

December 27, 1974

(612) 373-0710

consumer radio briefs

Freezing Gifts

(0:45)

Consider putting some of your Christmas gifts on "ice," suggests University of Minnesota Extension Food Microbiologist Edmund Zottola.

Gifts of smoked turkey, smoked pheasant and smoked fish can all be frozen and kept for several months. Sometimes smoked turkey will be sold in the frozen state. If so, you can ask a butcher to saw the frozen bird in half, allowing you to thaw half and freeze half.

Cheese can be kept safely in the refrigerator for a month or two. But, if you don't think you can eat it all in that time, freeze it and keep it for several months. Wrap the cheese in foil.

The best way to thaw frozen cheese is to leave it in its wrapper and let it thaw in the refrigerator. Before eating, let it stand at room temperature for a while so the flavor comes out.

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Avoid Food Poisoning

(0:25)

You wouldn't knowingly serve any food that isn't safe to eat. But don't do it "unknowingly," advises extension nutritionist Mary Darling at the University of Minnesota.

Keep cold cuts chilled. Don't allow them to stand at room temperature too long. Bring out a fresh tray frequently to replace a partially filled one. When meats stay cold bacteria don't have a chance to grow. Deviled eggs, cheese and sour cream dips all must be kept cold. Serve only what is needed and replace with fresh, chilled food often.

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