

## Winter Wonderland

In the winter we like to be cozy and warm, but leftovers and packed lunches sent by families need to stay wintery cold. In a recent study, researchers found that in most packed lunches, perishable foods are not kept at safe temperatures, even with ice packs. Food-borne illness is very common, so it is important

to be sure that packed lunches from home and leftovers from prepared lunches are chilled and maintain at safe temperatures. Storing food in the refrigerator at 40°F or below is one of the best ways to slow the growth of microorganisms and prevent illness.

### Keep it icy!

*Here are some guidelines for refrigerating foods from the U.S. Department of Agriculture:*

- \* Do not let cooked food or cut fresh vegetables and fruit out at room temperature for more than 2 hours. If the temperature is above 90°F, food should not sit out longer than 1 hour.
- \* To cool leftovers quicker, divide large amounts of leftovers into smaller and shallower containers.
- \* Keep foods chilled until served.
- \* Do not over fill the refrigerator. Cold air must be able to circulate to maintain temperature.
- \* Keep the refrigerator between 32°F and 40°F. Temperatures above 40°F will allow microorganisms to grow, and temperatures below 32°F will cause foods to start to freeze, lowering the quality of some foods, such as fresh fruits and vegetables.



### Resources

- USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service  
– [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov)
- FoodSafety.gov  
– [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)
- The Partnership for Food Safety Education Fight Bac! program  
– [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org)
- Be Food Safe  
– [www.befoodsafe.org](http://www.befoodsafe.org)

### References:

- Almansour, Fawaz D., Sara J. Sweitzer, Allison A. Magness, Eric E. Calloway, Michael R. McAllaster, Cynthia R. Roberts-Gray, Deanna M. Hoelscher, and Margaret E. Briley. "Temperature of Foods Sent by Parents of Preschool-Aged Children." *Pediatrics* 128, no. 3, (Sept. 2011): 519-523.
- Partnership for Food Safety Education. "Chill Fact Sheet" [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org)
- Utah State University Cooperative Extension: Food Preparation "Viva Vegetables" <http://usuextensionfoodpreparation.blogspot.com/>

## Winter Wonderland Winners

While enjoying a warm winter lunch, share some of the seasonal poems from the winter activity pages with the children. Here are some tasty winter wonderland recipes to try, but remember ... **keep them chilled once you're filled!**

### Cauliflower-Cheese Soup

#### What you need:

- 2 large potatoes, peeled and diced.
- 1 large cauliflower, cut into florets (set aside 2 cups and dice)
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and chopped
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt
- 4 cups water or broth
- 1 ½ cup grated sharp white cheddar cheese (set aside ½ cup)
- ¾ cup low-fat milk
- Salt and pepper to taste

#### What you do:

Pour water into soup pot. Add potatoes, cauliflower (except 2 cups for reserve), carrots, and salt. Bring to a boil and simmer until vegetables are very tender. Puree the mixture in a blender or food processor. If you prefer chunky soup, mash the mixture with a potato masher. Put the mixture back into the soup pot. Microwave or steam the reserved cauliflower until tender. Add reserve cauliflower, 1 cup cheese, and milk to the soup pot. Heat mixture on low until heated, stirring frequently. Serve while hot. Add salt and pepper to taste and garnish with reserve cheese.

### Snowman (or Snowball) Biscuits

#### What you need:

- Refrigerated biscuit dough
- Food coloring
- Cotton swabs

#### What you do:

Take 3 biscuits and press them together to make a snowman form. Use the cotton swabs and food coloring to decorate snowman. Or roll each biscuit into balls to make "snowballs." Bake according to package directions.

### Fruity Dip

#### What you need:

- 1 (8 ounce) carton of plain low-fat yogurt
  - 1 tablespoon orange juice concentrate
  - ½ teaspoon vanilla
  - sprinkle of cinnamon
- Fruit for dipping:*
- apple spears
  - banana slices
  - pineapple chunks

#### What you do:

Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Give each child his/her own small bowl of dip.



### Potato Snow Flakes (pancakes)

#### What you need:

- 5 medium potatoes, peeled and grated
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 tablespoons matzoh meal or 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil for frying

#### What you do:

Add eggs, matzoh meal or flour, baking powder, and salt. Mix well. Drop spoonfuls of mixture onto a nonstick griddle or frying pan coated with vegetable oil. Press balls to make "snowflakes." Cook, turning once, until golden.

**Please note:** Infants and young children can choke easily on some foods, such as nuts, popcorn, fruit seeds or pits, pieces of hot dogs or bacon, raisins, peanut butter, and some raw vegetables and fruits, such as carrots, celery, apples, and grapes. Using grated or finely chopped foods may reduce the risk of choking. Always closely supervise infants and young children when they eat. Also be aware of allergies and sensitivities to foods.

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