



Theresa Losoya, director at My Friend's House, presented the program to the Eagle Lake Study Club at their December meeting on Dec. 13. The different Mexican and Texas traditions were presented in an interesting and humorous Christmas program for the Study Club members and guests.

USDA Gives Food Safety Reminders

As Americans take to kitchens, dining rooms and parties this holiday season, they will encounter a variety of sumptuous food offerings.

And with all the recent headlines about foodborne illnesses, now more than ever we need to be sure food safety is on the menu.

As such, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service is offering recommendations to help avoid foodborne illness while enjoying seasonal feasts.

Here are four easy to remember tips that can help you be "food safe" during the season:

* Clean - Wash hands, surfaces and utensils often to avoid spreading bacteria when preparing food.

* Separate - Use different cutting boards for raw meat, poultry, seafood, and veggies. Keep poultry away from vegetables and side dishes that won't be cooked.

* Cook - You can't tell it's done by how it looks! Use a food thermometer. Every part of the turkey should reach a minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

* Chill - Keep the fridge at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below to keep bacteria from growing. Leftovers should be refrigerated within two hours.

"From office parties to traditional get-togethers at home, many kinds of foods will be present," said USDA Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Richard Raymond. "People should remember food that has been sitting out for more than two hours invites bacterial growth which can lead to foodborne illness."

As for that party buffet, basic food safety tips will also come in handy.

Foods that have been sitting out for too long on the buffet or table at holiday parties can cause foodborne illness.

Many parties go on for several hours and food is often left at room temperature.

Be wary of any foods - hot or cold-that have been left out for more than two hours. This so called "Danger Zone," when food is between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit allows bacteria to multiply.

Any perishable foods on the table that are not served with a heating source (chafing dishes or slow cookers) or chilling source (nesting serving dishes in bowls of ice) should be discarded after remaining for two hours at room temperature.

Safely cooked hot foods like turkey, ham, stuffing, chicken fingers and meatballs, should be served hot and replenished frequently.

While on the buffet, hot foods should be kept at a temperature of at least 140 Fahrenheit.

Cold foods, such as chicken salad or potato salad, should be served and kept cold-at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

A helpful hint is to prepare extra serving platters and dishes ahead of time, store them in the refrigerator or keep them hot in the oven (set at approximately 200 -250 degrees Fahrenheit) prior to serving.

The dessert table also needs to be watched. Bacteria can also multiply quickly in moist desserts that contain dairy products.

Keep eggnog, cheesecakes, cream pies and cakes with whipped-cream or cream-cheese frostings refrigerated until serving time.

Some of America's favorite holiday foods may contain raw eggs or lightly cooked eggs.

Most commercially sold eggnog is pasteurized, meaning the mixture has been heated to a temperature high enough to kill harmful bacteria that may have been present in the raw ingredients.

However, if you're making your own eggnog, be sure to use a recipe that calls for slowly heating the mixture to 160 degrees Fahrenheit. This will maintain the taste and texture while also killing bacteria.

Do not allow children (or adults) to eat raw cookie dough or lick the beaters after mixing batter containing eggs.

Raw eggs could be contaminated with Salmonella-a leading cause of foodborne illness.

For more food safety tips, visit the USDA's food safety Web site at www.fsis.usda.gov.



Mrs. Amanda Reneau

Reneau, Williams Wed In Austin

A wedding ceremony at the historic First United Methodist Church in downtown Austin, united Amanda Hope Williams and Kenneth Hilton Reneau on Saturday, July 29, 2006 at five o'clock in the evening. The double ring ceremony was presided over by the Reverend John McMullen with music by organist, Scott McNulty. The bride was given in marriage by her family and escorted by her grandfather, Ed Causey, Jr.

Amanda is the daughter of Ms. Jill Causey Williams of Houston and Mr. George Dennis Williams of Kirkwood, Missouri. She is the granddaughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Causey, Jr. of Houston and the great granddaughter of the late Mrs. Grace Dornon Towell Kucherka and the late Mr. and Mrs. Ed Causey, Sr., all of Eagle Lake.

Ken is the son of Ms. Gail Reneau of Grapevine, Texas and Mr. H. H. Reneau of Gatesville, Texas. He is the grandson of Mrs. Bill Wilson of Gatesville.

The Matron of Honor was Mrs. Mary Beth Pipkin of Spring. The bridesmaids were Ms. Allison Brown of Corpus Christi, cousin of the bride; and Mrs. Christine Jeschke of Cedar Park, Texas.

Mrs. Ashley Brown Sims of Freehold, New Jersey, cousin of the bride, was named as an honorary bridesmaid, but was unable to attend to the wedding.

The Best Man was Mr. Patrick Collins of Colleyville, Texas. The groomsmen were Mr. Matthew Hickman of West Hollywood, California and Mr. Shane Wilbanks of Austin. The ushers were Mr. Brian Pipkin of Spring, and Mr. Robert Boucher of Lewisville, Texas.

A reception, seated dinner, and dance were held at The University of Texas Alumni Center immediately following the ceremony.

Amanda has a B.S. in Kinesiology from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master's degree in Physical Therapy from the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas. She is employed as a Physical Therapist at Seton Northwest Sport Medicine in Austin.

Ken has a B.A. in Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin and is employed by Dell Computer in higher education sales.

After a honeymoon in Costa Rica, Mr. and Mrs. Reneau are at home in Round Rock.

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ASPIRIN-A POTENT DRUG

One important drug that is often left off the medical history form at the dental office is aspirin.

When we are asked about taking any medications, most of us instantly think about prescription medications, and less likely to think about the bottle of aspirin we picked up at the supermarket.

Aspirin is a potent drug that is used for a wide variety of conditions.

One important side effect of aspirin is that it can increase bleeding. This is of critical importance to your dentist when providing certain types of treatment. The dental procedures expected to cause bleeding include dental extractions, deep cleanings under the gum line, gum surgery, and biopsies.

The decision to alter your aspirin intake should be made with the consultation of your family doctor (or specialist) and your dentist.

You should always include any over-the-counter drugs on your dentist's medical history forms, especially aspirin containing compounds.

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Bite-Sized Cheesecakes Are Quick, Simple

In many households, cheesecake is a mainstay of holiday entertaining. Families may even compete as to who boasts the best recipe.

Whether you prefer extra creamy cheesecake, Italian style with ricotta inside, blueberry versus strawberry fruit topping, or any of the dozens of other cheesecake varieties, you may recognize that cheesecake is not the easiest of desserts to make.

Plus, it is a rich dessert, which can sit heavily in your stomach if you overindulge.

For those looking for a cheesecake recipe that's no-fuss, but still delicious, try these individual cheesecakes that bake in 15 minutes.

Vanilla wafers form the "crust"

of these cheesecakes, eliminating the need to crush and pack down graham crackers as is the case with most cheesecake recipes.

- CHEESECAKE CUPCAKES**
- Makes 12 cupcakes
- 2 8-ounce packages cream cheese (can use reduced-fat varieties if desired), softened
 - 1/2 cup granulated sugar
 - 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
 - 2 large eggs
 - 12 vanilla wafer cookies

Topping of your choice (cherry, blueberry or pineapple pie filling)

Preheat the oven to 350 F. Fill a cupcake pan with foil or paper cupcake liners.

Blend the cream cheese, sugar, eggs and vanilla together with an electric mixer until smooth.

Place one vanilla wafer in each cupcake liner to form the crust of the cheesecake.

Spoon cheesecake batter into each cupcake, leaving a little room for the cupcake to rise while baking.

Place pan in the oven and bake for approximately 15 minutes, or until the tops of the cheesecakes are lightly golden.

Remove pan from oven and let cool on a wire rack.

Top each cheesecake with topping of choice and let chill in the refrigerator until serving time.

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