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Travellers; Be Careful What You Eat

By Margot B

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Travellers Be Careful What You Eat

Diarrhea affects up to 50% of all travellers. Other diseases that effect travellers include typhoid and paratyphoid fevers, polio, viral hepatitis A, and a variety of parasitic infections.

When travelling you may not always be able to safely eat when, where and what you wish. Take a look at your servers! Are they clean looking? Most importantly, do their hands and fingernails look clean? Do they keep their hands away from their faces and hair? Foodborne illness can be passed person-to-person or from the bathroom by unwashed hands. Burns and cuts that may be infected are also a plentiful source of harmful bacteria. If you can, try to get a glimpse of the person who is fixing your food. You decide from there.

Plates, glasses and utensils should be clean and spot free. If they have dried-on food, finger prints, or lipstick on glasses, then the dishwasher is likely on the blink. Ask for clean replacements or move on down the road. Fresh foods such as fruits and vegetables should appear fresh and have a fresh aroma. Wilted salads may be an indication that the product is old or has not been properly handled.

See any bugs? If you have to share your table with roaches, it's time to leave. What is the general condition of the restaurant environment? Sure, you don't eat off the floor, but how the manager keeps the place up may be an indication of the amount of pride they take in preparing your food.

And remember, don't drink the water!

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Shopping For Food:

Plan ahead, decide what you are going to eat and how you are going to cook it—then plan what equipment you will need. Buy your food from a reputable supplier. Examples of foods to avoid are custards, egg salad, potato salad, chicken salad, macaroni salad, ham, salami, most cheese, cooked poultry and dressing, and smoked fish.

More foods that may be dangerous are home-made mayonnaise, some sauces [e.g. hollandaise] and some desserts, such as mousses. Ice cream is frequently contaminated if it comes from an unreliable source.

Be especially wary of unpasteurized milk, non-bottled drinks [they are likely to be contaminated and possibly unsafe]. Boil uncooked food and unpasteurized milk

before drinking.

Fruit and vegetables that YOU can peel or shell are okay.

Ensure that even cooked food has been thoroughly and freshly cooked and is piping hot. Cooked food that has set at a mildly warm room temperature for more than two hours holds one of the greatest risks of food-borne disease because bacteria may multiply in it. If room temperature is hotter, 90 F or more, leave out no longer than one hour.

Various species of fish and shellfish contain poisonous biotoxins at certain times of the year. So check with the local population.

Buy only hard cheeses marked "aged 60 days" [or longer]. With purchased or delicatessen cold food, eat or refrigerate immediately.

Take care with perishable foods before you get them home. Purchase them at your last stop, especially in hot weather, get them home and into the fridge quickly. Do not thaw frozen food at room temperature, keep in fridge 'till defrosted. Wash hands with soap and warm water before preparing, serving or eating food. Avoid using hands to mix foods when clean utensils can be used. Keep hands away from mouth, nose and hair.

General Rules for Outdoor Food Safety:

Items which don't require refrigeration include fruits, vegetables, hard cheese, canned meat or fish, chips, bread, crackers, peanut butter, jelly, mustard, and pickles. You don't need to pack them in a cooler. Carry bottled water for drinking. Otherwise, boil water or use water purification tablets. Don't use untreated water to clean your contact lenses but use only what is manufactured solely for that use.

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Don't leave trash in the wild or throw it off your boat.

If using a cooler, leftover food is safe only if the cooler still has ice in it.

Otherwise, discard leftover food.

Whether on land or sea, protect yourself and wash your hands before and after you eat.

Preparing For The Trip:

Pack safely, use a cooler if travelling by car, camping or boating. Keep raw foods separate from other foods. Never bring meat or poultry products without a cold source to keep them safe. Bring disposable wipes or biodegradable soap for hand and dishwashing.

Household pets and even some pet treats carry harmful bacteria, so keep them away from foods. Also be sure you wash your hands after petting your animals or handling their food.

When backpacking or hiking, the foods to bring are peanut butter in plastic

jars, concentrated juice boxes, canned tuna, ham, chicken and beef, dried noodles, soups, dried nuts, fruits, powdered milk and fruit drinks, powdered mixes for biscuits or pancakes, dried pasta, powdered sauce mixes, and rice. Take only the amount you need. Pack foods in the frozen state with a cold source.

When cooking meat use a meat thermometer for beef patties. Cook until 160 Fahrenheit. Heat hot dogs to 165 F. Chicken breasts to 170 F and legs and thighs to 180 F. Be sure to clean the thermometer between uses.

If travelling by car, for perishables use an ice chest or insulated cooler with sufficient ice, or gel packs to keep the food at 40 F. Pack food directly from the fridge or freezer into it. Why? Bacteria grow and multiply rapidly in the danger zone between 40 F and 140 F [out of the refrigerator or before food begins to cook]. So, food transported without an ice source or left out in the sun at a picnic won't stay safe long.

Put in air-conditioned passenger section, not in the trunk. At the camp site, insulate the cooler with a blanket or tarp and keep it in the shade. Keep the lid closed and avoid repeated openings. Replenish the ice if it melts. Once gel packs and their cold sources melt and cannot be replaced, perishables are not safe—discard them.

When Fishing:

With finfish, scale, gut and clean fish as soon as they're caught. Live fish can be kept on stringers or in live wells, as long as they have enough water and

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enough room to move and breathe.

Wrap fish, both whole and cleaned, in water-tight plastic and store on ice. Keep 3 to 4 inches of ice on the bottom of the cooler. Alternate layers of fish and ice. Store the cooler out of the sun and cover with a blanket.

Once home, eat fresh fish within 1 to 2 days or freeze them. For top quality, use frozen fish within 3 to 6 months.

Crabs, lobsters and other shellfish must be kept alive until cooked. Store in live wells or out of water in a bushel or laundry basket under wet burlap or seaweed.

Crabs and lobsters are best eaten the day they're caught. Live oysters should be cooked within 7 to 10 days.

Live mussels and clams should be cooked within 4 to 5 days.

Eating raw shellfish is extremely dangerous. People with liver disorders or weakened immune systems are especially at risk.

Cleanup on the boat is similar to cleanup in the wild. Bring disposable wipes for handwashing, and bag all your trash to dispose of when you return to shore.

Vacation Home or RV:

If a vacation home or a recreational vehicle has not been used for a while, check leftover canned food from last year. The Meat and Poultry Hotline recommends that canned foods that may have been exposed to freezing and thawing temperatures over the winter be discarded. Also, check the refrigerator. If unplugged from last year, thoroughly clean it before using. Make sure all food preparation areas in the vacation home or in the recreational vehicle are thoroughly cleaned.

It's perfectly safe to store uncooked patties as well as raw steaks, ribs, chops and raw poultry in the refrigerator for a day or so until ready to pack the cooler. If marinating meat and poultry, store in the refrigerator— not on the counter. If you plan to use some of the marinade as a sauce, reserve a portion before putting raw meat in it. Don't reuse the marinade, throw it out!

Perishables must be kept cold or cooked and chilled. Food should not be out of the refrigerator or oven longer than 2 hours. If cooking foods beforehand— such as turkey, ham, chicken, and vegetable or pasta salads— prepare them in plenty of time to thoroughly chill in the refrigerator. Divide large amounts of food into small containers for fast chilling and easier use. Keep cooked foods refrigerated until time to leave home.

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Purchasing Take-Out Foods:

If you're planning on purchasing take-out foods such as fried chicken or barbecued beef, eat them within two hours of pickup. Otherwise, buy ahead of time to chill before packing them into the cooler.

Serving Food:

Except when served, the food should be stored in a cooler. As the refrigerator at home when the power is off, the more times you open a cooler, the more cold air will escape. Once the ice melts, the cooler won't be able to keep food safe. Keep cold drinks in a separate cooler to avoid constantly opening the one containing perishable foods.

If you've packed cooked foods in several small containers, you can serve one and keep the others cold for second helpings. Leave raw meat in the cooler, too. When cooking it, remove from the cooler only the amount that will fit on the grill.

Grilling Safety for Safety and Quality:

The coals should be very hot before cooking food. For optimal heat, burn them 20 to 30 minutes or until they are lightly coated with ash. The USDA recommends against eating raw or undercooked ground beef since harmful bacteria could be present. To be sure bacteria are destroyed, cook hamburgers to 160 F on a meat thermometer. Large cuts of beef such as roasts may be cooked to 145 F for medium rare or to 160 F for medium. Cook ground poultry to 165 F and poultry parts to 180 F. Reheat pre-cooked meats until steaming hot. When taking foods off the grill, don't put the cooked items on the same platter which held the raw meat. Raw meat juices can contain bacteria that could cross-contaminate safely cooked foods. Do not partially grill extra hamburgers to use later. Once you begin

cooking hamburgers by any method, cook them until completely done to assure that bacteria are destroyed.

Keeping Leftovers Safe:

Place leftover foods in the cooler promptly after grilling or serving. Any left outside for more than an hour should be discarded. For the return trip, the cooler should again travel in the air-conditioned part of the car. If you were gone not more than 4 or 5 hours and your perishables were kept on ice except when cooked and served, you should be able to use the leftovers.

Check the cooler when you get home. If there is still ice in the cooler and the food is "refrigerator cool" to the touch, the leftovers should be safe to eat.

Remember: cook it, peel it, or leave it---and don't drink the water!

By Margot B/Writer & Web Developer
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Vacationers... Did you know?

By News Canada

(NC)—The long-awaited vacations of 1.3 million Canadians may be ruined every year by Travellers' Diarrhea, also referred to as Montezuma's Revenge. While rarely life threatening, Travellers' Diarrhea has a way of disrupting a perfectly planned vacation by keeping you running to the bathroom or even stuck in bed.

To make sure your vacation is as wonderful as can be, travellers to Mexico, the Caribbean, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and most parts of Asia should take precautions to avoid Travellers' Diarrhea.

"Now you have a tool that is recommended to help prevent Travellers' Diarrhea" said Dr. Suni Boraston, travel medicine specialist, Vancouver BC. "Travel specialists like myself are thrilled that there is now a prevention available for Travellers' Diarrhea. Called Dukoral™, it's an oral vaccine that you drink prior to your trip to help protect you from Travellers' Diarrhea. You still need to be cautious while travelling, but you can be a more confident traveller knowing that Dukoral is protecting you."

Travel Tips:

- Drink only carbonated bottled water or soft drinks, bottled fruit juices, alcoholic beverages without ice and hot beverages
- Only eat fruit and vegetables that you have peeled yourself
- Make sure that foods are well cooked
- Don't forget to visit a travel clinic or your family doctor well in advance of your trip to ensure you are medically protected from travellers' diseases including Travellers' Diarrhea.

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Fewer Rooms, More Style

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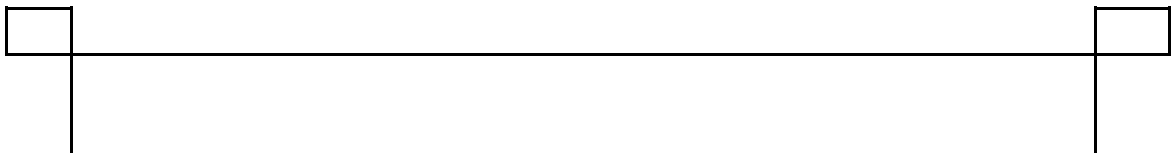
Hints for lovers

30-Day Low Carb Diet 'Ketosis Plan'

100 succulent Chinese Recipes



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