

PROBLEM-FREE PICNICKING

22% of people worry about food going off in the sun at a picnic

When taking food outdoors, it's easy to let your usual practises slip. The time between preparing dishes and eating them tends to be longer than normal, as food is packed up for picnics in the morning and sometimes not eaten until early afternoon.

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In fact, 1 in 10 people often leave picnic food out for more than two hours in the summer. The FSA advises that food should be left out for no longer than two hours, whether in picnic season or at any other time of year. After this time, foods can become unsafe so plan ahead to keep your food cool until you're ready to eat.

Here's five easy tips to keep food safe when out and about this summer:

1. Clean up first.

Rinse fresh fruits (including those with rinds) and vegetables under running tap water before packing them in the cool box.



2. Keep cold food cold.

Place cold food in a cool box with ice or frozen gel packs. Cold food should be stored at below 5°C to prevent bacterial growth.

3. Organise your cool box.

Pack drinks in one cool box and perishable foods in another. If using freezer packs (frozen drinks work well for this purpose), distribute them throughout the box – not all at the bottom!

4. Keep your cool box closed.

Once at the picnic site, limit the number of times the cool box is opened as much as you can. This helps to keep the contents cold for longer.



5. Pack away your picnic.

Once you've served it, dishes should not sit out for longer than two hours, or one hour if it's very hot outside. After this, the risk of bacteria increases and it becomes unsafe to eat, so best to throw it away when you get home. Pack away food so that your guests are not tempted to nibble later. To reduce waste, pre-plan portion sizes according to the size of your party and only pack what you need.

