

Living Well in Baker County

Dear Extension Friend:

November 2008

Wow, how is it already November? I don't know about you, but I'm running around like a chicken with my head cut off just trying to figure out who's all coming over for Thanksgiving dinner. I haven't even started thinking about the menu. I guess I need to kick it in high gear. Before I know it we'll all be staring at Christmas decorations and bringing in 2009.

Speaking of menus, I hope you all take a good look at the Food Safety article I included on page 2 and 3. It discusses the importance of a food/meat thermometer in the kitchen. I hear so many times, "it's done with when the juices run clear", or "it's done when it's no longer pink", and I want to scream! Nothing could be farther from the truth. The ONLY way to be sure food is properly cooked is by using a thermometer. I hope you all keep the article in mind when you cook your Thanksgiving meal.

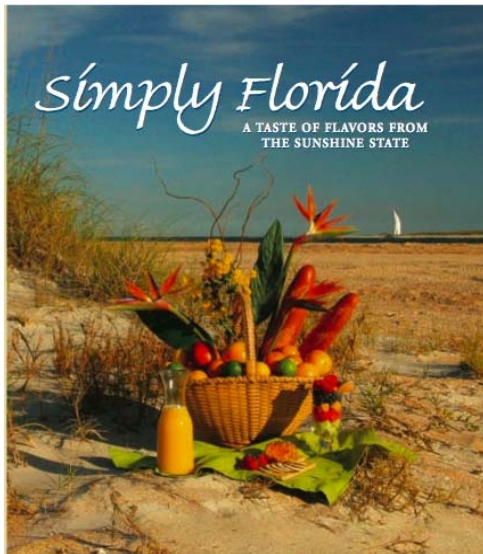
Hope you all enjoy the Newsletter, and as always if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions please give me a call.



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Inside this issue:



Simply Florida: A Taste of Flavors from the Sunshine State

Looking for a great gift idea for that gourmet cook in your life? The new *Simply Florida* cookbook created by Family & Consumer Sciences agents throughout Florida is the perfect choice! Order your copy today by calling Melanie at (904) 966-6224 or by visiting <http://www.simplyflorida.org>.

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Food Safety: The Importance Of A Food Thermometer



Your food thermometer deserves a starring role in your kitchen. The only sure way of knowing if meat, poultry, fish, egg dishes and other foods have reached a high enough temperature to kill bacteria in these foods is to use a food thermometer. Check the internal temperature of the food itself before you taste or serve it. The thermometer must be in the right place in the food, placed in the thickest part of the food away from the bone, fat or gristle. And the thermometer must be accurate so you know just what the true temperature is.

Safe Cooking Temperatures

Raw Food	Internal Temperature
Ground Meat and Meat Mixtures Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb Chicken, Turkey	160°F 165°F
Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb—(Steaks & Roasts) Medium-rare Medium Well-done	145°F 160°F 170°F
Fresh Pork Chops, roasts, ribs Medium Well-done Ham, fresh (raw) Ham, pre-cooked (to reheat) Sausage, fresh	160°F 170°F 160°F 140°F 160°F
Poultry Chicken & Turkey, whole Poultry breasts, thighs, wings (parts) Duck & Goose Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	165°F 165°F 165°F 165°F
Eggs & Egg Dishes Fried, poached Casseroles Sauces, custards	Yolk & white are firm 160°F 160°F
Fin Fish	Opaque & flakes easily with fork or 145°F
Leftovers & Casseroles	165°F

Food Safety: Continued

Taking a Correct Temperature

Be Clean—Make sure the thermometer and its case remain clean.

Before and after each use—Wash, rinse, sanitize and air dry thermometers to avoid contamination. You can sanitize with 1 teaspoon of bleach diluted in one quart of water.

Aim for the center—Take food temperatures in the center or the thickest part of the food, away from the bone, fat or gristle.

Place it far enough into the food—Put the tip of the thermometer in the food, making sure you get it in deep enough to be accurate. See what your thermometer says about how far to insert it or look for a “dimple” or “ring” on the stem.

Be patient—Wait for the needle to stop moving or the numbers on a digital readout to stop changing.

Be accurate—Check to make sure your thermometer is accurate every now and then, and especially after a lot of use with big temperature changes (from hot food to cold food, back to hot, etc.). Always check again if it has been dropped.

Calibrate!

Be sure to check the accuracy of your thermometer before taking food temperatures.

Make it mostly ice—Fill a large glass with ice and cover with water. Make it deep enough to insert the whole sensing area (tip) of the thermometer into the middle of it.

Cover the stem—Insert the thermometer at least 2 inches into the mixture. Make sure the tip does not touch the side or bottom of the glass.

Be patient—Wait until the temperature reading stops changing. Once you think it has stopped, make sure it stays the same for at least 30 seconds.

Be correct—The temperature should read 32°F.

Adjust if needed—If your dial thermometer needs correcting, turn the calibrating nut or adjusting bar under the dial or face until it does read 32. Keep the stem under the ice while you do this. If your digital thermometer needs correcting, use the buttons provided. If it cannot be adjusted, try a new battery or buy a new one.

Source: Elizabeth L. Andress, Ph.D., Extension Food Safety Specialist, and Carolyn Ainslie, Educational Program Specialist, University of Georgia



Happy Thanksgiving

“Not what we say about our blessings, but how we use them, is the true measure of our thanksgiving.” - WT Purkiser

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Aging: Physical Changes

The aging body does change. Some systems slow down, while others lose their "fine tuning." As a general rule, slight, gradual changes are common, and most of these are not problems to the person who experiences them. Sudden and dramatic changes might indicate serious health problems. A program of regular, thorough health check-ups and self-examinations will identify changes that may be cause for concern.

Many of the once-disabling problems of aging can be managed through improved health care and the use of assistive devices. Simple but effective changes in the home environment can be made that prevent problems and enable the older person to maintain independence.

The person who has had good health habits when younger and who maintains these habits throughout life can expect to age with a sense of well-being and continued enthusiasm for living. A healthy lifestyle includes getting plenty of appropriate physical activity, such as simple stretches and walking. Research confirms that physical activity prevents problems as people age such as increased weight gain and risk of cardiovascular disease. Activities that increase strength and mobility can also help older adults remain independent.

To stay healthy, older adults also need adequate sleep, sufficient fluid intake, nutritious foods, and a healthy and comfortable body weight. For more information about aging, meeting nutritional needs in the later years and maintaining a healthy lifestyle feel free to contact the Baker County Extension Office at 904-259-3520.

Source: Smith and Gove, University of Florida