

Words on Wellness

Handling Leftovers and Food Safety



Often when we cook at home or eat in a restaurant, we have leftovers. To ensure that leftovers are safe to eat, make sure the food is cooked to a safe temperature and stored correctly. Safe handling of leftovers is important to reduce foodborne illness. Use these tips to store leftovers:

- **Freezing.** Almost any food can be frozen. Freezing leftovers is easy to do and simplifies meal planning and preparation. If you know you will be short on time next week, freezing your favorite recipe this week is a good option.
- **Wrap leftovers well.** You can wrap food in freezer paper; place in freezer bags, making sure to let all the air out; or place in freezer-safe storage containers. This helps keep bacteria out and preserve moisture.
- **Label and date.** Label and date all leftovers so you know what is in the package and how long you can safely store it before throwing it away.
- **Storage.** Leftovers should be eaten, frozen, or thrown away after four days. If frozen, use leftovers within three to four months for the best quality.
- **Thaw.** Safe ways to thaw leftovers include the refrigerator, cold water, and the microwave oven.
- **Reheat.** Reheat leftovers in the microwave to 165°F in a microwave safe container and add liquid if needed. Stir the food halfway through the reheating process. Check the temperature of the food in several places before serving it as dense food needs more time to cook.

For more information watch [How to Freeze Leftovers](https://go.iastate.edu/VT3C71), go.iastate.edu/VT3C71, or download the How to Freeze Leftovers [Handout](https://go.iastate.edu/VA6EY2), go.iastate.edu/VA6EY2.

Slow Cooker Pork Chili

Serving Size: 1 1/4 cups | Serves: 6

Ingredients:

- 2 pounds boneless pork butt, roast, or shoulder
- 1 cup bell pepper (any color), diced (1 medium pepper)
- 1 cup onion, diced (1 medium onion)
- 1 1/2 cups salsa
- 1 can (15 ounces) low sodium pinto beans
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) low sodium diced tomatoes

Directions:

1. Trim the visible fat from the pork. Cut into 2-inch chunks. Place in the slow cooker.
2. Add the pepper, onion, and salsa.
3. Cook on a low setting for 6 hours or a high setting for 3 hours.
4. Pull the meat apart into shreds with a fork. You should have about 4 cups.
5. Put half (2 cups) of the shredded pork in the refrigerator or freezer. This could be used for the Shredded Pork Sandwich, spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu. Freeze pork if it will not be used within 4 days.
6. Return the rest of the pork to the slow cooker.
7. Add the pinto beans and diced tomatoes.
8. Cook another 30 minutes until hot.

Nutrition information per serving:

240 calories, 9g total fat, 3g saturated fat, 0g trans-fat, 40 mg cholesterol, 490mg sodium, 21g total carbohydrate, 7g fiber, 6g sugar, 18g protein. This recipe is courtesy of ISU Extension and Outreach's Spend Smart. Eat Smart. website. For more information, recipes, and videos, visit spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu

The Joy of Physical Activity

The weather outside may be frightful, but that does not have to make your winter any less delightful! Planning workouts ahead of time allows for consistent exercise habits. Setting goals and keeping track of your progress can be good motivators.

This time of year, there are many advertisements for workout challenges. You can even design your own 30-day challenge. You can create your own 30-day challenge using free online videos on the ISU Extension and Outreach SpendSmart. EatSmart. [website](https://go.iastate.edu/Q6EUJK), go.iastate.edu/Q6EUJK. Aim for 150 minutes of moderate physical activity weekly using a variety of aerobic, strength training, and stretching routines.

Make Better Choices Easier

Old habits can be hard to break but through repetition, it is possible to form and maintain new habits! Building good habits can be achieved by putting yourself in situations where you are more likely to engage in the desired behavior. Below are a few suggestions on how to get started building these habits.

- **Plan.** Identify unhealthy patterns and triggers. Set realistic goals and identify steps to help you achieve them.
- **Change your surroundings.** Find ways to make healthy choices the easy choice. For example, precut vegetables so they are quick and easy to eat for snacks.
- **Ask for support.** Find friends, family, neighbors, or coworkers to join you.
- **Track your progress.** Record how things are going to help you stay on track.
- **Reward yourself.** Give yourself a non-food reward, such as a new piece of workout clothing, a new cookbook, or a new notebook for tracking your progress, when you have achieved a small goal.

Things may not go as planned and that is okay. Improvement takes time and setbacks happen. Focus on progress being made rather than perfection.



Find our fitness resources at:

go.iastate.edu/Q6EUJK

Here for you.
Now.
Always.

Iowa State University
Extension and Outreach

AnswerLine

Call 1-800-262-3804

extension.iastate.edu/answerline

Spend Smart. Eat Smart.®

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Human Sciences

[extension.iastate.edu/](https://extension.iastate.edu/humansciences)

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If you or someone you know is skipping meals, going hungry, or choosing between food and medicine, call 1-855-944-3663 to apply for assistance today.

Call Iowa 2-1-1 or Iowa Lifelong Links, 1-866-468-7887, for additional resources.

