



During the holiday season there are many tempting foods and beverages offered at parties and family get-togethers. Celebrating doesn't have to lead to unhealthy habits. Follow these tips to make healthy choices:

- **Don't skip meals.** Eating regularly throughout the day is a generally healthy practice. During the holidays, it can help prevent overindulging.
- **Settle on one trip.** Make only one trip to the party buffet. Fill your plate with nutrient-rich foods such as fruit and vegetables, olives, nuts and seeds, lean meats, low-fat cheeses and whole grain bread or crackers.
- **Opt for low- or zero-calorie beverages.** Staying hydrated is important. Make healthy drink choices like water, unsweetened tea and diet soda, sparkling water or club soda. Add a splash of flavor with citrus fruits, herbs or cucumber slices.
- **Stay active.** Burn off extra calories by taking a brisk walk between meals or by dancing at the party.

Warm Up With Chili

Canned chili without beans is similar to a stew that contains meat, sauce and chili seasoning. Each 24-ounce can has about three, one cup servings each.

Storage:

- ◆ Check the product's "Best By" or "Best if Used By" date which indicates how long the chili will stay at peak quality. If the chili is stored properly, it will be safe for a little while after the printed date, but its quality may decrease.
- ◆ Store unopened cans of chili in a cool, dry place such as a kitchen pantry or cabinet.
- ◆ Once opened, store leftover chili in an airtight container for up to four days in the refrigerator. If you want to store it longer, freeze it for four to six months in an airtight container or freezer bag.

Preparation/Cooking:

- ◆ Canned chili without beans is safe to consume straight from the can since it is a fully-cooked product.
- ◆ To prepare and serve hot, microwave or heat on a stovetop or electric skillet.

Nutrition: One cup canned chili without beans:

- ◆ Provides 290 calories and 18 g of protein
- ◆ Is an excellent source of vitamin A (25% Daily Value [DV]) and iron (20% DV)
- ◆ Counts as a one-ounce protein equivalent from MyPlate

Uses:

- ◆ Chili mac and cheese (see recipe on back page)
- ◆ Served inside quesadillas, tacos or enchiladas
- ◆ Used as a topping for baked potatoes



Three Ways to SAFELY Defrost Frozen Food



1. **Refrigerator:** Store the food in the refrigerator until completely thawed. This method is one of the safest ways to thaw food. Other advantages include not having to cook the food right away and safely refreezing it in case your meal plans change.



2. **Cold Water:** While this method is faster than refrigerator thawing, it requires more attention. Carefully submerge the tightly-sealed food bag under **COLD** tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes to make sure the water remains cold. Do **NOT** use hot water, as the outer, thawed layer of the food may experience bacterial growth.



3. **Microwave:** This method is the quickest way to thaw food, but requires immediate cooking afterward. Set your microwave to “defrost” or the “50 percent power” setting to ensure that the food is thawing evenly. After the food has been cooked, you can safely re-freeze leftovers.

Source: <http://www.stilltasty.com/articles/view/9>

Easy Chili Mac and Cheese

Serving Size: about 1 cup
Serves: 3

Ingredients:

1½ cups dry elbow macaroni
Nonstick cooking spray
1/4 onion, chopped
1 can (about 12 ounces) chili without beans*
½ teaspoon black pepper
½ tablespoon garlic powder
1 cup low-fat cheddar cheese, shredded



Instructions:

1. Cook elbow macaroni according to package directions.
2. Heat a skillet over medium heat and coat with nonstick cooking spray. Cook onion until soft. Then, add chili, black pepper and garlic powder. Stir well until hot.
3. Stir cheese and chili mixture into cooked macaroni. Mix until cheese is melted and serve hot.

Nutritional analysis (about 1 cup): 410 calories, 12 g fat, 4.5 g saturated, 0 g trans, 680 mg sodium, 51 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, 4 g sugar, 26 g protein

Source: http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/HHFS_BEEF_CHILIWOBEAN100138nov2012.pdf

*Refrigerate leftover canned chili if going to use within four days. For long-term storage, freeze for four to six months in an airtight container or freezer bag.

Helpful Resources

Polk County Congregate Meals
(515) 286-2062

Commodity and Supplemental Foods
(515) 286-3679

Nutrition, Food Preparation and Food Safety
ISU AnswerLine
1-800-262-3804

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