



# USDA Recipes for Child Care

## Supplemental Information



United States Department of Agriculture  
Food and Nutrition Service  
Child Nutrition Programs

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# Introduction

Welcome to the *USDA Recipes for Child Care Supplemental Information* section which contains additional guidance for Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) sponsors. The guidance and techniques provided will assist you when purchasing, preparing, and storing food items that will be served to the children or adults in your care.

**Storage Tips**—Includes charts on suitable freezer and refrigerator storage times for meats, poultry, grains, and fruits and vegetables.

**Preparation Tips**—Includes sections on thawing frozen meat and ready-to-cook poultry, pre-preparation of poultry, sandwich making, and pre-preparation of fresh vegetables.

**Cooking Tips**—Provides information on roasting and stewing meats and poultry, handling techniques for seafood products, and guidelines for cooking vegetables and pastas.

**How To Use Specific Ingredients**—Discusses procedures such as seasoning vegetables with herbs and spices, flavorings, and garnishing techniques.

**Bonus Mini-Posters**—Three 8"x10" posters on handwashing and thermometer usage have been included for your convenience. Please print them out and display them in areas where these two tasks are performed to serve as helpful reminders for you and your staff.



# Storage Tips

## Freezer Storage Chart

Store the following foods at 0 °F, with adequate circulation. For optimal quality, store no longer than the times listed below. Length of time may vary depending on the quality of product stored.

IF YOU ARE STORING THIS FOOD ITEM IN THE FREEZER...	STORE NO LONGER THAN...
<b>Dairy Products</b>	
Butter	12 months
Cheese, hard	6-8 months
Margarine	12 months
Milk, fluid	3 months
Whipped topping, unopened plastic tub	14 months
<b>Fruits/Juices/Vegetables</b>	
Fruit: berries, melons, apple slices	8-12 months
Juice concentrates	12 months
Vegetables, blanched or cooked	8-12 months
<b>Grain Products/Baked Goods</b>	
Bread	2-3 months
Bread dough	1 month or use-by date
Cake, angel food	6-12 months
Cake, frosted	1 month
Cake, unfrosted	2-4 months
Cookie dough	3 months
Cookies	6-12 months
Muffins	6-12 months
Pancakes, waffles	1 month
Pie, fruit	6-8 months
Pie, pumpkin or chiffon	1-2 months
Pie crust, ready-to-bake	12 months

IF YOU ARE STORING THIS FOOD ITEM IN THE FREEZER...	STORE NO LONGER THAN...
<b>Meat/Meat Alternates</b>	
Casseroles, meat, poultry, egg	2-4 months
Chicken or turkey, cooked	4 months
Chicken nuggets	1-3 months
Chicken or turkey, parts, raw	9 months
Chicken or turkey, whole, raw	12 months
Eggs, whites, yolks, substitutes, raw	12 months
Fish, cooked	3 months
Fish, raw	3-8 months
Gravy or meat broth	2-3 months
Meat, chops, steaks, roasts, raw	4-12 months
Meat, cooked	2-3 months
Meat or poultry, ground, raw	3-4 months
Meat, ham, frankfurters, bologna	1-2 months
Meat, luncheon	1-2 months
Meat, cooked	1-2 months
Sausage, raw or cooked	1-2 months
Soups or stews	2-3 months

# Storage Tips

continued

## Refrigerator Storage Chart

Store the following foods at 40 °F, with adequate circulation. For optimal quality, store no longer than the times listed below.

Length of time may vary depending on the quality of product stored.

IF YOU ARE STORING THIS FOOD ITEM IN THE REFRIGERATOR...	STORE NO LONGER THAN...
<b>Dairy Products</b>	
Butter	1-2 weeks
Cheese, cottage or ricotta	1-2 weeks
Cheese, cream	2 weeks
Cheese, hard, unopened	1-2 months
Cheese, hard, opened	3-4 weeks
Margarine	4 to 6 months
Milk or buttermilk, fluid	7-14 days
Sour cream	1-3 weeks
Whipped topping	2-3 weeks
Yogurt	7-10 days



IF YOU ARE STORING THIS FOOD ITEM IN THE REFRIGERATOR...	STORE NO LONGER THAN...
<b>Fruits/Juices</b>	
Apples	1-3 weeks
Berries	1-7 days
Citrus fruits	3 weeks
Grapes	1 week
Juices, all types, opened	7-10 days
Juices, all types, unopened	3 weeks
Melons	3-7 days
Oranges	3 weeks
Peaches, apricots, nectarines	3-7 days
Pears, plums	3-4 days
Pineapple, ripe	3-5 days
Pumpkins	2-3 months
Rhubarb	2-4 weeks
<b>Grain Products/Baked Goods</b>	
Bread	2-3 weeks
Pies, cream or pumpkin	2-3 days
Pies, fruit	2-3 days
Rolls	2-3 weeks

# Storage Tips

continued

IF YOU ARE STORING THIS FOOD ITEM IN THE REFRIGERATOR...	STORE NO LONGER THAN...
<b>Meat/Meat Alternates</b>	
Chicken or turkey, cooked	3-4 days
Casseroles, meat, poultry, egg	3-4 days
Chicken nuggets	1-2 days
*Chicken or turkey, raw	1-2 days
Eggs, hard-cooked	1 week
Eggs, in shell, raw	3-5 weeks
Eggs, yolks, whites, substitutes, raw	2-4 days
Fish, cooked	3-4 days
*Fish, raw	1-2 days
Frankfurters, opened package	1 week
Frankfurters, sealed package	2 weeks
Gravy and meat broth	3-4 days
*Meat, chops, steaks, roasts, raw	3-5 days
Meat, cooked	3-4 days
*Meat or poultry, ground, raw	1-2 days
Meat, luncheon, store-sliced	3-5 days
Meat, luncheon, closed package	2 weeks
Meat, luncheon, opened package	3-5 days
Prepared salads: tuna, chicken, egg	3-5 days
Sausage, precooked	7 days
*Sausage, uncooked	1-2 days

\*Store raw foods that must be cooked prior to serving on the refrigerator's *bottom* shelf to prevent their juices from coming into contact with other foods. Raw juices often contain harmful bacteria.

IF YOU ARE STORING THIS FOOD ITEM IN THE REFRIGERATOR...	STORE NO LONGER THAN...
<b>Vegetables</b>	
Beans, green or wax	3-7 days
Beets	3-5 days
Broccoli	3-5 days
Brussels sprouts	3-5 weeks
Cabbage	1-2 weeks
Carrots	4-6 weeks
Cauliflower	1 week
Celery	2 weeks
Corn on the cob	2-3 weeks
Cucumbers	1 week
Eggplant	1 week
Greens	7-14 days
Lettuce or salad greens	3-5 days
Okra	3-7 days
Parsley	1-2 months
Parsnips	2-6 months
Peas or lima beans, unshelled	3-5 days
Peppers	4-7 days
Radishes	3-4 weeks
Spinach	10-14 days
Squash, summer	4-5 days
Tomatoes, ripe	4-7 days
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
Mayonnaise	2 months

## Storing Vegetables and Fruits

**All chilled and frozen fruits and vegetables are highly perishable.**

When improperly stored, they deteriorate rapidly. For example, they will spoil rapidly if:

- temperatures are too high or too low.
- humidity levels are unfavorable.
- air circulation is inadequate.
- storage areas are unsanitary.

Food spoilage is caused by bacteria or mold. Once fruits and vegetables begin to spoil, the decay spreads rapidly. In addition to maintaining proper storage conditions, you can help prevent losses by using the oldest purchases first — in other words, by following the “First-In, First-Out” (FIFO) rule.

### Tips for storing fresh fruits and vegetables

- Most fresh vegetables should be stored in the refrigerator.
- Use asparagus, beans, Brussels sprouts, greens, peas, and other fresh vegetables as quickly as possible.
- NEVER** store uncut potatoes, onions (excluding green onions), or winter squash in the refrigerator; the starch will convert to sugar. Store in a cool, dark place at 45 °F to 50 °F, just above refrigerator temperature. *If they must be stored at room temperature, use within 1 week.*
- Immediately refrigerate any fresh-cut items such as salad or fruit for best quality and food safety.
- Most fresh vegetables and fruits should be used within a few days. Some may be stored for weeks or months. It is helpful to become familiar with how long individual foods can be successfully stored. Using the “Refrigerator Storage Chart” in this section, you’ll find a list of common fresh vegetables and fruits, with acceptable storage times given for each when stored at 40 °F.



# Preparation Tips

## Thawing Frozen Meat, Poultry, and Fish

To avoid spoilage or serious foodborne illness, meat, poultry, and fish must be properly handled during thawing, preparation, cooking, cooling, and serving.

Frozen meat, poultry, and fish must be received and stored hard-frozen at 0 °F or below, until removed for thawing and cooking.

### Directions for Thawing

1. **ALWAYS** wash hands and all surfaces **BEFORE** and **AFTER** handling raw meat, poultry, or fish.
2. Remove from freezer storage only the amount of meat, poultry, or fish needed for 1 day's use.
3. It is best to thaw frozen meat, poultry, or fish in the refrigerator at 40 °F. **Do NOT** thaw raw meat, poultry, or fish at room temperature or in warm water. Meats defrosted in the microwave should be cooked immediately after thawing. Some areas of the food may become warm and begin to cook during microwaving. Holding partially cooked food is not recommended because any bacteria present will not have been destroyed.
4. To shorten thawing time in the refrigerator, remove packages of meat, poultry, or fish from the carton and thaw in the original wrapper. If not individually wrapped, cover loosely or wrap. For easy handling, place blocks or packages of meat, poultry, or fish on trays. Place trays on **BOTTOM** shelves and space so that air can circulate around the frozen food.
5. **NEVER** allow raw meat, poultry, or fish drippings to come in contact with other foods.
6. Thaw fish in the refrigerator allowing about 18-24 hours per pound.
7. If fish fillets or fish steaks will be breaded or stuffed, they should be thawed first.
8. Thaw meat cuts or poultry (except turkeys weighing 16 pounds or more) in the refrigerator overnight (16 to 24 hours).
9. Thaw whole turkeys weighing 16 pounds or more in the refrigerator for 2 to 3 days.
10. As soon as whole poultry is pliable enough to remove giblets from cavity, proceed as described in the next section, "Pre-preparation of Ready-To-Cook (Fresh or Thawed) Poultry."
11. Cook thawed poultry and giblets promptly.
12. Cook thawed meat, poultry, or fish immediately or cover loosely with waxed paper, freezer bag, or plastic wrap. Refrigerate at 40 °F.
13. **Do NOT** hold thawed meat, poultry, or fish for longer than 24 hours before cooking.
14. **Do NOT** refreeze thawed meat, poultry, or fish.

## Pre-preparation of Ready-To-Cook (Fresh or Thawed) Poultry

### Directions

1. **ALWAYS** wash your hands **BEFORE** and **AFTER** handling raw poultry.
2. **Do NOT** wash or rinse raw poultry. Rinsing or washing raw poultry creates the danger of cross-contamination and is not necessary. Washing these foods allows bacteria that are present on the surface of the poultry to spread to the sink, kitchen utensils, counter surfaces, and ready-to-eat foods. Any bacteria that might be present are destroyed by cooking.
3. Use separate cutting boards for preparing raw poultry.
4. Remove neck and giblets, which are usually packed in neck and body cavities and drain.
5. If necessary, remove excess fat and any parts of lung, windpipe, or pinfeathers that may be present.
6. **ALWAYS** thoroughly clean and sanitize table surfaces and any other equipment you have used while handling or preparing raw poultry.
  - Do this *before* and *after* the equipment or surfaces are used to handle cooked foods. (See “Keeping Food Safe to Eat,” *USDA Recipes for Child Care* booklet, page 39.)
  - Sanitize by using the 3-sink washing method (described in *USDA Recipes for Child Care* booklet, page 40) or by using a mechanical dishwasher.

# Preparation Tips

continued

## Making Sandwiches Quickly and Safely

Sandwiches may be served hot or cold, closed or open-faced. They can be made with many different types of breads and rolls. To add variety to your menus, include breads and rolls with different flavors, textures, sizes, and shapes.

Besides enriched white bread, consider using whole-wheat, rye, pumpernickel, French, raisin, Italian, Boston brown, or cheese bread made with whole-grain or enriched flour, bran, or germ.

Hamburger rolls, frankfurter rolls, hard and soft rolls, pitas, English muffins, tortillas, and bagels all make good sandwich bases. Breads with a relatively firm texture make good sandwiches for eating out-of-hand because they won't bend or lose fillings.

Below you will find important food handling precautions followed by a list of suggested tools, equipment, and directions for making sandwiches. (For information on acceptable grains/breads products for CACFP, see "Section 3. Grains/Breads" of the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* on the additional CD-ROM included in this packet.)

## Food Handling Precautions

1. Make sandwiches the day they are to be served.
2. Make sandwiches one tray at a time (stacking no more than three sandwiches high per tray), so that they can be immediately refrigerated after preparation. This is important because foods stored in the refrigerator need to reach the desired cold temperature within a short amount of time. If sandwiches are stacked more than three high, sandwich fillings will be insulated and will not cool as quickly as they should. Also, the weight tends to crush the bottom layer if stacked higher than three sandwiches.
3. Handle bread and fillings as little as possible during preparation. Avoid touching foods directly with your hands if tools or equipment can do the job efficiently.
4. Wear disposable plastic gloves if possible. Disposable plastic gloves should be considered necessary equipment. Change gloves frequently to avoid tearing and to prevent excessive perspiration. If you cannot wear gloves, be sure to wash hands thoroughly and frequently.



Always change gloves during or between tasks as needed to avoid contaminating the food. For example, after carrying a tray of sandwiches to the refrigerator, wash your hands and put on new gloves before returning to food preparation. Since you have touched the handle of the refrigerator door, which is contaminated, it is unsafe to return to handling food without washing your hands and changing your gloves.

# Preparation Tips

continued

## Pre-Preparation

### 1. Have all ingredients ready to use.

- Freeze sliced bread ahead of time. Working with frozen bread allows easier spreading of fillings that tend to tear fresh bread.
- Pre-prepare all sandwich fillings, such as tuna salad, egg salad, or chicken or turkey salad, and have them well chilled. Continue to refrigerate fillings when not in use. Make prepared fillings only in the amount that will be used during one serving period.
- Evenly slice foods such as tomatoes, cheese, and meats. For quick and easy pickup, cross-stack items such as cheese and meat. Refrigerate all sliced ingredients when not in use.

- If lettuce is desired, purchase dark green leaf lettuce; wash thoroughly; separate leaves, drain, and crisp in the refrigerator.
- Sandwich spread (optional): Mayonnaise, mustard, spreadable butter or margarine.

### 2. Allow plenty of space to work.

- One slice of bread or a bun takes up a space at least 4 inches square.

### 3. Assemble all equipment and ingredients at the work station in advance.

- Place within easy reach toward back of table.
- Arrange ingredients in the order to be used.
- Set appropriate scoop (dipper) nearby to ensure correct portion control.

## Suggested Tools and Equipment

Cutting board  
Disposable plastic gloves  
Knives, serrated  
Mixing bowls  
Sandwich bags, plastic wrap, or waxed paper  
Scoops or dippers (sized for portioning)  
Spatula  
Spoons  
Storage pans, trays, or bins

# Preparation Tips

continued

## Assembly

**The following method explains how to prepare 16 or 32 whole sandwiches (32 or 64 half-sandwich servings).**

**Have the following foods ready to use:** 32 or 64 slices of frozen bread, just enough prepared and well-chilled sandwich filling for 16 or 32 sandwiches, and any additional toppings. Handle bread and fillings as little as possible during assembly.

STEP 1. Using both gloved hands, grasp frozen bread and place slices onto tray in four rows of four each (16 slices).

STEP 2. If using sandwich filling: Dip scoop in filling and scrape level against the edge of the container. Place filling on upper right corner of each slice of bread. With spatula, spread filling to upper left, lower right, and then lower left corners, using an “S” motion.

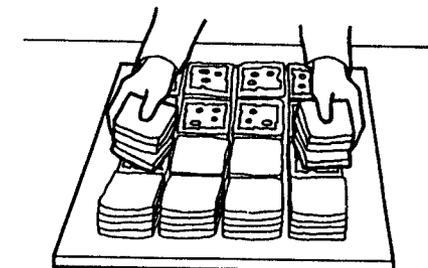
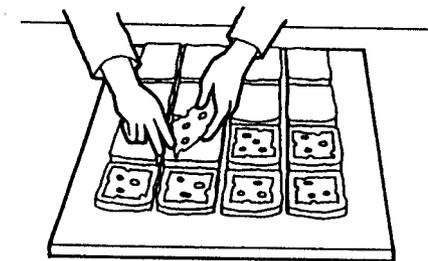
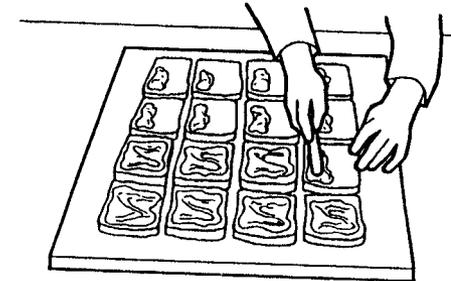
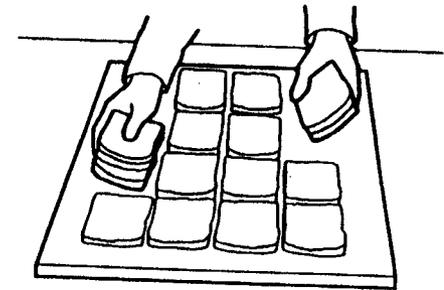
**OR**

If using pre-sliced ingredients (such as meat or cheese): Arrange on bread as desired.

STEP 3. Add lettuce and/or other toppings (if using) to each slice. If you are only making 16 whole sandwiches, skip step 4 and complete steps 5-7.

**OR**

To make 32 whole sandwiches, pick up four slices of bread in each hand. Place two slices on each filled slice. The second slice forms the bottom of the next layer of sandwiches.



## Preparation Tips

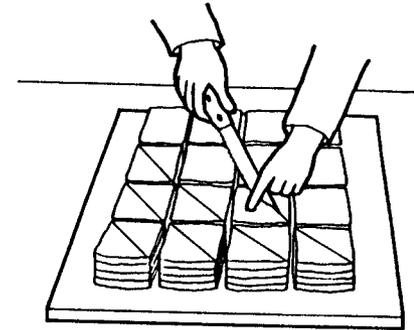
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STEP 4. Repeat Steps 2 and 3.

STEP 5. Top the final layer with single slices of bread. Repeat until all sandwiches are complete.

STEP 6. Hold sandwiches together with the thumb and first finger of your left hand. With your right hand, use a sharp serrated knife to cut through one stack at a time. A sawing motion should be used to prevent tearing.

STEP 7. Wrap sandwich halves individually or place on storage trays. Keep covered and airtight. Refrigerate. Serve sandwiches the same day as prepared.



**This method may be adjusted to meet the needs of each individual food service setting.**

To obtain 50 half-sandwich servings, assemble and cut 25 whole sandwiches. Begin with 25 slices of frozen bread. Place slices onto tray in five rows of five. Follow steps above for filling, topping, and slicing each sandwich and store as directed below.

### Holding Assembled Sandwiches

**It is important to think about food safety as you assemble and hold sandwiches.**

**Serve sandwiches the same day they are made. Put in refrigerator until serving time.**

**To hold properly:**

- If you are stacking sandwiches on trays, be sure to stack no more than three high so the cold air of the refrigerator can penetrate the filling of each sandwich.
- Keep prepared sandwiches covered and airtight. Cover the entire tray with waxed paper or plastic wrap; or place sandwiches in sandwich bags; or fold sandwiches in waxed paper; or place in pans with covers.
- Refrigerate prepared, covered sandwiches until serving time. Serve sandwiches the same day as prepared.

## Guidelines for Washing Fresh Vegetables

### Tips for Washing Fresh Vegetables (for Cooking or for Serving Raw)

- ❑ Just before eating or preparing, wash fresh produce under cold running tap water to remove any lingering dirt. This reduces bacteria that may be present.
- ❑ Firm vegetables such as carrots, potatoes, and squash will need to be scrubbed with a vegetable brush under cold running water to remove dirt from the crevices.
- ❑ Vegetables that can't be scrubbed such as asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, or greens should be immersed in cold water. Shake to dislodge any dirt, then remove immediately. Rinse under cold running tap water and drain before cooking or serving raw.
- ❑ **Do NOT** wash fruits and vegetables with detergent or soap. These products are not approved or labeled by the Food and Drug Administration for use on foods. You could ingest residues from soap or detergent absorbed by the produce.



## Pre-preparation of Fresh and Frozen Vegetables

- ❑ Before preparing fresh vegetables, cut away any damaged or bruised areas. Bacteria that cause illness can thrive in these places.

- ❑ Immediately refrigerate any fresh-cut items for best quality and food safety.

**Specific directions for preparing a variety of fresh vegetables that are commonly served in Child Care programs are listed below. Feel free to use vegetables that are not listed, bearing in mind the tastes and methods of**

**preparation that are acceptable for children.**

Vegetables that make good finger foods are starred (\*). Also, see “Finger Foods and Snack Ideas,” page 63 of the *USDA Recipes for Child Care* booklet, for suggested finger foods.

FRESH...	DIRECTIONS...
<b>Artichokes</b>	Wash under cold running water and remove discolored petals. Dip into acidified water to preserve color. (One tablespoon vinegar or lemon juice per quart of water.) Cook before serving.
<b>Asparagus spears*</b>	Break off the tough lower ends of the stalk. Wash. If sand or grit is present under scales, scrape off scales. Brush gently with a soft brush. Swish in water. These are a tasty finger food when cooked, cooled, and drained.
<b>Beans, Blackeye Beans or peas, or Lima</b>	Shell. (Scald pods to make shelling easier.) Rinse. Fresh shelled beans should be cooked before serving to deactivate naturally occurring toxins.
<b>Beans, green or wax*</b>	Wash. Trim ends; remove any strings. Cut or break into 1-inch pieces, slit lengthwise into thin strips (for French-cut beans), or leave whole for a different type of finger food, after cooking.
<b>Beets</b>	Remove tops, leaving 2-inch stems on beets. Wash. Remove stems and roots, and peel after cooking.
<b>Broccoli florets*</b>	Cut off tough stalk ends. Wash. Cut florets from stalks. Save stalks to shred for coleslaw or add to chopped salads for an interesting crunch. Florets can be served raw or cooked and make a simple-to-prepare finger food.
<b>Broccoli spears*</b>	Cut off tough stalk ends. Wash. Cut broccoli lengthwise, if thick, to speed cooking. Cut horizontally into thirds. After cooking, these make excellent finger foods.

# Preparation Tips

continued

FRESH...	DIRECTIONS...
<b>Brussels sprouts*</b>	Remove discolored outer leaves. Wash. For cooked vegetable, cut an X in the stem end to hasten cooking. When cooked and cooled, Brussels sprouts make a no-fuss finger food.
<b>Cabbage*</b>	Remove discolored outer leaves. Wash thoroughly. Quarter and core. Crisp in cold water, if wilted. Shred or cut into ½ inch wedges. Serve raw or cooked. Wedges are more easily eaten as a finger food after cooking and cooling.
<b>Carrots*</b>	Wash. Scrape or peel with vegetable peeler. Cut off ends. Chop or cut into slices or sticks. Children enjoy carrots raw or cooked.
<b>Cauliflower*</b>	Remove outer leaves and stalks. Break into florets. Wash. Cauliflower florets make an attractive finger food either raw or cooked.
<b>Celery*</b>	<p>Separate ribs; wash celery and scrub grooves with brush. Trim off root and blemishes. Chop, slice, or cut into sticks. Serve raw as a finger food or cooked in mixed dishes.</p> <p>For a finger food, fill with peanut butter, low-fat cottage cheese, or reduced-fat cream cheese (thinned slightly with milk). Pimentos may be added to cream cheese for color and extra flavor. Well-drained, crushed pineapple is also an option.</p>
<b>Cherry tomatoes*</b>	Wash, remove blossom-end stems. Cherry tomatoes should be halved for easier eating and to prevent choking in young children.
<b>Corn on cob</b>	Husk; remove silk. Rinse; do not allow corn to stand in water. Corn is typically cooked before serving.
<b>Cucumbers*</b>	Wash. Peel if waxed or if skins are tough. Cut into strips, chunks, or wheels. Cucumbers are generally served raw.
<b>Eggplant</b>	Wash. Peel and cut into pieces or slices. To prevent darkening, hold in salted water (1 Tbsp salt per quart of water) until ready to cook. Eggplant should be cooked before serving.

# Preparation Tips

continued

FRESH...	DIRECTIONS...
<b>Green leafy vegetables (beet greens, chard, collards, kale, mustard)</b>	Wash greens in water as many times as needed until there is no sand on the leaves. Lift greens out of water (instead of pouring off water) so that sand remains on the bottom of the sink. Strip leaves from tough stems and discard any discolored leaves. These vegetables are typically cooked.
<b>Jicama*</b>	Peel skin like a potato, then cut into slices or strips. Can be served raw as a finger food or tossed in a salad.
<b>Kohlrabi*</b>	Peel and cut into match-like strips. Good raw or cooked.
<b>Mushrooms*</b>	Do not wash before storage. When ready to use, clean with a damp cloth or soft brush. Rinse briefly under running water and pat dry. Never soak, as they absorb moisture. Trim end of the stem and slice before serving.
<b>Okra</b>	Wash. Leave small pods whole and thickly slice the large ones. May be served raw or cooked.
<b>Onions, mature</b>	Peel; rinse. Quarter, if large, or cut as desired. May be served raw or cooked.
<b>Parsnips</b>	Scrape or peel. Leave whole or cut into strips or pieces. Parsnips are typically cooked before serving.
<b>Peas, green</b>	Shell. Rinse. Should be cooked before serving.
<b>Peppers, green, yellow, red*</b>	Wash. Cut out stem or blossom end and remove seeds and fibrous portion. Wash the inside. Cut or chop as desired. Can be served cooked or raw as finger food or in salads.
<b>Potatoes</b>	Wash, scrubbing with vegetable brush. Peel (unless serving with skins). Remove eyes. Cut potatoes to serving size. Pierce skins if baking whole. Fresh potatoes are typically cooked before serving.
<b>Pumpkin</b>	Store around 50 °F until cut. Remove stem and cut pumpkin in half. Scoop out flesh and seeds. Cook as desired. Can also be baked whole. Seeds are preferred roasted.
<b>Radishes*</b>	Wash, trim off root and stem end. Cut as desired, or leave whole. If mildly flavored, and not hot, radishes are a delicious and crunchy finger food. May also be served steamed.

# Preparation Tips

continued

FRESH...	DIRECTIONS...
<b>Rutabagas</b>	Wash. Peel and cut as desired. Rutabagas may be eaten raw or cooked.
<b>Spinach</b>	Wash thoroughly. Cut off tough stems. Discard yellow and damaged leaves. Serve raw or cooked.
<b>Squash, summer*</b>	Wash. Cut off stem and blossom ends. Trim as desired. (It is not necessary to peel summer squash.) Slice, cut into sticks, or chop. Makes a mildly flavored finger food. Can be served raw or cooked.
<b>Squash, winter</b>	Wash. Cut in half with a heavy-bladed knife. Remove seeds, fiber, and peel. Cut into serving pieces. (If peel is hard and tough, soften by steaming or boiling.) Winter squash should be cooked before serving due to its hard texture.
<b>Sweet potatoes</b>	Scrub, using brush. Peel (unless serving with skins). Fresh sweet potatoes are typically cooked before serving.
<b>Tomatoes*</b>	Wash. Cut out core. Cut into quarters, wedges, or slices. (Tomatoes may be peeled by scalding. Dip the tomatoes, uncut, into boiling water for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Plunge into cold water and slip off skin. After peeling, core and cut as desired.)
<b>Turnips*</b>	Wash. Peel and cut as desired. For finger foods, cut into sticks; serve cooked or raw.

## Preparing Frozen Vegetables for Cooking

- Loosely packed frozen vegetables, such as whole-kernel corn, can be cooked without thawing.
- Solid-pack frozen vegetables, such as spinach, should be thawed in the refrigerator long enough to break apart easily before cooking.
- Broccoli spears will cook more uniformly if they are partially thawed.

### Cooking Fresh and Frozen Vegetables

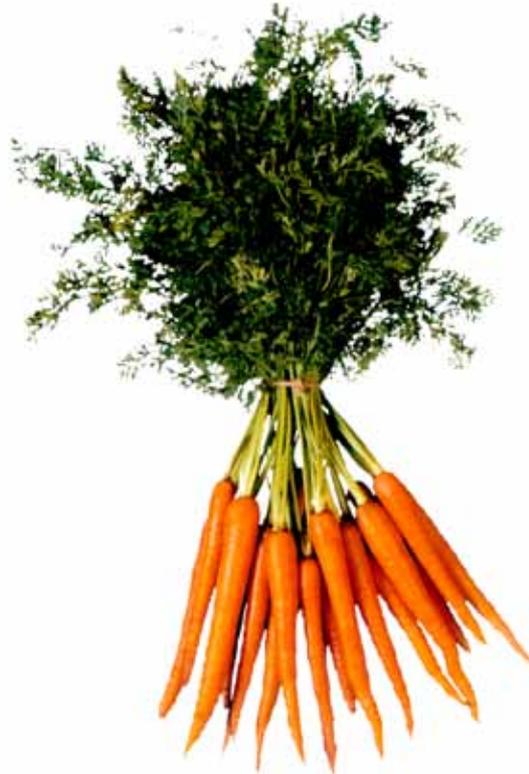
**Timing is important when cooking vegetables.** To protect quality and nutritional value, you'll want to serve vegetables soon after they are cooked. This may require careful scheduling, but the results will be worth it.

**A good way to protect quality is to cook vegetables in small batches.** Batch cooking helps prevent vegetables from becoming broken or overcooked. It also helps ensure that vegetables will retain their color and have little loss of nutrients.

**Be sure to cook vegetables only until tender-crisp.** They may continue to cook when held. Vegetables will become overcooked if held too long, so batch cooking throughout the meal is recommended.

**The following fresh vegetables are typically cooked before serving:**

Asparagus  
Brussels sprouts  
Beans in pods (blackeye, lima, etc.)  
(need to be cooked to deactivate toxins)  
Corn  
Eggplant  
Peas  
Potatoes  
Sweet potatoes  
Winter squash



#### To boil in water:

Cook in a covered stockpot as follows. However, leave off lid for items like broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage, to help retain their bright green color.

1. Add fresh or frozen vegetables to boiling water.
2. After water boils again, reduce heat and simmer until tender-crisp.
3. Drain cooked vegetables and place in serving dishes.
4. Season with herbs and spices, and garnish as desired. (See "Seasoning Vegetables with Herbs and Spices" and "Garnishing Techniques" on pages 28 and 30.)

## Cooking Tips

continued

### To microwave:

Place fresh or frozen vegetables in a covered microwaveable dish. Then:

1. Microwave, following manufacturer's directions, stirring halfway through the cooking time.
2. Don't overcook.
3. Season with herbs and spices, and garnish as desired. (See "Seasoning Vegetables with Herbs and Spices" and "Garnishing Techniques" on pages 28 and 30.)

### To steam:

Place fresh or frozen vegetables in a single layer in a steamer pan (12" x 20" x 2 1/2"). Then:

1. Steam uncovered, following steamer manufacturer's directions. Don't overcook.

2. Drain cooked vegetables.
3. Season with herbs and spices, and garnish as desired. (See "Seasoning Vegetables with Herbs and Spices" and "Garnishing Techniques" on pages 28 and 30.)

### To stir-fry:

Cut or dice vegetables into uniform pieces, selecting them for color, texture, and flavor. Then:

1. Heat a small amount of oil in a frying pan.
2. Add vegetables that take longest to cook, such as carrots.
3. Add remaining vegetables, such as onions and broccoli florets.
4. Cover and cook until vegetables are tender but crisp and brightly colored.



5. Season with herbs and spices, and garnish as desired. (See "Seasoning Vegetables with Herbs and Spices" and "Garnishing Techniques" on pages 28 and 30.)

**Chill cooked, hot food from 135 °F to 70 °F within 2 hours and from 70 °F to 41 °F or below within the next 4 hours. The total cooling process from 135 °F to 41 °F may not exceed 6 hours.**

## Braising or Pot Roasting Meats (Moist Heat)

Less tender cuts of meat may be braised or pot roasted. Meat is cooked slowly with a small amount of liquid in a covered pan.

**ALWAYS wash hands BEFORE and AFTER handling raw meat.**



For proper storage and thawing techniques see “Freezer Storage Chart,” “Refrigerator Storage Chart,” and “Thawing Frozen Meat, Poultry, and Fish” in this document.

### Directions for Braising or Pot Roasting

1. **Prepare rub, if desired.** Mix  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon salt and 3 tablespoons flour per pound of meat and sprinkle on or rub into the meat, if desired, to increase browning.
2. **Brown meat.** Brown meat in oil, as needed, in a heavy pot or a Dutch oven to develop aroma, flavor, and color.
3. **Add small amount of water.** Add more water if needed during cooking.

4. **Cook.** Cover pan; simmer (do not boil) on top of range or bake at 325 °F (slow oven).

5. **Monitor temperature.** Cook until meat is tender with an internal temperature of at least 145 °F.

6. **Allow meat to rest for 10 to 20 minutes.** Drain fat and juices, slice, and serve. Gravy may be made from remaining drippings by thickening with flour or cornstarch.

**Chill cooked, hot food from 135 °F to 70 °F within 2 hours and from 70 °F to 41 °F or below within the next 4 hours. The total cooling process from 135 °F to 41 °F may not exceed 6 hours.**

For more information on meat and poultry, visit the Food Safety and Inspection Service Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp).

# Cooking Tips

continued

## Cooking Meats in Liquid (Stewing)

Some less tender and highly flavored cuts of meat (such as brisket) are commonly cooked (simmered) with enough water to cover. See below for cooking directions.

**ALWAYS wash hands BEFORE and AFTER handling raw meat.**

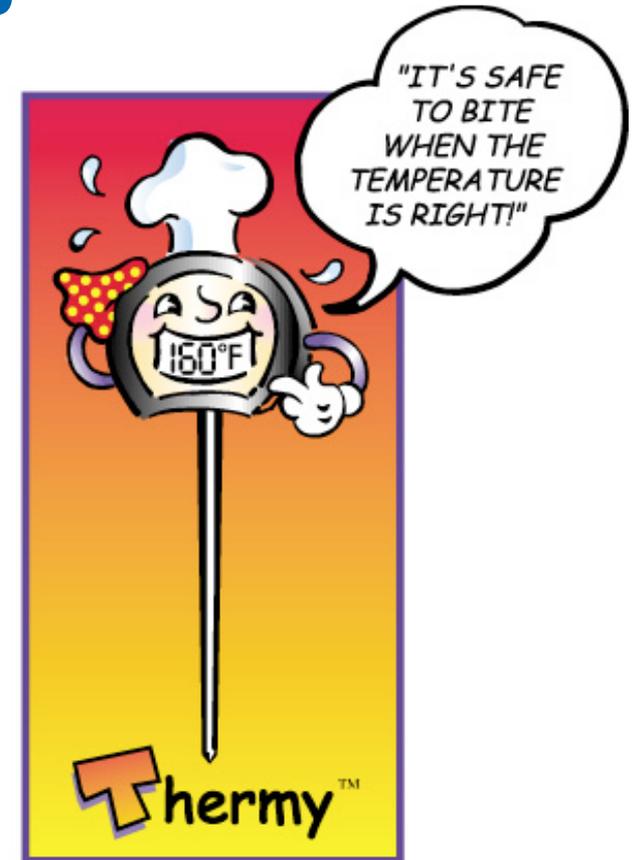
For proper storage and thawing techniques see “Freezer Storage Chart,” “Refrigerator Storage Chart,” and “Thawing Frozen Meat, Poultry, and Fish” in this document.

### Directions for Stewing

1. **Place meat in a pot.**
2. **Cover meat with water.** Seasonings may be added to the liquid as desired.
3. **Cook.** Cover pan and simmer (do not boil) until tender.
4. **Monitor temperature.** Cook until meat is tender with an internal temperature of at least 145 °F.

**Chill cooked, hot food from 135 °F to 70 °F within 2 hours and from 70 °F to 41 °F or below within the next 4 hours. The total cooling process from 135 °F to 41 °F may not exceed 6 hours.**

For more information on meat and poultry, visit the Food Safety and Inspection Service Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp).



Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA

## Roasting Meats and Chicken (Dry Heat)

Tender cuts of meat and poultry may be roasted. Roast in an open pan without added liquid, as explained below.

**ALWAYS wash hands BEFORE and AFTER handling raw meat.**

For proper storage and thawing techniques see “Freezer Storage Chart,” “Refrigerator Storage Chart,” “Pre-preparation of Ready-To-Cook (Fresh or Thawed) Poultry,” and “Thawing Frozen Meat, Poultry, and Fish” in this document.

### Directions for Roasting

- Place meat in roasting pan, fat side up.** Allow space in pan between roasts. Do NOT cover pan or add water.
- Insert meat thermometer.** Insert thermometer into the center of the thickest part of the meat, AWAY from bone, fat, or gristle. *If roasting from a frozen state:* Insert thermometer when roast is nearly completed cooking. Insert thermometer with tip touching the center of the roast. Do NOT touch bone, fat or gristle with the thermometer tip.

## Minimum Internal Temperatures for Safety

(Based on the 2005 FDA Food Code)

165 °F for 15 seconds	Poultry, stuffing, stuffed fish, pork, or beef; pasta stuffed with eggs, pork, casseroles, reheating leftovers.
155 °F for 15 seconds	Ground meats, beef, lamb, veal, pork, pasteurized eggs held on steam table, cubed or Salisbury steaks, fish nuggets or sticks.
145 °F for 15 seconds	Seafood, beef, pork, veal steaks, and roasts (medium rare), eggs cooked to order and served immediately.
135 °F for 15 seconds	Fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables that are going to be held on a steam table or in a hot box.

- Roast at 325 °F (slow oven).** Roast until meat is tender and thermometer registers the correct temperature for the proper time according to the chart above.

*If roasting from a frozen state:* Additional cooking time will be required. The extra time needed varies according to the size and cut. Start by determining the amount of time recommended for cooking a similar cut from the chilled state. Then, add one-third to one-half the amount of time recommended. The oven temperature should not change. Here is an example: The recommended cooking time is 3 hours for a particular cut of meat from the chilled state. To cook a similar cut from the frozen state, the recommended time would be 4 to 4 ½ hours.

- Allow meat to rest for 10 to 20 minutes.** Drain fat and juices. Slice and serve. Gravy may be made from remaining drippings by thickening with flour or cornstarch.

**Chill cooked, hot food from 135 °F to 70 °F within 2 hours and from 70 °F to 41 °F or below within the next 4 hours. The total cooling process from 135 °F to 41 °F may not exceed 6 hours.**

For more information on meat and poultry, visit the Food Safety and Inspection Service Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp).

## Roasting Whole Turkey, Turkey Parts, and Boneless Turkey Roasts

### Keep in mind the following important safety tips when cooking raw turkey.

- ALWAYS wash hands BEFORE and AFTER handling raw turkey.
- Do NOT stuff whole, raw turkey — prepare and heat stuffing separately.
- Do NOT partially cook one day and finish cooking the next.
- Use within 2 days after roasting.

NOTE: Giblets from whole poultry may be simmered with neck and wing tips for making broth or gravy stock.

### Direction for Roasting

1. **Thaw and prepare frozen turkey for cooking.** See “Thawing Frozen Meat, Poultry, and Fish” and “Pre-preparation of Ready-To-Cook (Fresh or Thawed) Poultry” on pages 7 and 8 or follow label instructions.

Whole turkey frozen without giblets and other frozen forms of turkey may be roasted without thawing. However, extra cooking time will be needed.

2. **Place prepared whole turkeys, boneless roasts, and turkey parts in shallow roasting pans.** Use separate pans for breast pieces and for legs (drumstick and thigh) due to differences in cooking times.

3. **Insert a meat thermometer.** Be sure the thermometer does NOT touch bone.

*For a whole turkey:* Insert the thermometer into the center of the meaty part of the inner side of the thigh (toward the body).

*For a boneless turkey roast:* Insert into the center.

*For a breast or thigh piece:* Insert into the center of the thickest part of the breast or thigh.

(If roasting frozen turkeys, insert the thermometer part way through cooking.)

4. **Roast at 325 °F (slow oven).** When whole turkey is half done, release legs to speed cooking. For boneless turkey roasts, the diameter of the roast will affect cooking time more than the weight. The greater the diameter of the roast, the longer the cooking time will be.

- Turkey is done when the thermometer registers 165 °F in the inner thigh of whole turkeys or in the center of turkey roasts.** If your turkey has a “pop-up” temperature indicator, it is recommended that you also check the internal temperature of the turkey in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast with a food thermometer. The minimum internal temperature should reach 165 °F for safety.
- Allow roasted turkey to rest** (set juices) for 15 to 20 minutes before carving. Slice and serve.

**OR**

**Cool** cooked turkey on wire rack until cool enough to handle (within 2 hours). Remove meat from bones. Spread pieces of meat in one layer for more rapid cooling. Wrap meat and store in the refrigerator at 40 °F.

**Chill cooked, hot food from 135 °F to 70 °F within 2 hours and from 70 °F to 41 °F or below within the next 4 hours. The total cooling process from 135 °F to 41 °F may not exceed 6 hours.**

For more information on cooking turkey, visit the Food Safety and Inspection Service Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Lets\\_Talk\\_Turkey/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Lets_Talk_Turkey/index.asp).

For more information on meat and poultry, visit the Food Safety and Inspection Service Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp).

## Stewing Chicken or Turkey

### Remember the following important safety tips when cooking raw poultry:

- ALWAYS wash hands BEFORE and AFTER handling raw poultry.
- Do NOT cook partially one day and finish cooking the next.
- Use broth and poultry meat within 2 days after cooking.

### Directions for Stewing

1. **Thaw and prepare chicken or turkey for cooking.** (See “Thawing Frozen Meat, Poultry, and Fish” and “Pre-preparation of Ready-To-Cook (Fresh or Thawed) Poultry” on pages 7 and 8.)
2. **Put poultry in large kettle or stockpot.** Add enough water to half-cover chicken or turkey. Season as desired.

3. **Cook.** Cover and simmer until tender.
4. **Monitor internal temperature.** Check the internal temperature of the poultry in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast with a food thermometer. The minimum internal temperature should reach 165 °F for safety.

### Directions for Cooling Stewed Chicken or Turkey

1. **Remove chicken or turkey from broth and place on sheet pans.**
2. **Place container of broth in ice water**  
Do NOT allow the cooling water/ice to get into the container of cooked broth. Stir frequently to hasten cooling. Cover container and store in refrigerator at 40 °F.
3. **Remove meat from bones.** When poultry is cool enough to handle (within 2 hours), remove meat from bones.

4. **Wrap meat loosely in waxed paper, plastic wrap, or foil.**
5. **Store in refrigerator at 40 °F.** Use within 2 days.

**Chill cooked, hot food from 135 °F to 70 °F within 2 hours and from 70 °F to 41 °F or below within the next 4 hours. The total cooling process from 135 °F to 41 °F may not exceed 6 hours.**

For more information on cooking turkey, visit the Food Safety and Inspection Service Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Lets\\_Talk\\_Turkey/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Lets_Talk_Turkey/index.asp).

For more information on meat and poultry, visit the Food Safety and Inspection Service Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp).

## Cooking Fish

Fish must be *handled properly* during storage, thawing, preparation, cooking, and serving to avoid spoilage or serious food-borne illness.

For proper storage and thawing techniques see “Freezer Storage Chart,” “Refrigerator Storage Chart,” and “Thawing Frozen Meat, Poultry, and Fish” in this document.

**ALWAYS wash hands BEFORE and AFTER handling raw fish.**

### Directions for Cooking

1. **Cook frozen fish portions and fish sticks while still frozen.** Fish portions and fish sticks *should not be thawed* before cooking. Remove from the freezer only the amount of portions or sticks needed for 1 day’s use.
2. **Allow additional cooking time for frozen fish.** Or, cook according to manufacturer’s directions.
3. **Monitor internal temperature.** Cook only until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork and thermometer registers the correct temperature.
  - Cook fish fillets or fish steaks to 145 °F.
  - Cook fish portions or fish sticks to 155 °F.
  - Do NOT overcook.
4. **Serve fish immediately after it is cooked.**



## Cooking Pasta

Pasta comes in many different forms. The illustration shows the names and shapes of a variety of popular pastas.

Cooking times and the amount of water needed may vary. Below are general directions for macaroni, noodles, or spaghetti.

### Directions for Cooking

1. Boil water.
2. Slowly stir in pasta while allowing water to continue to boil.
3. Cook, uncovered, at a fast boil until pasta is tender. DO NOT overcook.
4. Drain pasta quickly.  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cooked enriched or whole-grain pasta is equivalent to  $\frac{1}{2}$  slice of bread.

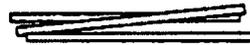
### Types of Pasta

Macaroni, noodles, and spaghetti are just a few of the many pastas you can buy. Here are some others.

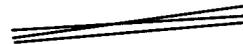
### Pasta Shapes and Names



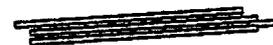
Fettuccine



Linguine



Angel hair



Spaghetti



Gemelli



Manicotti



Bow ties, farfalle



Medium egg noodles



Elbow macaroni



Wide Egg Noodles



Ziti



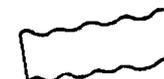
Rotini, twists, spirals



Radiatore



Orzo



Lasagne



Jumbo shells



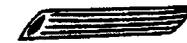
Alphabets



Wagon Wheels



Rigatoni



Mostaccioli, penne



Medium shells



Ditalini



Fusilli



Small shells

# How To Use Specific Ingredients

## Seasoning Vegetables With Herbs and Spices

Vegetables can be made more appealing with herbs, spices, and other seasonings. Herbs and spices also reduce the need for added salt and fat. Try the suggestions below to enhance the natural flavor of vegetables, and try reducing (or eliminating) salt and fat.

TO SEASON...	USE...
<b>Beans, green or wax</b>	Caraway, dill seed, onion powder, or sage
<b>Beets</b>	Caraway, cinnamon, or dill seed
<b>Broccoli</b>	Lemon juice or marjoram
<b>Cabbage</b>	Basil, caraway, celery seed, curry, dill seed, mustard seed, or onion powder
<b>Carrots</b>	Basil, celery seed, cinnamon, dill seed, marjoram, mint, or thyme
<b>Cauliflower</b>	Caraway, celery seed, dill seed, lemon juice, mace, marjoram, rosemary, or tarragon
<b>Celery</b>	Celery seed, curry, dill seed, nutmeg, red pepper, or thyme
<b>Corn</b>	Chili powder
<b>Green leafy vegetables</b>	Garlic powder, lemon juice, or vinegar

TO SEASON...	USE...
<b>Lima beans</b>	Curry
<b>Onions</b>	Cinnamon or sage
<b>Peas, green</b>	Basil, dill seed, marjoram, mint, or oregano
<b>Sauerkraut</b>	Celery seed or sugar
<b>Spinach</b>	Basil, marjoram, mint, nutmeg, rosemary, vinegar, or lemon juice
<b>Sweet potatoes</b>	Allspice, cardamom, or cinnamon
<b>Tomatoes</b>	Basil, celery seed, chili powder, cinnamon, garlic powder, oregano, parsley, sage, or sugar
<b>Turnips</b>	Rosemary
<b>Winter squash</b>	Allspice, cardamom, or nutmeg
<b>Zucchini</b>	Caraway, marjoram, or oregano

# How To Use Specific Ingredients

continued

## Flavoring Substitutions

Here are ways to substitute one flavoring ingredient for another.

	<b>in place of ...</b>	<b>use...</b>
<b>Chocolate, unsweetened</b>	1 oz (1 square)	3 Tbsp cocoa + 1 Tbsp ( $\frac{1}{2}$ oz) fat
<b>Garlic, fresh</b>	1 clove	<i>one of the following:</i> dry granules: $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp garlic powder: $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp garlic salt: $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ( $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp is salt)
<b>Green peppers, fresh</b>	8 oz edible portion	1 oz dry green pepper flakes
<b>Herbs, fresh (all)</b>	1 Tbsp	<i>one of the following:</i> dry flakes: $1 \frac{1}{2}$ tsp dry ground: $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp
<b>Honey</b>	1 cup	$1 \frac{1}{4}$ cups granulated sugar + $\frac{1}{4}$ cup liquid
<b>Onion, fresh</b>	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	<i>one of the following:</i> onion flakes: 2 Tbsp onion powder: 2 Tbsp onion salt: 3 Tbsp (2 Tbsp is salt)
<b>Vanilla, pure extract</b>	1 tsp	imitation vanilla: 2 tsp

## Garnishing Techniques

A garnish is a food item or part of a food item that enhances the food being served and catches the eye of children; for example, a dash of cinnamon over applesauce or shredded cheese sprinkled over Chili Con Carne.

### Considerations in Garnishing

1. Garnishes should be handled carefully to prevent spoilage and foodborne illness. Always wash a vegetable or fruit before preparing it as a garnish.
2. Garnishes need not require a lot of time or money to prepare. The following foods may be sliced, diced, or used as is, as appropriate, for a quick garnish.  
  
Apples, bread crumbs, celery, cheese, coconut, croutons, cucumber, grapes, lettuce, nuts, onion, paprika, parsley, parsley flakes, peaches, raisins, tomato.
3. Garnishes need not require special equipment. Only simple tools are needed; for example, a sharp pointed knife for paring, a serrated knife for bread and tomatoes, and a vegetable peeler for paring fruits and vegetables.



### Choosing a Food Item for Garnish

These items should be appropriate for the menu being served. Use combinations of colors that blend well. Be sure the flavor of the item accents or is compatible with the flavor of the menu item being served. In addition, be sure the size is appropriate.

Some foods with their own vivid color and texture need no garnish, while other foods do need garnishing. For example, pizza with its bright variety of colors needs little or no extra garnish. Creative arrangement of foods can also appeal to children.

### Garnishes

Apple rings,\* apple slices,\* banana chunks,\* carrot coins, green pepper strips, onion rings, orange slices, lemon wedges, tomato slices, and tomato wedges can be used effectively as garnishes. Following are ideas and instructions for creating more unusual garnishes from fruits and vegetables.

\*To delay the browning effect, place apples and bananas in citrus or pineapple juice, or in a lemon juice and water mixture. When ready to use, remove the fruit from the solution and drain.

# How To Use Specific Ingredients

continued



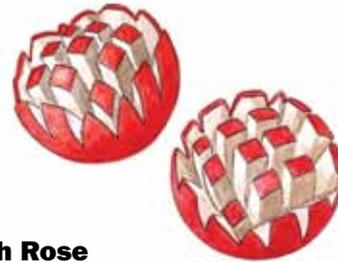
## Carrot Ribbons or Curls

1. Slice carrot in half lengthwise.
2. With a peeler, peel a single strip from the cut surface.
3. Drop in ice water and the strip will curl by itself.
4. Remove from ice water and drain.



## Celery Fans

1. Cut celery stalk into 2 or 3 equal lengths.
2. Make 1 1/4" slashes into one end or both ends of stalk.
3. Fan one end or both ends of stalk.
4. Drop in ice water.
5. Remove from ice water and drain.



## Radish Rose

1. Cut a thin slice off the bottom and top of the radish.
2. Make 4 cuts across the radish horizontally almost to the bottom and then make 4 cuts across the radish vertically.
3. Place in ice water until open (overnight if possible). Remove from ice water and drain.



## Radish Tulip

1. Cut a thin slice off the bottom and top of the radish.
2. Make 3 cuts from the top of the radish almost to the base, making 6 equal segments.
3. Place in ice water until open (overnight if possible). Remove from water and drain.



## Lemon or Orange Twists

1. Cut fruit into 1/4" horizontal slices.
2. Slit each slice and twist.



## Tomato Rose

1. Use a sharp paring knife. With the stem end of the tomato down, begin peeling on the smooth end. Cut around the tomato in a spiral, making a continuous strip about 3/4" wide. Do not be concerned if the peel breaks.
  2. To form the rose, roll one end of the peel tightly to make the center. Loosely roll the remaining peel around the center.
  3. Use a pick to secure the rose base. Cut off excess pick. CAUTION: Be sure pick is firmly secured in the rose, so pick will not fall into the food during service.
- NOTE:** Do NOT store tomato garnishes.

For more information about marketing and garnishing fruits and vegetables, read *Fruits and Vegetables Galore: Helping Kids Eat More* from [teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/fv\\_galore.html](http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/fv_galore.html).