



# Roaster Pigs

Roasting a pig on a spit has become a popular food attraction at community and private events. Although fun, there are food handling instructions that must be followed so no one gets sick. Salmonella and E. coli are the most common bacteria linked to incorrect handling and cooking of whole pigs. By being prepared and with the right tools, you can prevent this from happening at your get-together.

## Handling and Cooking of the Roaster Pig

Follow these steps to correctly handle, prepare and cook the pig, and make your event safe.

**Separate:** Buy the pig from an inspected source. If you purchased a frozen roaster pig, thaw it completely before cooking. Until ready to cook, the pig must always be kept cold at or below 4°C (40°F). This can be done in a large cooler packed with ice, or if available to you, a walk-in cooler. Make sure there is no contact between the uncooked pig and other food in the coolers.

**Clean:** Clean and sanitize all coolers, sinks, cutting boards, knives, countertops, roasting pan, or any other equipment that did or may have come into contact with the uncooked pig. Rinse with warm water 43°C (109°F) or hotter, and then sanitize in a solution of 5 mL (1 teaspoon) of household bleach per 750 ml (3 cups) of hot water 77°C (170°F).

**Cook:** Make sure you have a food thermometer. Some parts, such as the shoulders and hams, take longer to cook because they are thicker than other parts. Insert the thermometer into more than one area of the pig to ensure all parts of the pig have reached a minimum internal temperature of 77°C (170°F). Serve the roasted pig safely by:

- using a clean knife. Carve meat from the whole pig and place slices in a chafing dish within two hours after cooking.
- keeping the cooked meat warm by hot holding at 60°C (140°F) or hotter.
- not putting cooked food on a plate that has, or is holding uncooked meat.

**Chill:** Divide leftovers and place into small shallow containers. Cover and refrigerate leftovers within two hours of cooking the meat. Discard any food left out at room temperature for more than two hours.

## Other Tips

- Do not allow anyone who has been ill, to help or prepare the food.
- Ask the inspected meat source for a copy of their recommended cooking instructions.
- Always wash your hands with warm soap and water, after bathroom breaks and, after touching/handling uncooked meat.
- Keep the raw meat separate from any other food being served at the event.

For more safe food handling tips call Health Connection to speak with a public health inspector.