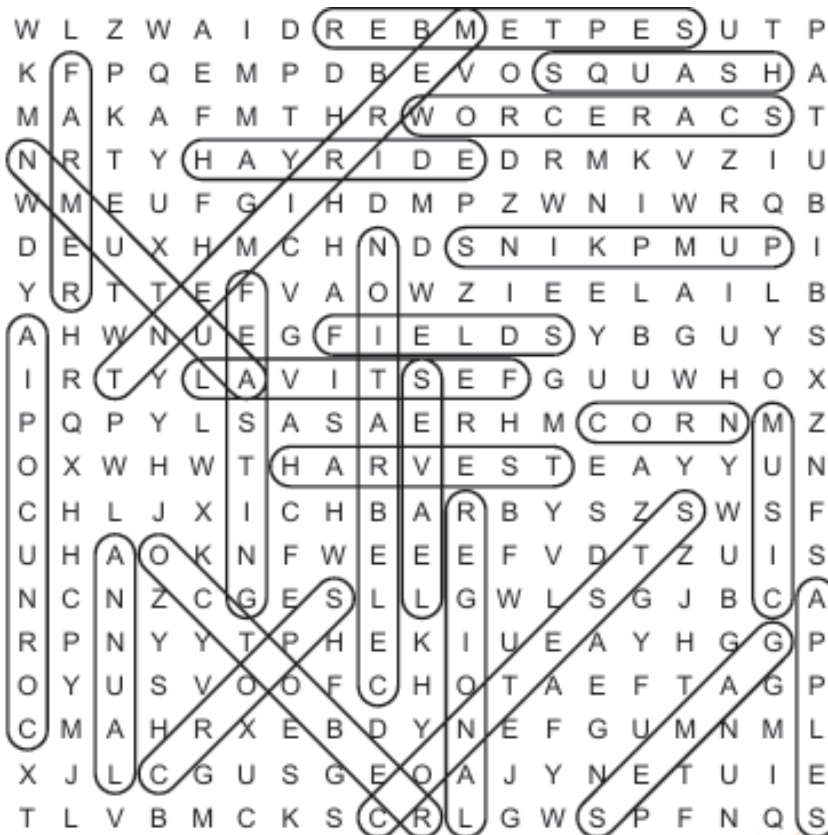
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## Harvest Festival

Word Search  
**SOLUTION**



This newsletter is created by Kathrine J. Clark, MS, RD, LD, Nutrition Consultant to the West Virginia Bureau of Senior Services.