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## Importance of Cooking Temperatures

Cooking foods to the proper temperature is a must to keep your family safe. Foods such as beef, poultry, pork, eggs, seafood, and leftovers can carry illness-causing bacteria that can make people sick. Cooking foods to a certain temperature kills the harmful bacteria. Food thermometers are special thermometers used to measure the temperature of foods. They help you know when you have reached safe cooking temperatures. They are sold at many local grocery stores in the kitchen section. Always follow the directions on the package to use the thermometer correctly. A thermometer should be inserted in the thickest part of the food. Certain thermometers take better readings in some foods than others. Buy one that works for the variety of foods you cook.



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For more information on stretching your food dollars, contact your local SDSU Extension office or the State office at 605-688-4440.

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## Minimum Cooking Temperatures

Using a food thermometer, make sure the food reaches these minimum cooking temperatures.



- Ground meat and meat mixtures: 160 degrees F
- Steaks, roast, chops: 145 degrees F
- All poultry: 165 degrees F
- Pork and ham: 145 degrees F (fresh), 165 degrees F (precooked)
- Leftovers and casseroles: 165 degrees F
- Seafood (fish with fins): 145 degrees F
- Eggs: cook until yolk and white are firm

## Safe Thawing Practices

Thawing foods at safe temperatures is also important. There are several safe methods you can use:



- Refrigerator: Thawing food in the refrigerator is the safest way to thaw food. Also, food thawed in the refrigerator can be refrozen safely!
- In the microwave: Food can be thawed safely in the microwave using an appropriate defrost setting. Food must be cooked immediately after.
- Under cold water: The thawing process can be sped up by placing food in a leak-proof plastic bag under cold water. Water should be changed every 30 minutes.
- Cooking: Frozen food can be cooked without thawing. However, it will take at least 50 percent longer to cook food this way.



## Apricot & Lemon Chicken

Makes 4 Servings

### Ingredients:

4 chicken breasts, boneless & skinless (medium)  
1 teaspoon cumin  
5 tablespoons apricot spread (about 1/3 cup)  
1 fresh lemon, juiced  
2 tablespoons water

### Directions:

Rub cumin over chicken and place in skillet. Cook on medium-high for 6 minutes on each side, or until cooked through. Remove from pan and keep warm. Add apricot spread, lemon juice, and water to skillet. On medium heat, stir until smooth. Spoon sauce over chicken and serve warm.

Why wait for dessert to enjoy your fruit? Make it a part of your meal in this main dish.

Nutritional Information per serving: Total Calories 241; Total Fat 4g; Saturated Fat 1g; Protein 31g; Carbohydrates 19g; Dietary Fiber 0g; Sodium 83mg



## Honey Mustard Pork Chops

Makes 4 Servings

### Ingredients:

4 top loin pork chops  
1/3 cup orange juice  
1 tablespoon soy sauce, reduced sodium  
2 tablespoons light honey mustard

### Directions:

Put the pork chops in the large non-stick skillet. Cook over medium-high heat to brown one side of the pork chops. Use the spatula to turn the chops. Add the rest of the ingredients and stir. Cover the pan and lower the heat. Simmer for 6 to 8 minutes until chops are done.

This family favorite can be made in minutes! Enjoy with a side salad and a whole grain biscuit or dinner roll.

Nutritional Information per serving: Total Calories 238; Total Fat 6g; Saturated Fat 2g; Protein 38; Carbohydrates 4g; Dietary Fiber 0g; Sodium 280mg



## Basic Custard

Makes 4 Servings

### Ingredients:

1 egg  
2 tablespoons sugar  
1 cup skim milk (or reconstituted non-fat dry milk)  
½ vanilla (½ teaspoon, optional)

### Directions:

#### Stovetop version:

Beat egg and sugar together in a saucepan. Add milk. Place saucepan with egg/milk mixture in another pan containing 1-2 inches boiling water. Stir custard constantly while cooking. Cook until foam disappears and custard coats the spoon. Remove from heat. Add flavoring and stir. Pour into individual dishes and cool in the refrigerator. Custard will be soft.

Eggs, milk, and a bit of sugar combine into a wholesome dessert that can be enjoyed by all ages.

Nutritional Information per serving: Total Calories 63; Total Fat 1g; Saturated Fat 0g; Protein 4g; Carbohydrates 9g; Dietary Fiber 0g; Sodium 44mg



## Green Beans & New Potatoes

Makes 6 Servings

### Ingredients:

3 ½ cups frozen green beans (16 oz bag)  
8 potatoes (small, washed, peeled, and halved)  
1 onion (medium, chopped)  
¼ teaspoon salt

### Directions:

Add all ingredients to a large stock pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil and reduce to medium heat. Cook until green beans and potatoes are tender.

Frozen green beans and potatoes are boiled in a pot with onion and salt to make an easy side dish for dinner.

Nutritional Information per serving: Total Calories 204; Total Fat 0g; Saturated Fat 0g; Protein 6g; Carbohydrates 46g; Dietary Fiber 8g; Sodium 112mg

