



# HealthBits

## Safe—not sick—Holiday Foods

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Preparing and enjoying large meals often coincides with the holiday season. Do you know how to properly thaw frozen food items? Can you state the temperature your food must reach during the cooking process to be considered safe? If you do not know the answers to the former, you are not alone! The following are guidelines derived from the ServSafe Coursebook.

### Minimum Internal Cooking Temperatures:

Product	Minimum Internal Cooking Temperature
Poultry (whole or ground duck, chicken, turkey)	165 F (74 C) for 15 seconds
Stuffed meat, fish, poultry, or pasta	165 F (74 C) for 15 seconds
Ground Meat (beef, pork, other meats)	155 F (68 C) for 15 seconds
Pork, Beef, Veal, Lamb	Steaks/chops: 145 F (63 C) for 15 seconds Roasts: 145 F (63 C) for 4 minutes
Fish	145 F (63 C) for 15 seconds

### Four Ways to Properly Thaw Food:

1. In refrigeration at 41 degrees F or lower—this takes planning as larger products, such as turkey, can take several days to thaw completely.
2. Submerged under running potable water at a temperature of 70 degrees F or lower—clean and sanitize the work area before and after.
3. In a microwave—you should only thaw food in a microwave oven if it will be cooked immediately afterward. Microwave thawing can actually start cooking the product.
4. As part of the cooking process—safe as long as the product reaches the required internal cooking temperature.

Did You Know... December is "Pear Month." Check out the great recipe below!

### Seasonal Produce:

Buying seasonal fruits and vegetables will help to save some green (not to mention they will taste better), which is a definite perk as the holiday shopping season is in full swing. The following are produce items that are currently in season:

Vegetables: White and Sweet Potatoes, Mushrooms, Celery, and Onions

Fruits: Pears and Avocados

### Featured Recipe: Lolita Salad

#### Salad Ingredients:

- 1 bag/head lettuce
- 1 cup cashews
- 1 cup golden raisins
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella or Swiss cheese
- 2 pears (cubed)

#### Dressing Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/3 cup lemon juice
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2/3 cup olive oil

Directions: Mix salad and dressing ingredients in separate bowls. Pour dressing over salad mixture, toss, and serve.

Hint: If you plan to bring this dish to a holiday party, do not combine the dressing with the salad mixture until closer to serving time. This will prevent the salad from becoming "soggy."



**Click Pick** (Recommended Website)

<http://www.healthyalberta.com/ActiveLiving/691.htm>

No one understands the winter better than our "northern neighbor" Canada. Check out this site for information on staying active during the winter.

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