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SUMMER BRINGS HOT WEATHER, FOOD SAFETY CONCERNS

BLT Deviled Eggs are a mouth-watering twist on an old favorite when properly prepared

COLUMBUS – As consumers plan their summer picnics and cookouts, the Ohio Poultry Association (OPA) encourages families to keep responsible food safety tips top of mind.

“Getting ready for a picnic or summer gathering is often done in a hurry, as families are excited to get outdoors,” said Jim Chakeres, OPA executive vice president. “As a result, this can lead to a lack of following proper food handling and preparation exercises. Simple food safety practices can greatly reduce the risk of food-borne illnesses and help keep families safe during the summer season.”

When preparing a favorite egg dish, or handling any food, consumers should always remember to wash their hands thoroughly with warm water and soap. This is the easiest way to prevent the spread of bacteria. Along with keeping hands clean, it’s important to keep cooking surfaces, kitchen utensils and cutting boards clean as well.

When packing perishable food items, like BLT Deviled Eggs (*see recipe below*), OPA recommends using an insulated cooler kept below 40° F.

In addition, when enjoying an outside picnic or dining at a summer gathering, OPA recommends that consumers follow the below food safety tips:

- Pack moist towelettes or soap and water to clean hands and surfaces.
- Eggs should not be kept out of a refrigerator for more than two hours; when temperatures are above 85° F, no longer than 30 minutes. A helpful tip is to remove the egg dish from the cooler when it’s time to eat and set a timer. This will help eliminate food spoilage and illness.
- Transport the cooler in the backseat of an air conditioned car rather than placing in a warm trunk.
- Remember to serve cold foods below 40° F and hot foods above 140° F.
- When the day is over, take the time to thoroughly clean the cooler. This will prevent bacterial growth and contamination on the next outing.

When properly handled, eggs as part of the summer diet can promote healthy muscle growth, make individuals feel full longer, and provide energy, which contributes to maintaining a healthy weight. In fact, research shows that eggs eaten at the start of the day can reduce daily calorie intake, prevent snacking between meals and keep people satisfied on those busy summer days when mealtime is delayed.

For more information on safety tips, fun recipes or nutritional benefits, visit the OPA website at www.ohiopoultry.org. Ohio is the number-two egg producing state in the U.S.; producing more than seven billion eggs annually.

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BLT Deviled Eggs

Ingredients

- 6 large eggs, hard-boiled and peeled
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 3 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled plus more for garnish, if desired
- 2 cherry tomatoes, seeded and finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon dried parsley flakes
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper



Photo Credit: FoodNetwork.com

Directions

Halve the eggs lengthwise. Remove the yolks and add them to a medium bowl. Mash the yolks with a fork and stir in the mayonnaise, bacon, tomatoes, and parsley. Add salt and pepper, to taste, and blend well.

Fill the egg whites evenly with the yolk mixture and garnish with bacon, if desired. Arrange them in a container and store, covered, in the refrigerator until ready to serve.