



## BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

### Have a Safe and Not Scary Halloween!

Halloween is just around the corner and while the holiday may be filled with fun and spooky, we want to avoid the scary foodborne illness (food poisoning). It is estimated that there are about 48 million cases of foodborne illnesses annually. This affects approximately 1 in 6 Americans each year, scary! However, there are food safety practices to prevent illness now and throughout the year.

**Scare or Fight BAC!® (Bacteria)** with the four practices to keep you and your family safe.

- 1) **Clean** your workspace, utensils, and hands. **Hand washing** is very important in helping prevent the spread of foodborne illnesses. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with warm soapy water before cooking, eating, or digging into the trick-or-treating treats.
- 2) **Separate** to prevent cross-contamination. Keep raw meats or poultry separate from foods that are ready to eat.
- 3) **Cook** food to a safe internal temperature.
- 4) **Chill** perishable foods until serving time. During a Halloween party keep cold foods chilled until it is time to serve and do not leave out for more than 2 hours at room temperature or



one hour when temperatures are above 90°F. To learn more about the Fight BAC!® principles visit: <https://www.fightbac.org/food-safety-basics/the-core-four-practices/>.

#### Other Tips While Trick-or-Treating

**Snacking:** Eat a light meal before leaving for trick-or-treating to discourage snacking on treats while out. Waiting until home allows you to inspect the treats before anyone eats them.

**Safe Treats:** Do not eat treats with wrappings that have been tampered with or look suspicious. It is best to avoid treats that are not commercially wrapped.

**Food Allergies:** Check the package label to ensure no allergens are present. Do not allow children to eat home-baked goods.

**Choking Hazards:** For very young children, remove any choking hazards like gum, peanuts, hard candies, or small toys.

*Have a safe and not scary Halloween!*

Written by: Amber Bozeman, Lubbock County Extension Agent – Better Living for Texans  
Content Source: <https://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/halloween-treats-better-safe-scary> and <https://www.fightbac.org/halloween-food-safety-how-to/> Photo From: unsplash.com



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This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP.  
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# HEALTHY HACKS FOR 2023 October

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### Recipe of the Month

*Recipe from Barbara Brown, Regional Project Specialist – Better Living for Texans, West Region (retired)*

#### Ham and Cheese Stuffed Sweet Potatoes

*Cook once, eat twice! If you have extra sweet potatoes cook them while prepping this recipe and use for a different meal during the week.*

**Serves: 4**

#### Ingredients

- 2 medium sweet potatoes
- 1 teaspoon unsalted butter, melted
- 2 ounces baked ham, cut into ¼-inch dice
- ¾ cup shredded reduced-fat Monterrey Jack or mozzarella cheese
- 4 teaspoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon toasted pumpkin seeds (optional)



#### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F. Prick potatoes with a fork. Place potatoes on a foil-lined baking sheet. Bake 1 hour or until tender when pierced with a fork. Remove from oven. Increase the oven temperature to 425°F.
2. Cut potatoes in half, lengthwise. Scoop out potato flesh, leaving ¼-inch-thick flesh inside the skins, and place in a large bowl.
3. In the bowl of potatoes, add butter and stir until combined. Fold in ham, ½ cup of shredded cheese, and Parmesan cheese. Spoon mixture evenly between potato skins.
4. Bake potatoes for 10 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining ¼ cup shredded Monterrey Jack cheese and bake 5 more minutes or until cheese has melted. Sprinkle with toasted pumpkin seeds.

**Nutrients Per Serving:** 150 calories, 5 g total fat, 2.5 g saturated fat, 25 mg cholesterol, 230 mg sodium, 14 g carbohydrates, 2 g fiber, 3 g total sugar, 0 g added sugar, and 13 g protein.



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