# Leftover Management

This playbook outlines the step-by-step process for safely storing and reheating leftovers to prevent foodborne illness. It covers the best practices to ensure that your food remains safe and delicious for subsequent consumption.

### Step 1: Cool Down

Allow leftovers to cool down to room temperature within two hours to prevent bacterial growth. For large quantities, separate into smaller containers to cool more quickly.

### Step 2: Storage

Transfer the cooled leftovers into airtight containers. Label each container with the date of storage to keep track of how long they have been in the fridge or freezer.

### Step 3: Refrigerate

Place the containers in the refrigerator if they'll be eaten within three to four days. For longer-term storage, put them in the freezer.

### Step 4: Reheat

Reheat leftovers thoroughly to an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C) to kill any bacteria. Use a food thermometer to check. Stir food occasionally to ensure even heating.

### Step 5: Serve Safely

Once reheated, serve the leftovers immediately. Do not reheat leftovers more than once to minimize the risk of foodborne illness.

## General Notes

### Two-Hour Rule

Remember the two-hour rule: do not leave perishable foods out at room temperature for more than two hours.

### Use by Date

Always consume leftovers within three to four days if refrigerated, and within three to six months if frozen, for best quality and safety.