

Hygiene Guidelines on Preparation and Sale of Poon Choi

Objective:

Poon Choi comprises a wide variety of food ingredients, which are cooked in advance and set into layers in a basin. Since the making of Poon Choi requires a long preparation time and involves complicated preparation steps, improper handling may lead to a higher risk of microbiological contamination. These guidelines are intended to remind the food industry about the food hygiene and safety issues they should pay attention in the preparation and sale of Poon Choi.

Scope of Applicability:

Premises for preparation and sale of Poon Choi, including premises for takeaway and dine-in, and food factories that make this type of food.

Definition:

Poon Choi: consists of a wide variety of food ingredients such as seafood, meat, vegetables, and mushrooms, which are fried, cooked, stewed and braised, etc., and then set into layers in a basin. Traditionally, Poon Choi used to serve in wooden basin, but nowadays, metal or ceramic basin becomes popular due to its convenience when reheating Poon Choi.

Content:

1. Smart Purchase and Receipt

1) Purchase

- Purchase food and food ingredients in the amount as needed;
- Purchase hygienic and good quality food ingredients such as seafood, meat and dried foodstuff from reputable suppliers;
- Retain purchase and sales records or relevant receipts for source tracing by competent government authorities whenever necessary.

2) Receipt

- Check the information on the invoices to see if it is consistent with the received goods upon receipt;
- Check whether the food ingredients are stored at proper temperatures. Make sure they are in good condition, uncontaminated or undamaged;
- Reject food ingredients which are spoiled, expired, from unknown

sources, or with signs of melting;

- If necessary, request the suppliers to provide relevant documents, such as health certificates and certificates of origins, etc.

2. Careful Preparation

1) Storage

- Take appropriate protective measures (e.g. food should be wrapped or stored in lidded containers) to avoid contamination of food ingredients during storage;
- Perishable food ingredients such as meat and seafood should be stored in a refrigerator (with chill temperature below 5°C and freezing temperature at -18°C or below). Follow the “cooked food above raw food” principle, or alternatively, store raw food and cooked food in separate refrigerators;
- Food ingredients (e.g. salt, soy sauce and dried foodstuff) that need to be stored at room temperature should be kept in a cool and well-ventilated place to avoid exposure to direct sunlight, and away from the ground.

2) Preparation

- Plan ahead the quantity of food ingredients (e.g. meat, seafood and dried foodstuff) that are needed to avoid over-production or preparation too far in advance;
- Ensure the availability of adequate thermally insulated containers and refrigeration equipment, and at least two sets of utensils to handle raw and cooked food separately;
- Check whether the food ingredients are in good condition and ensure food ingredients with earlier expiry date are used first. Plan the order of preparation according to the food ingredients’ preparation time;
- Wash food ingredients thoroughly. Dried foodstuff such as dried shrimp and mushrooms should be washed prior to soaking;
- Food ingredients which have been chopped or prepared should be used as soon as possible;
- Defrost frozen food ingredients with appropriate methods (e.g. defrost frozen food in a refrigerator, under running water, or in a microwave oven with immediate cooking afterwards). Thawed food ingredients should be used as soon as possible.

3) Cooking

- Food ingredients should be covered and completely soaked in water, soup or Lo Sui marinade during cooking;
- Food ingredients, such as chicken and seafood, should be cooked thoroughly. Ensure the centre of the thickest part of meat is not red in colour, juice is clear and blood is not visible;
- Cooked food (e.g. poached chicken and roast duck) that need to be chopped should be handled carefully to avoid cross-contamination;
- To produce chilled Poon Choi, it should be cooled from above 60°C to 21°C within two hours or less, and from 21°C to below 5°C within four hours or less, and then kept refrigerated.

3. Proper Delivery and Serving

1) Delivery

- Keep Poon Choi in clean and lidded containers, and store it in appropriate thermally insulated containers or refrigeration equipment;
- Use clean delivery equipment or vehicle to deliver Poon Choi to the destination as soon as possible.

2) Sale and serving

- Cover Poon Choi properly, and store it at appropriate temperatures (keep hot Poon Choi at above 60°C and chilled Poon Choi at below 5°C);
- Provide cleaned and disinfected communal chopsticks and spoons for dine-in customers during consumption of Poon Choi;
- Poon Choi should be reheated thoroughly until the core temperature reaches 75°C or above, or brought to a complete boil;
- When selling takeaway Poon Choi, remind customers of the safety precautions of the collection, storage and reheating of Poon Choi;
- Stop serving the Poon Choi immediately if it has spoiled or is suspected of being contaminated.

4. Time Control

- Cooked food (e.g. cooked shrimp, cooked mushrooms and barbecue pork) is potentially hazardous, and hence, the duration it is being held at temperature danger zone (5 °C to 60 °C) should be shortened as far as

possible during the production and operation process;

- During the assembling of layers of food ingredients of Poon Choi, cooked food may inevitably expose to the temperature danger zone for a period of time. Therefore, it is important to implement the time control measure by following the 2-hour / 4-hour rule¹:
 - Food held at the temperature danger zone for less than 2 hours should be stored in the refrigerator or used immediately;
 - Food held at the temperature danger zone for 2 to 4 hours should be used immediately;
 - Food held at the temperature danger zone for more than 4 hours should be discarded.

5. Personal Hygiene

- Wash hands thoroughly before handling food and after using the toilet;
- Wear clean and light-coloured outer clothing, protective overalls or apron;
- Do not wear rings, bracelets, watches, etc., and do not wear nail polish or false nails;
- Use waterproof dressings to cover open wounds properly;
- Wear disposable gloves if necessary. Change gloves after touching dirty items, or every 30 minutes;
- Use cleaned and disinfected utensils when handling food ingredients;
- Do not handle money while handling food;
- Suspend from engaging in any food handling work when suffering from symptoms of illness such as running nose, coughing, diarrhoea, vomiting and fever, etc.

6. Utensils, Equipment and Environmental Hygiene

- All utensils and equipment that come into contact with food should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before and after use;
- Keep the areas for assembling layers of food ingredients in a basin clean, and they should be away from the areas for handling raw food;
- All work surfaces should be made of impermeable, easy to clean material and kept well above the ground;
- Replace damaged or cracked utensils;
- Use lidded rubbish bins, and empty and disinfect them regularly;

¹ Reference: “Hygiene Guidelines on Time and Temperature Control”

- Clean all Poon Choi preparation and storage areas daily;
- Do not keep pets at food premises.