

Buffet Basics

Plan a BAC-free buffet with these tips!

Size Matters!

If you're planning a buffet at home and are not sure how quickly the food will be eaten, **keep buffet portions small**. Prepare a number of small platters and dishes ahead of time. Store cold back-up dishes in the refrigerator and keep hot dishes in the oven (set at 200° - 250° F) prior to serving. This way, your late-arriving guests can enjoy the same appetizing arrangements as the early arrivals.

Take Temperatures!

Cooked, hot foods should be kept at 140° F or warmer. Use a food thermometer to check. Serve or keep food hot in chafing dishes, crock pots, and warming trays. *Note:* Some warmers only hold food at 110° F to 120° F, so make sure your warmer has the capability to hold foods at 140° F or warmer.

Chill Out!

Cold foods should be kept at 40° F or colder. Keep cold foods refrigerated until serving time. If food is going to stay out on the buffet table longer than 2 hours, place plates of cold food on ice to retain the chill.

Keep it Fresh!

It can be unsafe to add new food to a serving dish that already contained food. Many people's hands may have touched the food, which has also been sitting at room temperature for awhile. Instead, **replace empty platters with freshly filled ones**.

Watch the Clock!

Remember the 2-Hour Rule: Don't leave perishable food out at room temperature on a buffet table for more than 2 hours unless you're keeping it hot or cold. If the buffet is held in a place where the temperature is above 90° F, the safe-holding time is reduced to 1 hour.



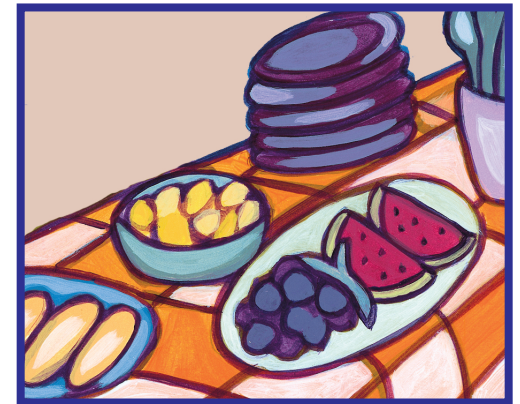
If you have any questions or concerns about food safety during the holiday season, contact:

- The **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Meat and Poultry Hotline** at (800) 535-4555 or (202) 720-3333 (Washington, DC area). The TTY number for the hearing impaired is (800) 256-7072
- The **U.S. Food and Drug Administration Food Information Line** at (888) SAFE FOOD
- The **Fight BAC!** Web site at: www.fightbac.org



Bon appétit!

Buffet Bonanza: Keeping Food Safe!



**Guard your buffet table from BAC!
by following these food safety tips.**

