

**PENNY SAVER NEWS**

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If you still have remnants of Thanksgiving in your refrigerator, they've got to go! By now they're a week old, and that's too long to keep leftovers, even if they have been refrigerated the whole time. So please, before they grow green fuzzies, before they make anyone sick, bag them, wrap them, and dump them!

Great! Now you're ready to start getting ready for Christmas, Hanukah and Kwanzaa in the kitchen. Will you need extra freezer space to hold the made-in-advance dishes for holiday meals? Take a look at what's in the freezer. As long as the freezer has not gone off, food will be safe. Even if it's a couple of years old, the food will be safe. But, will you want to eat it?

Dig into the depths and decide whether the packages of frozen spinach that are mostly full of frost by now are really worth keeping. Frozen dinners have probably lost even more quality than frozen veggies. Foods with high fat and salt content are much more likely to have developed off, rancid flavors. Bacon, ham and sausage are particularly likely to get bad flavors. If they've been in the freezer for more than 6 months it's time to use them or move them out.

Are you going to be doing a lot of holiday baking? Don't wait until it's time to start mixing and measuring. Take a look at your ingredients now. If you depend on mixes, check the Use By... dates on the boxes. Some mixes lose their leavening power when they get old. That means they won't rise, or will only rise a little bit. What you expect to be a full-sized cake will look and feel more like a pan of brownies! They'll be safe if

they're past their dates, but they're not what you want to depend on to serve guests. Use them up and get fresh.

Check your spices too. Open the bottles and take a sniff. If the aroma is faint, flat or stale it won't help your famous Christmas cookies. Stale cinnamon is not the way to good eggnog either. Especially here in Florida, with our changing temperatures and humidity, it's hard to keep spices more than a couple of years.

Spice manufacturers recommend that we get fresh spices every year. If you can't manage that, try to get at least one fresh jar each year. Next year refresh a different spice. Or pool with a couple of relatives or neighbors. Each of you can buy a different one, then split them up and share. That way you'll have several fresh spices for the price of one.

Liquid extracts will not lose their punch the way dry spices do. So the vanilla or peppermint extracts will be fine. And dry spices last longer if they are not ground. If you have a spice grinder, buy whole and grind them yourself. You might not want to do that for cinnamon, but freshly ground cumin will make a world of difference in the dips or salsas you serve.

Unless you bake often, it's a good idea to take a sniff in your flour canister, especially if you have made the healthy switch to whole wheat flour. Whole grains tend to get off flavors faster because they still have the oils in their bran and germ. But even white flour will develop a stale odor if it gets too old. Replace it with fresh if necessary.

And if you stocked up on candied fruits during the after-the-holidays sales, and you still haven't used them, check them too. Check for aroma, and then for taste. Some can get bitter. Some will go flat or stale. Some just lose their flavor and color.

Unless they're moldy they'll be safe. If they are fuzzy, don't even open the package!

It's not worth doing fancy holiday baking with flat or stale ingredients. Check now to be sure your ingredients are ready. Then when the grandkids come in, or the urge strikes, you'll be ready for holiday cooking.

If you need a way to use the last of the Thanksgiving turkey in the freezer, here's a recipe from the American Egg Board. Serve with salad or fruit, and hot sauce for those who like their spice. I hope you had a great Thanksgiving!

#### Turkey Veggie Quiche with Hash Browns Crust

6 eggs  
2 cups frozen hash brown potatoes, defrosted  
2 cups leftover vegetables, drained (or a 12 oz bag mixed vegetables, defrosted)  
1 cup diced cooked turkey  
1 cup low fat milk  
Salt, hot sauce if desired

Preheat oven to 375°F. Beat 1 egg in medium bowl until blended. Add potatoes and mix. Press against sides and bottom of greased, deep 9-inch pie plate. Bake for 5 minutes. Remove from oven. Sprinkle vegetables and turkey in crust. Beat 5 eggs, milk and ½ tsp salt or hot sauce if desired in small bowl. Pour over turkey. Bake about 45 min longer, until center is puffed and set. Use thermometer to check, temperature should be 160°F. Remove from oven and let sit 5 minutes before serving. Serves 6.