



### Plating it Safe: Spring Break Food Tips

By Dianna Schalles

#### On the Road

- Place perishable foods in a cooler with ice or freezer packs.
- Place drinks in a separate cooler so the food cooler is not opened frequently.
- Pack perishable foods (like meat, mayo, dairy) directly from the refrigerator or freezer into the cooler. Meat and poultry may be packed while it is still frozen so it stays colder longer.
- A full cooler will maintain its cold temperature longer than one that is partially filled. If the cooler is only partially filled, pack the remaining space with more ice or with fruit and some non-perishable foods such as peanut butter and jelly.
- Keep raw meat and poultry wrapped separately from cooked foods, ready-to-eat foods and beverages.
- Keep the cooler in the passenger compartment of your vehicle, rather than a hot trunk.

#### At the Beach

- Take along only the amount of food that can be eaten to avoid having leftovers that may spoil. If grilling, make sure local ordinances allow it.
- Bury your cooler partially in the sand, cover with blankets, and shade with a beach umbrella.
- Bring along wet wipes and antibacterial for cleaning hands.
- If dining along the boardwalk, make sure food stands look clean and that hot foods are served hot and cold foods served cold.
- Don't eat anything that has been sitting out in the hot sun – a big risk for food borne illness and a spoiled vacation!

#### Beyond the Border

If you're heading off to Mexico or some other warm Central American or Caribbean country this break, take extra precautions against 'Montezuma's Revenge'. One study reported 29% of American college students developed traveler's diarrhea as a result of spring break travels.

- Wash hands often with soap and water. Use antibacterial hand wipes or alcohol swabs when soap and water are unavailable.
- Drink only bottled or boiled water, carbonated drinks in cans or bottles, coffee, tea, beer, or wine. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. Wipe off the top of the can or bottle.
- Eat only thoroughly cooked food, pasteurized dairy products, and fruits and veggies you have peeled yourself. Avoid salads.
- Don't purchase food from street vendors.
- Don't brush your teeth with tap water. (in areas where water is contaminated)

**Stick to this simple rule: *Boil it, peel it, cook it or forget it!***

### **Avoiding the 'Spring Break 15'**

Keep some semblance of a healthy eating routine and reap the benefits of fun-filled physical activity – sand volleyball, skiing, dancing, jogging along the beach.

- Try to keep a regular meal and snack pattern and avoid the 'all you can eat', non-stop munching syndrome.
- Eat, drink and be merry, but keep some balance. Eat when you are hungry, stop when you are full. Keep in mind many alcoholic beverages are loaded with calories. If you choose to drink, pace yourself with water and a lime wedge or diet ginger-ale. Your liver and waistline will thank you!
- Pack some healthy snacks so you won't be at the mercy of convenience and fast food munchies when the hunger pangs strike.
- Grab some fruit – nature's 'fast food'. The fiber in fresh fruits and veggies can help you avoid constipation – often a side effect of long hours on the road and poor nutrition choices.

### **Bon appétit!**

A one week vacation won't make or break a healthy lifestyle, but it will be easier to maintain your fitness if you balance food choices and keep active, before, during and after spring break. Crash dieting to squeeze into that new swimsuit? This can actually increase the likelihood of binge eating and mindless munching. Be sensible, be active and enjoy some flavor-filled foods with your friends. When the break is over, try to get back to your usual routine as soon as possible.

For more information:

U.S. Centers for Disease Control Travel Information

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel>

Provided by Lafene Health Center, Health Promotion and Nutrition Counseling, Kansas State University



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