

K-State Research and Extension Family Nutrition Program

# DINING ON A DIME

## *Eating Better for Less*

September / October

### Are you “Smart” about Food Safety?

A recipe for food safety success is to “Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill.” Since September is National Food Safety Education Month, this is a perfect time to check your food safety know-how! Choose an answer to each question, then read on for more information.



#### **How long should you wash your hands before or after handling food?**

- a. 1 minute   b. 20 seconds   c. 10 seconds   d. 5 seconds

Did you know to wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds? This is about how long it takes to hum or sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice.

#### **Ground beef should be cooked to a minimum of how many degrees?**

- a. 180 degrees F.   b. 160 degrees F.   c. 150 degrees F.   d. 140 degrees F.

Do you have a meat thermometer? If not, get an inexpensive one. They are easy to use. Insert it into the thickest part of the meat, but don't let it touch any bones. For thin meats, insert the thermometer sideways. Cook ground beef and ground pork to 160 degrees, and casseroles, leftovers and poultry to 165 degrees.

#### **How long is it safe to leave perishable foods at room temperature?**

- a. 4 hours   b. 3 hours   c. 2 hours   d. 1 hour

Did you know that perishable foods (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, dairy products, cooked pasta, rice and vegetables; fresh, peeled and cut fruits and vegetables) should be at room temperature for a total time of only two hours or less? Reduce your risk of getting a foodborne illness. Refrigerate these foods promptly. At room temperature, in just 7 hours one bacteria can grow into 2,097,152!

#### **Will freezing a food kill the bacteria in it?**

- a. Yes   b. No

Did you know that freezing a food stops bacteria from growing in it, but freezing does not kill existing bacteria? And the bacteria become active again when a food is thawed. To decrease the risk of foodborne illness, never thaw food at room temperature. Instead, thaw it in a refrigerator, in cold running water, or cook it promptly after thawing in a microwave oven.

Source (Accessed 8/30/13): University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service, [Test Your Summer Food Safety Savvy](http://food.unl.edu/web/safety/), <http://food.unl.edu/web/safety/>

## Back-to-School Breakfasts for Busy Days

How many times have you heard that breakfast is the most important meal of the day? It's because eating breakfast is linked to better performance, and more! This month's issue of *Dining on a Dime* will help you start your day right.



### Be Smart and Get Smarter — Eat Breakfast!

Ask your child's teacher if the school has a breakfast program. If so, these meals are offered to all children (and at a free or discounted rate for those who qualify). According to an article in the *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, some benefits of eating breakfast include:

- Better memory and better mood
- Better test scores and school attendance, and lower tardiness rates
- Decreased hyperactivity
- Decreased risk of being overweight, and lower cholesterol levels
- Higher intakes of vitamins A and C, riboflavin, calcium, zinc and iron

### Relax and Read ... or Dine and Dash?

If it seems like you're too time-crunched in the morning to get a healthy start, try some of these fast fixes. You could get everything ready the night before. If you wish, take breakfast along for the ride as you or the children head out the door!

- Whole wheat bread, toast, bagel or tortilla, spread with peanut butter or cheese, and an apple
- Ready-to-eat cereal in a bag, a cup of milk, and a banana
- Grits topped with cheese, and a cup of tomato juice
- Oatmeal with milk and canned peaches
- Toasted frozen waffle with peanut butter and applesauce
- Rice and beans with a piece of fruit
- Yogurt mixed with small bits of fruit and ready-to-eat cereal
- Leftover cooked rice, a hard-boiled egg and baby carrots
- Scrambled egg and cheese wrapped in a tortilla



### “Picky” Eaters

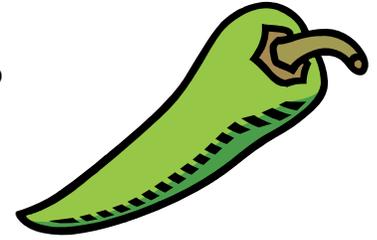
If there is a picky eater in your family, offer two or three food choices to help the child feel more in control. Having children help with breakfast is a nice way to start the day together. And remember, kids are more likely to eat breakfast when they see adults eating breakfast. So set a good example — you'll both benefit!

Source: Rampersaud GC, Pereira MA, Girard BL, Adams J, Metz J. 2005. Breakfast habits, nutritional status, body weight and academic performance in children and adolescents. *JADA* 105:743-760.

You may view previous newsletters at [www.ksre.ksu.edu/HumanNutrition/p.aspx?tabid=184](http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/HumanNutrition/p.aspx?tabid=184) This issue is an updated revision of the “Dining on a Dime September 2005” newsletter. Contents of this publication may be reproduced for educational purposes. All other rights reserved. In each case, credit Erin Henry and Mary Meck Higgins, “Dining on a Dime,” September 2013.

## Feeling hot, hot, hot!

What's hot all year long and bites you back when you eat it? Chili peppers, of course! Chilies are a great way to heat up your meals when the weather turns cooler. Choose from several varieties, including cayenne, habanero, serrano and jalapeños, to name a few. Each differs in flavor and heat intensity. Typically, larger chilies taste milder, because they contain fewer seeds and white membrane compared to their size.

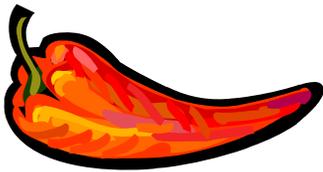


### Handling

Capsaicins are the fiery substances in chili peppers that pack the heat and can burn your eyes and skin. Handle chilies carefully. Wear thin rubber gloves, if possible. Wash your hands well with plenty of soap and water when done handling chilies. Avoid touching anyone's nose, eyes or mouth after handling hot peppers.

### Availability, Selection and Storage

Hot chilies may be fresh, canned or dried. Fresh chili peppers are available year 'round. Look for firm glossy chilies with taut smooth skin and green stems. Dried hot peppers should be glossy and unbroken. Store fresh chilies for up to three weeks: Wrap them, unwashed, in paper towels and refrigerate. Store dried chilies in an airtight container at room temperature for a maximum of four months. If you will be keeping dried chilies for more than four months, store them in the refrigerator.



### Preparation

To prepare chili peppers, rinse and cut them in half. If you want to decrease the heat intensity of chilies, remove the seeds and veins. Soak chopped chilies in salt water for 1 to 2 hours to help "cool them off" as well.

### Enjoy

If the bite is too strong when you eat a chili, chew on bread or another starchy food. Water only spreads the heat. Peppers are packed with vitamin C and good-for-you antioxidants, yet are low in calories.

Ready? Turn up the heat and turn the page. *Dining on a Dime* includes a recipe this month for Spicy Serrano Pepper Salsa!

Source (Accessed 8/30/13): [Chili peppers, http://foodchef.net/farmers-market/seasonality-guide/vegetables](http://foodchef.net/farmers-market/seasonality-guide/vegetables)

For more information about healthy eating, contact your local extension office. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Food Assistance Program can help people of all ages with low income buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-888-369-4777.



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## Dining on a Dime's Cooks' Corner

### Spicy Serrano Salsa (Makes about 1 1/2 cups)

#### Ingredients

3 or 4 tomatoes (the fleshy Roma type is preferred)  
1 serrano pepper, stem removed  
1 garlic clove, finely chopped  
1/4 fresh onion, finely chopped  
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh (or 2 tablespoons dried) cilantro

#### Directions

**1.** Place an oven rack at the highest position possible. Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. **2.** Place tomatoes and pepper on a cookie sheet. Bake on the upper rack for 10 minutes or until skins start to blacken. **3.** Use tongs to turn the tomatoes and peppers over. Roast for 10 more minutes or until blackened. Remove from oven. **4.** Put all ingredients into a blender or food processor. Blend to desired consistency. **5.** Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.

*Each serving (2 tablespoons) provides 5 calories, 0g fat, 0g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 1g carbohydrate, 0g protein, 0mg cholesterol, 0mg sodium and 0g dietary fiber. Daily Values: 4% vitamin A, 4% vitamin C, 0% calcium, 0% iron.*

If desired, serve salsa with baked potatoes.



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