

Leftovers Are Timesavers For Busy Cooks

(NAPS)—Leftovers. Smart cooks hold leftover foods in high regard, viewing them as an opportunity to save time and produce an enticing encore to their original dish. This winter, you can make the most of cold-weather comfort food by combining already-cooked items with pantry staples to create easy, flavor-packed meals.

For instance, a little bit of mashed potatoes can be transformed into easy Potato Cheese Puffs by combining them with cheese, flour, eggs and seasonings. Serve them as an appetizer or side dish.

Another tip: Remember to savor your leftovers safely by refrigerating them within two hours. The Partnership for Food Safety Education suggests dividing large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator.

You can save time by storing leftovers in containers that can be refrigerated, frozen or microwaved. Tight-sealing GLADWARE containers come in several sizes to hold a variety of items—from large portions of meat and potatoes to smaller containers for gravy and snacks. If you're preparing tomorrow's lunch using tonight's leftovers, try the divided dish for meal-size offerings of two separate dishes. These containers are so inexpensive you won't even mind if they're left at the office or school.

There's another new product on the market that's great for messy marinades and for transferring stews, soups and sauces to the fridge or freezer. GLAD Stand and Zip Bags have wide openings and pleated bottoms for easy filling, freezing and microwaving.

Love your leftovers—by keeping them fresh, flavorful and safe.

Potato Cheese Puffs

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes

1 cup water
½ cup butter (no substitutions)



1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
½ teaspoon garlic salt
¼ teaspoon dried marjoram
⅛ teaspoon pepper
1 cup flour
4 eggs
½ cup leftover mashed potatoes
¾ cup shredded Gruyere cheese
¾ cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
2 tablespoons fresh chives

Preheat oven to 400°F. Heat water, butter, mustard, salt, marjoram and pepper in a medium heavy saucepan until butter is melted and water is simmering. Beat in flour, mixing vigorously until mixture forms a ball and no longer sticks to the sides of the pan. Remove from heat and set aside for 10 minutes. Beat in eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Stir in potatoes, cheeses (reserving ¼ cup for top) and chives. Drop teaspoonfuls onto a well-greased baking sheet and sprinkle with reserved cheese. Bake for 18 to 20 minutes or until puffed and golden brown. Turn off oven and crack oven door. Let stand for 15 minutes before removing from oven.

Makes about 36 puffs.



Storage Tips from the Partnership For Food Safety Education and GLAD:

- Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods, and leftovers within two hours.
- Divide large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator.
- Thaw food in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave. Never defrost at room temperature.
- Wash all utensils and food prep surfaces using hot, soapy water. A sanitizing solution or bleach-based kitchen cleaner may help eliminate harmful germs.
- Avoid cross-contamination by separating raw meat, poultry and seafood from other foods in the shopping cart and fridge. Use a different cutting board for raw meat products.
- Cook roasts and steaks to at least 145°F; whole poultry should be cooked to 180°F. Heat other leftovers to at least 165°F.

For more information on food safety, visit www.fightbac.org.