How to Use the Safe Recipe Style Guide

The Safe Recipe Style Guide, created by food safety experts and honed by leading food journalists, is designed for use by recipe writers for all published materials, including cookbooks, social media, web sites, blog entries, newspapers and magazines, and industry promotional materials.

The approved wording in the Safe Recipe Style Guide reads as follows:

**TEMPERATURE**

Cook until internal temperature reaches XX *(fill in the blank and include chart with specific foods)* on food thermometer.

**HAND WASHING**

Wash hands with soap and water. *(Include this at beginning of recipe and after each touch of raw meats, poultry, seafood or eggs).*
CROSS CONTAMINATION

Wash *(insert cutting board, counter, utensil, serving plate)* after touching raw meats, poultry, seafood or eggs.

Do not reuse marinades used on raw foods.

Do not rinse raw poultry or meat.

PRODUCE

Gently rub produce under cold running water.

Scrub firm produce with a clean vegetable brush under running water.

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While use of the wording in recipes should be as close to the above as possible, the Safe Recipe Style Guide is intended to be flexible to allow for use in recipes as needed.

**Here are some tips for using the Safe Recipe Style Guide in recipes:**

- When giving instructions on the amount of time food should stay in the oven, or on the stovetop, grill or other cooking device, use the guideline “Cook until internal temperature reaches XX *(fill in the blank as applicable to specific food)* on food thermometer.”

- Start recipes with the guideline, “Wash hands with soap and water.” Include this verbiage after each touch of raw meats, raw poultry, raw seafood, or eggs.
• When instructing recipe user to place raw meats, poultry, seafood or eggs on a surface such as a countertop, serving plate or cutting board, include the instruction to wash the surface after the touch with the raw ingredient.

• If the recipe contains a marinade that is used to baste or marinate raw or cooking meat, poultry or seafood, add the line, “Do not reuse marinades used on raw foods.”

• When describing preparation process for raw meats or poultry, include the guideline, “Do not rinse raw poultry or meat.”

• When using any form of produce in a recipe, include the following relevant guideline in the instructions with the introduction of the ingredient: “Gently rub produce under cold running water,” or “Scrub firm produce with a clean vegetable brush under running water.”

CAN I USE JUST SOME OF THESE GUIDELINES IN MY RECIPES?

Yes. These four guidelines were determined by leading food safety experts to address the most egregious and common food safety problem areas in most home kitchens. The guidelines are meant to be adapted to recipes, as appropriate and needed. For example, not all recipes will utilize raw meats or fresh produce; thus, these particular guidelines will not be needed.

WHAT IF I AM LIMITED IN COPY SPACE FOR THE TEXT OF MY RECIPE? DO I STILL NEED TO INCLUDE THESE INSTRUCTIONS?

Length of copy is a major concern to many recipe writers. As with any form of journalism, the best written recipes are clear in intent but concise in length of text. However, the relevant food safety guidelines should not be omitted for the sake of copy space. Try editing other lines or phrases in the recipe, using abbreviations approved in the AP Stylebook, or limiting unnecessary ingredients such as
HOW DO I INCORPORATE THE SAFE RECIPE STYLE GUIDE INTO MY RECIPES?

First, read through the four guidelines carefully. Which apply specifically to the recipe that you are writing? For example, if you are writing a recipe that features fresh produce as an ingredient, add the guideline that calls for the user to rub produce under cold running water (or scrub with a clean vegetable brush under running water, if appropriate). If your recipe calls for raw meat, poultry or seafood, include the instructions to limit cross contamination between raw and cooked foods.

In some cases, it may be appropriate for the guideline to appear in the recipe ingredients list; in other cases, it may make more sense in the body of the recipe directions. Use your professional judgment as to how best to convey the food safety information.

All recipes should start with instructions to wash hands with soap and water because current studies show that a large majority of people do not wash their hands properly — or at all — when handling food.

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