

# Rice with Two Sides

and Other Takeaway Foods for  
Hot Holding and Display

Food Safety Guidelines for Food Businesses



# Introduction and scope

Commonly known as ‘rice with two sides’ to locals, these pre-cooked dishes are often prepared much ahead of orders and readily available for takeaway at restaurants, fast-food outlets, campus or staff canteens, supermarkets and food stalls. These hot foods come in wide-ranging varieties, stored and displayed in containers for diners to select.

This set of guidelines is intended for food business operators (FBOs) that prepare and sell ‘rice with two sides’ at premises. It aims to help them implement food safety measures in their operations in order to produce and supply safe and wholesome ‘rice with two sides’. This set of guidelines is also applicable to takeaway foods that require hot holding and display. While this is not a legal document and its use is voluntary, it reviews some essential parameters related to Good Hygiene Practices and recommends best practices that any FBO should consider in providing safe foods to consumers.



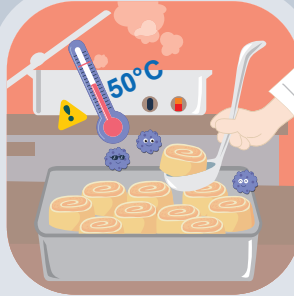


# Common food safety problems related to 'rice with two sides'



## Preparing cooked food too far in advance

- To cater for operational needs, FBOs serving 'rice with two sides' usually prepare large quantities of pre-cooked dishes in advance for later reheating and display for sale at the food counter.
- Temperature abuse, such as **prolonged cooling at ambient temperatures** and **improper refrigeration**, can promote the growth of harmful bacteria in food.



## Inadequate reheating

- Chilled pre-cooked food is inadequately reheated (i.e. core temperature of food **not reaching 75°C**) before display and sale.



## Using an incorrect hot-holding temperature

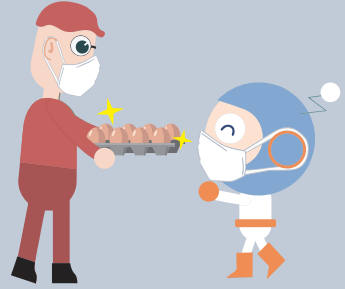
- Some FBOs may put food on display in a bain marie **at a lower temperature**, say 45°C, to prevent the food from drying out.
- This practice of keeping food at **the Temperature Danger Zone (4-60°C)** allows harmful bacteria to proliferate in food.

# Food safety measures for preparing 'rice with two sides'

## Purchase and receiving

1

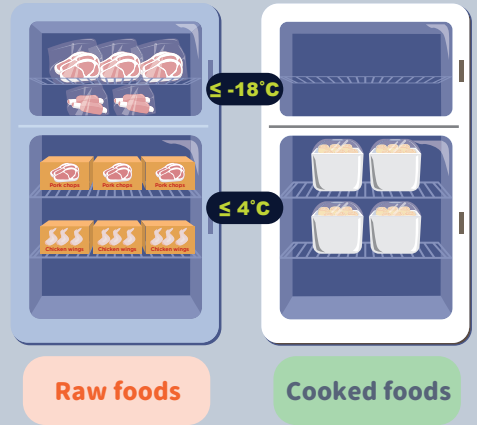
- Obtain food and food ingredients from approved and reliable sources.
- Check the quality of food and food ingredients upon receipt.
- Check the expiry date of prepackaged food.



## Storage

2

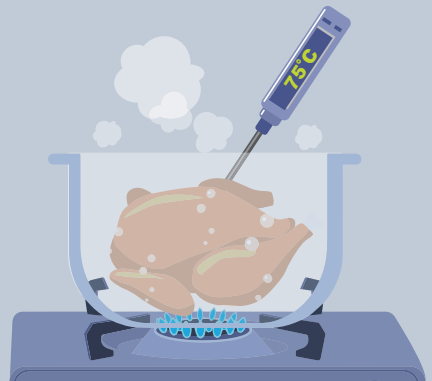
- Perishable foods should be refrigerated. Check with a thermometer and record the temperature of the refrigerator. Keep the fridge and the freezer at or below 4°C and at or below -18°C respectively.
- Ideally, use two refrigerators to store raw and pre-cooked foods separately. Otherwise, always store pre-cooked food on the upper shelf over raw food to avoid cross-contamination.
- Do not overstuff your refrigerator. Apply the first-in-first-out principle to store food.



## Cooking

3

- Cook food thoroughly, with core temperature reaching at least 75°C.
- Plan your preparation schedule ahead so that perishable or easily contaminated dishes, such as gravy, soup and rice, are not cooked too far in advance.



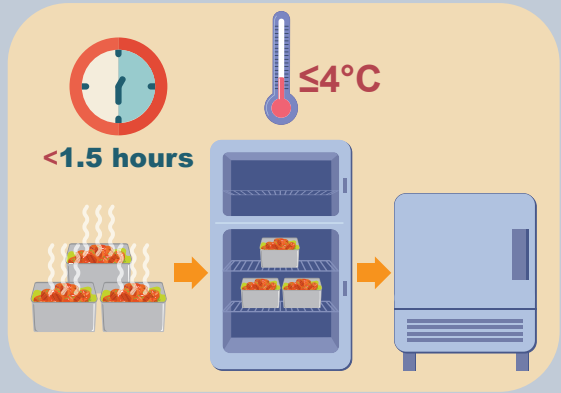
# 4

## Cooling and storage of pre-cooked food

- Food cooked in advance must be cooled down as soon as possible and refrigerated at 4°C or below.

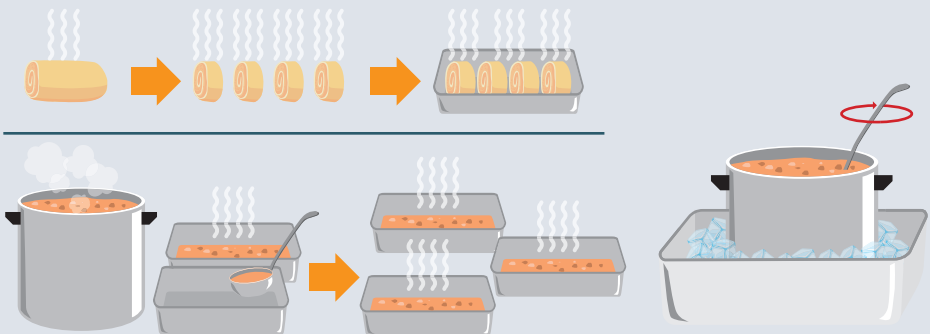
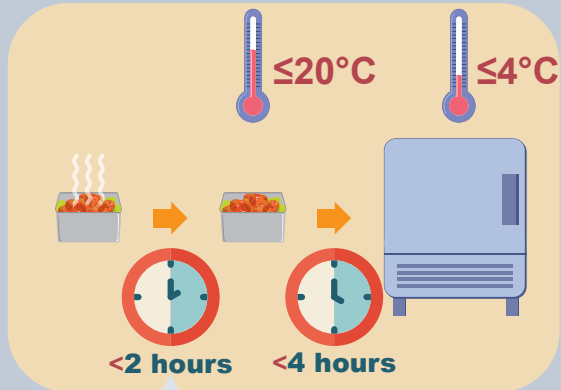
### Blast chilling

- Prior to refrigeration, the pre-cooked food can be quickly chilled in a blast chiller (e.g. to 4°C in 1.5 hours).



### Two-step cooling method

- Otherwise, the pre-cooked food could be cooled down in two steps – cooling to 20°C within two hours, and then to 4°C within the next four hours or less.
- For two-step cooling, food can be divided into smaller portions or placed in wide, shallow containers to speed up the process. Ice bathing while stirring the food provides very effective cooling for soup, gravy, purées and beverages.

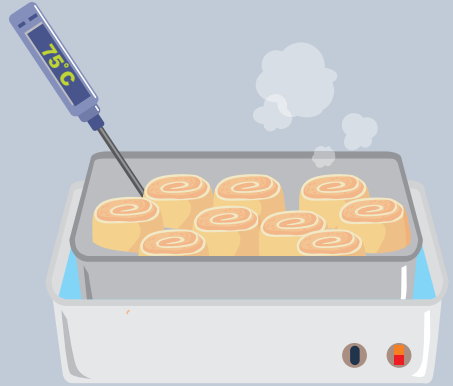
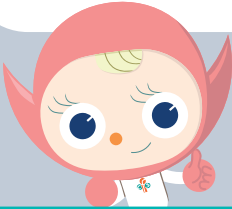


# Reheating

5

- Reheat refrigerated food with core temperature reaching at least 75°C before hot holding.
- Do not reheat cooked food more than once.

Remember, reheating means **cooking again**, not just warming up. Always reheat food until it is **steaming hot all the way through**. Do not put food into hot holding without reheating it thoroughly first.

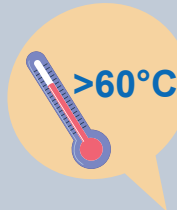


Reheat > 1 time

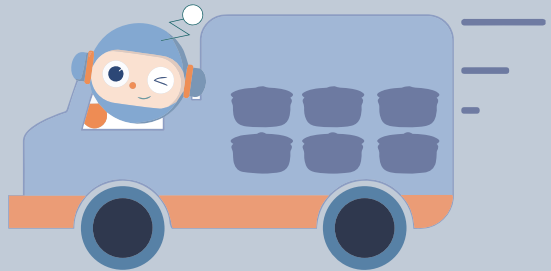
# Transportation

6

- If food is prepared in the central kitchen and then sent to the store for sale, the temperature of hot food should be kept at above 60°C during transportation.
- Food should be properly wrapped or covered to avoid contamination.



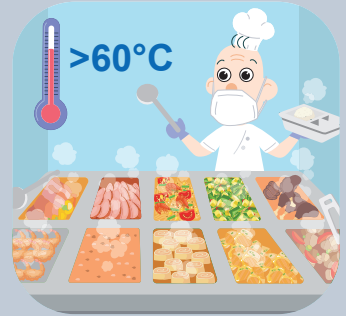
Central  
Kitchen



## 7

## Hot holding and display

- Use suitable equipment for hot holding, such as hot cupboards, soup kettles, bains marie and serving counters.
- Preheat hot-holding equipment before you put any food in it.
- Food must be cooked / reheated thoroughly until steaming hot before hot holding begins.
- Hot-holding equipment should only be used for keeping thoroughly cooked or reheated food hot. Do not reheat chilled food in a hot-holding device.
- Constantly monitor and ensure food is stored at above 60°C.
- Display appropriate amount of food to shorten the display time.
- To make sure your hot-holding equipment is working properly, check the temperature of each batch of hot food using a clean, disinfected food thermometer.
- Do not top up food by combining freshly cooked / reheated food with food displayed and kept for some time.
- Discard food that has been held/displayed at the Temperature Danger Zone (4-60°C) for more than four hours.
- Remind customers to consume the food as soon as possible.



4 hours



## 8

## Personal hygiene

- Always follow good personal hygiene practices, which include proper hand washing. Wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and water and rub hands for at least 20 seconds before and after handling foods or after using the toilet, touching your eyes, nose or mouth, coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose, etc.
- Cuts or wounds on hands should be covered by waterproof dressings or gloves.
- Do not smoke, eat or drink during food preparation.
- Suspend work if you are suffering from or think that you are suffering from an infectious disease with symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting, fever, sore throat or abdominal pain.



# A generic flowchart of producing 'rice with two sides'



Food cooked directly for hot holding/display



Cook thoroughly until core temperature reaches at least 75°C

CCP



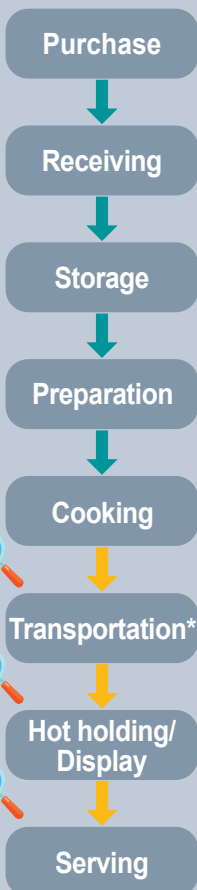
Keep hot dishes at above 60°C

CCP



Keep hot dishes at above 60°C

CCP



Food cooked in advance (e.g. one day ago) for later use



Cool to 20°C within 2 hours and then to 4°C within the next 4 hours or less

CCP



Keep food at 4°C or below

CCP



Reheat with core temperature reaching at least 75°C

CCP

A **Critical Control Point (CCP)** refers to a step at which control can be applied and is essential to prevent or eliminate a food safety hazard or reduce it to an acceptable level.

Maintain good personal, environmental and food hygiene throughout the process.

Follow the **Five Keys to Food Safety**: ① **Choose** (Choose safe raw materials); ② **Clean** (Keep hands and utensils clean); ③ **Separate** (Separate raw and cooked food); ④ **Cook** (Cook thoroughly); and ⑤ **Safe temperature** (Keep food at safe temperature).



\* For food produced in central kitchens