

OYHP “Best of Cooking Tips”

Welcome to the Oklahoma Youth Hunting Program. If you have made it to this section of the website, you have indicated that you are possibly interested in participating in a future hunt. A successful hunt is due in part to volunteers and what they offer by way of hunting skills, gun safety, time management and the best part cooking!

Please take a gander at the following information and maybe it will assist you in finding your spot with OYHP.

FOOD SAFETY

Safe steps in food handling, cooking, and storage are essential to prevent foodborne illness. You can't see, smell, or taste harmful bacteria that may cause illness. In every step of food preparation, follow the four steps of the Food Safe Families campaign to keep food safe:

- Clean — Wash hands and surfaces often.
- Separate — Don't cross-contaminate.
- Cook — Cook to the right temperature.
- Chill — Refrigerate promptly.

Storage

- Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours—1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F (32.2 °C).
- Check the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer with an appliance thermometer. The refrigerator should be at 40 °F (4.4 °C) or below and the freezer at 0 °F (-17.7 °C) or below.
- Cook or freeze fresh poultry, fish, ground meats, and variety meats within 2 days; other beef, veal, lamb, or pork, within 3 to 5 days.
- Perishable food such as meat and poultry should be wrapped securely to maintain quality and to prevent meat juices from getting onto other food.
- Canned foods are safe indefinitely as long as they are not exposed to freezing temperatures, or temperatures above 90 °F. If the cans look ok, they are safe to use. Discard cans that are dented, rusted, or swollen. High-acid canned food (tomatoes, fruits) will keep their best quality for 12 to 18 months; low-acid canned food (meats, vegetables) for 2 to 5 years.

Preparation

- Always wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- Don't cross-contaminate. Keep raw meat, poultry, fish, and their juices away from other food. After cutting raw meats, wash cutting board, utensils, and countertops with hot, soapy water.
- Cutting boards, utensils, and countertops can be sanitized by using a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach in 1 gallon of water.
- Marinate meat and poultry in a covered dish in the refrigerator.

Thawing

- **Refrigerator:** The refrigerator allows slow, safe thawing. Make sure thawing meat and poultry juices do not drip onto other food.
- **Cold Water:** For faster thawing, place food in a leak-proof plastic bag. Submerge in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes. Cook immediately after thawing.
- **Microwave:** Cook meat and poultry immediately after microwave thawing.

Cooking

Cook all raw beef, pork, lamb and veal steaks, chops, and roasts to a minimum internal temperature of 145 °F (62.8 °C) as measured with a food thermometer before removing meat from the heat source. For safety and quality, allow meat to rest for at least three minutes before carving or consuming. For reasons of personal preference, consumers may choose to cook meat to higher temperatures.

Serving

- Hot food should be held at 140 °F (60 °C) or warmer.
- Cold food should be held at 40 °F (4.4 °C) or colder.
- When serving food at a buffet, keep food hot with chafing dishes, slow cookers, and warming trays. Keep food cold by nesting dishes in bowls of ice or use small serving trays and replace them often.
- Perishable food should not be left out more than 2 hours at room temperature—1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F (32.2 °C).

ALWAYS REMEMBER 40/140 and your food avoids the risk of spoilage. Also, try to keep in mind of potential food allergies, i.e. don't cook with peanut oil etc....

HELPFUL HINTS FOR COOKING IN LARGE QUANTITY

One of the most unsettling thoughts is “did I fix enough for everyone”.... It is sometimes a difficult process to cook enough and not too much. Consider the carpenter...he may only need 5 feet of a 2x4 but he buys a 8 foot board. It's better to have too much than not enough.

Top tips

1. **Check the kitchen** that you will be using to see what it has and how much oven space (check for racks), fridge space, work space, serving dishes, salt & pepper, serving spoons and knives for slicing, chopping, carving, cutlery etc. Also check for anti-bacterial hand-soap, washing-up liquid, cloths, dishtowels, oven gloves etc. It's always a good idea to check with the hunt master to understand what is available to you. You may only be cooking on a grill – It can be done!
2. **Get Help.** Things take time on a large scale and what you are able to do for a small group at home becomes impossible to handle in a fast time frame, when multiplied by a much bigger volume of food and people eating.
3. **Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.** The "danger zone" is the range between 40°F and 140°F. Bacteria grow most rapidly in the range of temperatures between 40 ° and 140 ° F, doubling in number in as little as 20 minutes.
4. **Volume logistics.** It's easy to cook a pot of pasta or boil a few corn on the cobs at home. Multiply that by ten and you are in for a big surprise! The water for the corn or pasta will take 'forever' to boil and put all your timings out. If you are cooking for 40 people, it is not always as simple as multiplying a recipe for four people by ten. So sit down and think of dishes that can be made in bulk ahead of time and be frozen until needed. (Recipe ideas included in the information below)
5. **Plan ahead,** have a time and sequence list made out for anyone helping in the kitchen. That way your meal will be done efficiently and nothing will be forgotten. Even something like cutting up the dessert takes lots of time if there is a large amount of it. Allow extra time to do everything and designate tasks. Prepare as many items as you can in your kitchen and transport them to your hunt. It will save on time and some dishes can be as simple as a warm up.

RECIPES

We have just listed a few of our own recipes that have been successful in the past hunts. They are bulk recipes that can be prepared at home and transported. At the hunt you simply just warm them up on a grill or if you have the luxury of a kitchen, in the oven or on the stove top.

Chili

Chicken Pot Pie

Brisket (sliced or chopped)

Pork Loin

SCHEDULING

Any foods you can prepare before at home will make your cooking experience for a large group a great success. The ability to just warm something up or put your lunch together is a time saver. Keep in mind that preparation time is just that TIME! On location if you just have to char up some dogs and burgers you are way ahead. Onions chopped, lettuce ready, cheese ready and buns out, is time shaved off.

Part of scheduling is preparing your menu in advance. Breakfast, lunch and dinner is essential for a group of hungry hunters. Mornings are early and dinners can be late. Keeping things warm and available are a challenge. You may be serving dinner at the designated time and there will be a hunter who is tracking a deer and can't come in. You will need to keep his dinner warm and waiting for him when he makes it in. Lunch time can be somewhat easier as hunters are not in their blinds during that time of day.

We recommend that you have alternatives to breakfast. We always have a hot meal for breakfast offered but some may choose to have no breakfast and enjoy a piece of fruit with a breakfast bar instead. One of the most important issues facing every hunt master is trash. Every hunter should learn to leave the woods like they found it. Littering is not acceptable – so keep that in mind when sending them to the blinds with no way of disposing of their wrappers, cups, etc.

Preparing your schedule for each day is crucial. Knowing what you are preparing to serve will make your experience much easier.

EXAMPLE OF MENUS

Make it your own – Make it easy!

Remember you are feeding your hunters on Friday & Saturday (breakfast, lunch and dinner) and Sunday (breakfast) and maybe lunch. Thursday evening or Friday morning is check in day so the be prepared to feed all day long. This is a good day for something in a crockpot. Sunday is the final day with hunters going home usually by noon time, so breakfast will be served.

It's always a good idea to have grab and go snacks for in between. Items like trail mix, granola bars, fruit, dried fruit, package crackers or cookies, etc. are good to have around. Another good idea is to have a couple of water coolers available for drinks. Fill them with water, tea, Gatorade, etc and locate them somewhere outdoors that is accessible to all. Some hunt masters give their hunter a thermos cup of sorts at the time of check-in that the hunter must be responsible for drinking with during their stay. They keep track of it and bring it to meals or to the blind as needed.

SAMPLE MENU

Thursday (for your guides & staff)

Dinner:

Spaghetti with meat sauce
Garlic bread
Salad with ranch or Italian dressing
Parmesan cheese

Friday

Breakfast:

Scramble eggs
Sausage patties
Fruit

Lunch:

Chopped BBQ Brisket sandwiches
Potato Salad or Cole Slaw

Dinner:

Chicken Pot pie
Salad with ranch or Italian dressing

Saturday

Breakfast:

Sausage biscuits
Hashbrowns

Lunch:

Chicken salad croissant sandwich
Potato salad or Cole Slaw

Dinner:

Red Stag Chili
Bread sticks or crackers

Sunday

Breakfast:

Scrambled egg Tortilla wraps
Salsa

Cooking Items that could be helpful:

Crock Pot

Griddle

Deep Pots

Utensils – spatulas, long spoons, tongs, outdoor grill utensils, etc.

Salt & Pepper

Paper Plates, Napkins, Plastic Ware