



*The Voice for Safe Food*

## 11 food safety tips to pack for spring break

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Whether you spend spring break partying in a city, exploring a different country or getting some R&R at home, don't let food safety take a vacation. "Spring break is the perfect time to make memories with family and friends and Stop Foodborne Illness wants to make sure it's the FUN MEMORIES that fill up your social media," says [Stop Foodborne Illness](#) CEO, Deirdre Schlunegger.

Maintaining basic food safety standards, like [washing hands](#), and adding some travel-specific practices is the best way to ensure foodborne illness won't interrupt a fun getaway. Check out the Stop Foodborne Illness top tips for food safety during spring break.

All-inclusive resorts have many perks; they are touted as safer, more affordable, ideal for partying and usually include 24/7 buffets. Having unlimited access to food and drink is convenient, but can be potentially dangerous. Buffets serve large amounts of food over long periods of time, meaning there are more opportunities for food to not be kept at consistent, correct temperatures. Additionally, everyone shares the same serving utensils, increasing the risk of spreading pathogens. Since many all-inclusive resorts also have sit-down dining

options on site, Stop Foodborne Illness recommends avoiding the buffet when possible and following these tips when it's not.

- There's always the possibility that food has not been held at proper temperatures – cold foods (salads, cold cuts, dressings) should be cold and hot foods (soups, meats, fish) should be hot. Any food that's served at room temperature, and isn't supposed to be, is within the temperature "[danger zone](#)" where bacteria can thrive.
- If you've gotten away to a warmer climate, remember the one-hour rule. Any perishable foods that have been sitting out beyond one hour when the temperature is higher than 90° F, is not safe to consume. (It's 2 hours, if the temperature is below 90° F.)
- Another source of contamination is when food is mishandled by people with unclean hands. If you see something, say something. Don't assume anything. And, of course, after a day's activities, be sure to wash your own hands before eating.
- Fresh fruit and vegetables from the buffet can be a great poolside snack but don't forget to [wash and peel](#) the tasty treat before eating. If you're in an area with unsafe water, wash the produce with bottled or filtered water.

Eating and drinking can be some of the best things about travelling abroad. While "going local" is a delicious way to experience a new cuisine, it can also be an easier way to contract foodborne illness. Stop encourages travelers to be adventurous, but smart when it comes to consuming food in different countries.

- [Street food](#) is a great way to experience local culture, but often, stalls don't have the same hygiene standards as restaurants that cater to tourists. Stop Foodborne Illness recommends being aware of this difference and [making wise choices](#) when enjoying dishes from local restaurants or street stands.
- Avoid establishments where the food handlers don't practice [good hygiene](#), such as tying back their hair, wearing protective gloves and having clean hands and fingernails.
- [Be selective](#) when choosing foods. Avoid raw milk and raw milk cheeses, and other raw foods—including undercooked meat and seafood, and uncooked vegetables — as well as foods that require a lot of handling before serving.
- Be extra cautious when [visiting a remote destination](#). Turn up the food safety dial a notch; even though you may enjoy certain foods and beverages at home—like rare meat or runny eggs—it's better to avoid questionable foods while in a different country. (Being sick in a language you don't know can really complicate matters.)

As they say, half the fun is getting there! When you're road tripping, in a rental or hopping on a plane, make sure you arrive at your destination safely with safe snacking habits.

- Sanitize tray tables, seat armrests and door handles with an 60% alcohol-based wipe. These frequently touched areas are generally made of plastic, a nonporous material that allows germs to live on longer, and have a higher risk of spreading foodborne illness.
- Keep food out of the [danger zone](#). Make sure cold food stays cold—at or below 40°F—by packing it in coolers with frozen gel packs or ice. Stop Foodborne Illness suggests packing beverages in one cooler and perishable foods in another since you are likely to grab beverages most often while on the road. Since hot food needs to stay hot—at or above 140°F, Stop Foodborne Illness suggests passing on hot foods and opting instead for peanuts, and other nuts (including nut butters), jelly, crackers,

chips, dried fruit, baked goods such as cookies or muffins, granola bars, popcorn, and whole fresh fruits like bananas, apples, and oranges.

- Rinse all fresh produce under running tap water (and patting it dry) before packing it in a cooler, including produce with peel-away skins or rinds. Follow this [checklist](#) to make sure coolers are packed properly.

Not going anywhere? Enjoy a relaxing staycation at home but don't let your food safety practices go on a break. The best way to prevent the spread of foodborne illness is to continue following proper food safety. [Wash your hands](#) for 20 seconds before handling food, cook food to a [safe internal temperature](#) and [clean cooking equipment and surfaces](#) after preparing raw foods. Visit [stopfoodborneillness.org](http://stopfoodborneillness.org) for more food safety tips.

### **About Stop Foodborne Illness**

Stop Foodborne Illness is a national nonprofit, public health organization dedicated to preventing illness and death from foodborne pathogens by promoting sound food safety policy and best practices, building public awareness, and assisting those impacted by foodborne illness.

For more food safety tips please visit [www.Stopfoodborneillness.org/awareness/](http://www.Stopfoodborneillness.org/awareness/). If you [think you have been sickened from food](#), contact your local health professional.

You may subscribe to receive Stop Foodborne Illness e-Alerts and eNews here: [www.Stopfoodborneillness.org/take-action/sign-up-for-e-alerts/](http://www.Stopfoodborneillness.org/take-action/sign-up-for-e-alerts/).

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For questions and personal assistance, please contact Stanley Rutledge, Community Coordinator, at [srutledge@Stopfoodborneillness.org](mailto:srutledge@Stopfoodborneillness.org) or 773-269-6555 x7.