

Keeping Your Food Safe When The Power Goes Out In Winter



Section	Details	Advice	Additional Information
Understanding the Basics of Food Safety	Food safety revolves around maintaining temperatures below 40°F to prevent bacterial growth in perishable items.	Use appliance thermometers to monitor temperature and avoid relying on appearance or smell to judge food safety.	Bacteria thrive between 40°F and 140°F, referred to as the "danger zone."
Preparing Before the Storm	Freeze containers of water ahead of time and keep thermometers in refrigerators and freezers.	Ensure you have coolers and gel ice packs ready for emergency food transfers.	Frozen water jugs serve as ice blocks and an emergency source of drinking water.
Immediate Steps During an Outage	Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.	Plan meals to minimize door openings. Unopened refrigerators can keep food cold for 4 hours, while freezers last up to 48 hours.	Group items closely to maintain lower temperatures.
Preserving Perishables	Transfer vulnerable items like meat and soft cheeses to a cooler with ice if the outage exceeds 4 hours.	Group perishable and frozen items together to maintain a consistent temperature.	Ensure raw meats are kept separate from ready-to-eat foods to prevent cross-contamination.
Long-Term Freezer Preservation	Use dry ice to extend the life of frozen goods during prolonged outages.	Fill empty freezer spaces with water bottles or crumpled newspaper to maintain insulation.	Handle dry ice carefully and ensure ventilation to avoid hazards from carbon dioxide gas.
Post-Outage Food Assessment	Check appliance thermometers and assess food safety based on temperature.	Discard refrigerated foods exceeding 40°F for more than 2 hours. When in doubt, throw it out.	Do not taste food to determine its safety as some harmful bacteria do not affect smell or appearance.
Community and Government Resources	Leverage USDA and FDA charts for guidance and stay informed through local alerts and resources.	Use printed resources and connect with local ice distribution points or cooling centers as needed.	Government charts detail which foods to save or discard post-outage.