

Chill Out This Winter

Do You Know?

1. What range of temperatures is best for a refrigerator?

- a. 34 to 40 degrees F
- b. 41 to 55 degrees F
- c. 56 to 69 degrees F

2. What temperature should your freezer be?

- a. 0 degrees F
- b. 10 degrees F
- c. 20 degrees F

Answers: 1. a. 34 to 40 degrees F 2. a. 0 degrees F

Freeze Some Meals

Your freezer can save you time and money if you use it to prepare meals ahead of time. Try cooking extra chili or other main dishes.

- Freeze meal-size portions in freezer-safe containers and label them with the date and contents.
- Check the ingredients in the recipes. You may need to modify your favorite recipes slightly.
 - Slightly undercook pasta, and leave off bread crumbs.
 - Leave out sour cream, mayonnaise and raw vegetables in unbaked casseroles meant to be frozen. Thaw the unbaked meal, then add the extra ingredients right before baking. On the label, be sure to note ingredients to add.

What freezes well?

- ✓ Meats such as beef, poultry, fish
- ✓ Leftover casseroles
- ✓ Leftover soups
- ✓ Breads/grain products

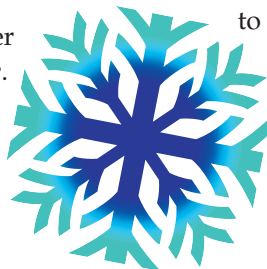
What doesn't freeze well?

- ✗ Whole egg
- ✗ Dairy products (milk, yogurt, sour cream)
- ✗ Raw vegetables*
 - * Vegetables need to be blanched, or heat-treated, before freezing to maintain quality.

What should you do if you forgot your leftover meat casserole on the counter overnight? Unfortunately, you cannot pretend it didn't happen.

For safety, you need to throw perishable leftovers that weren't put in the refrigerator. Food should be refrigerated within two hours. Some types of bacteria produce toxins that survive reheating, even boiling.

If you do not have one already, consider investing in a refrigerator thermometer. Check it regularly so you know your refrigerator is doing its job: keeping your food safe!



For more information, visit www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise.

This program is funded in part by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. SNAP provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716.

In accordance with federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, political beliefs or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave. S.W., Washington, DC 20250 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Quick and Easy Chili

- 1 pound lean ground beef (or ground turkey or venison)
- ¼ cup diced onion
- 1 28-ounce can tomato sauce
- 2 Tbsp. chili powder (or to taste)
- 2 15-ounce cans beans (such as kidney beans)
- Salt, pepper (to taste)
- Shredded cheddar cheese (optional)

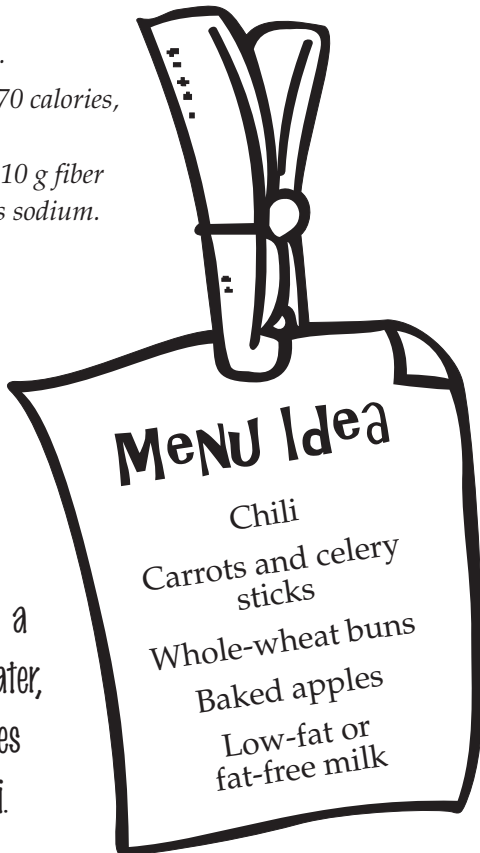
Brown the ground beef until cooked all the way through. Place in slow cooker and add all ingredients. Cook in a slow cooker for four to six hours on high.



Alternate method: simmer for 30 minutes in a pan on the stove. Sprinkle with shredded cheddar cheese if desired.

Makes six servings.

Each serving has 370 calories, 12 grams (g) fat, 32 g carbohydrate, 10 g fiber and 400 milligrams sodium.



For a quick meal a couple of days later, top baked potatoes with leftover chili.

I know that most frozen meat thaws overnight in the refrigerator, but sometimes I forget to thaw meat for dinner. What are safe ways to thaw food?

You can thaw meat in a microwave oven if you cook the food immediately. Using a microwave is an easy method when reheating leftovers, too. Be sure that the food is heated thoroughly by stirring it midway during heating.

You can thaw meat under cold running water at 70 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. Be sure the food is wrapped in a water-tight package such as a sealed plastic bag.

You also can cook food in the oven or stove from the frozen state, but allow one and half times the cooking time.

Be sure to measure the temperature of the cooked meat. Cook ground beef to an internal temperature of at least 160 degrees and poultry to 165 degrees.

Why is fiber so important? How much do adults and kids need?

Fiber keeps your digestive system healthy. Some types of fiber also can help lower cholesterol and prevent disease. Fiber is found in fruits, vegetables, cooked dry beans and whole grains. Try to make half your grain food choices whole grains. Try swapping high-fat snack foods with apples, carrots, or any other favorite fruits and vegetables.

Women should try to get 25 grams daily and men should aim for 38 grams. For kids, add 5 grams to their age. The recommendation for a 5-year-old, therefore, would be 10 grams.

Julie Garden-Robinson, Food and Nutrition Specialist

Contact the local office of the
NDSU Extension Service
for more information
on food and nutrition or
managing your food dollar.

