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DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS
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DLCA SHARES HOLIDAY TIPS: THANKSGIVING

Throughout this Holiday Season, the Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs will be sharing holiday tips with consumers and food preparers in order to safeguard the general public. See suggestions for traditional Thanksgiving meals.

Saving Money

Read labels and check out unit prices- A unit price is the cost for a small unit of measure, such as an ounce, which is used to compare the cost of differently priced items in differently sized containers. It is important for consumers to read the labels on grocery goods before purchasing. There are a number of brands of specific grocery goods that are packaged by different manufactures but the items may look identical. Same size, same shape, and same height- however the content amount may vary- sometimes by several ounces. Reading the label allows you to select the grocery item with the greatest content amount. This then allows you to get the most for your money.

Beware of so-called “specials”- Food displayed in a store as a “featured special” are not necessarily bargains but may simply be promotions of regularly priced items approaching their “sell by” dates. If you see an item marked “special,” it is important that you first look for the expiration date before purchasing. If the expiration date on the particular item is not visible, immediately report it to DLCA. The alteration of labels on any consumer good is a clear violation of the Deceptive Trade Practices Act, pursuant to Title 12A, Section 101 of the Virgin Islands Code.

Food Safety

The Thanksgiving meal can be tiresome to prepare; and in addition to cooking large portions, many people preparing meals may become overwhelmed. Share the following information with individuals preparing meals this holiday as a food safety checklist.

“Serving Businesses and Assisting, Educating, & Protecting Consumers”

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Steps to follow before cooking a turkey:

- Read labels carefully. Temperature labels show if the bird is fresh or frozen. If you plan to serve a fresh turkey, purchase it no more than two days before Thanksgiving.
- Purchase two thermometers: a refrigerator thermometer to ensure the turkey is stored at 40 °F or slightly below and a food thermometer to make sure the cooked turkey reaches a safe 165 °F.
- Thaw the turkey by using the microwave, the cold water method, or the refrigerator. The refrigerator method is USDA recommended.

Steps to follow when cooking a turkey:

- Wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before touching any food to prevent the spread of many types of infection and illness.
- Do not wash the turkey. This only spreads pathogens onto kitchen surfaces. The only way to kill bacteria that causes foodborne illness is to fully cook the turkey.
- Keep raw turkey separated from all other foods at all times.
- Use separate cutting boards, plates, and utensils when handling raw turkey to avoid cross-contamination. Wash items that have touched raw meat with warm soap and water, or place them in a dishwasher.
- Cook the turkey until it reaches 165 °F, as measured by a food thermometer. Check the turkey's temperature by inserting the thermometer in three places: the thickest part of the breast, the innermost part of the thigh, and the innermost part of the wing.

Steps to follow when consuming leftover Thanksgiving food:

- Refrigerate leftovers within two hours to prevent bacteria from growing on the food.
- Store leftovers in shallow pans or containers to decrease cooling time. This prevents the food from spending too much time at unsafe temperatures (between 40 °F to 140 °F).
- Do not store stuffing inside a leftover turkey. Remove the stuffing from the turkey, and refrigerate the stuffing and the meat separately.
- Avoid consuming leftovers that have been left in the refrigerator for longer than 3 or 4 days (next Tuesday to be exact). Use the freezer to store leftovers for longer periods of time.
 - Keep leftovers in a cooler with ice or frozen gel packs if the food is traveling home with a guest who lives more than two hours away.

For more information email info@dlca.vi.gov or call (340)713-3522 on St. Croix and 340-714-3522 on St. Thomas. Visit the Department of Licensing Consumer Affairs Facebook page for the latest information in consumer news and business updates, @DLCAVI.

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