

FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR PIT OVEN COOKING (HUNGI, KUP-MARI, UMU, PACHAMANCA)

This guideline provides food safety information for people or community groups who intend to cook food using traditional pit oven cooking often referred to as a Hungi or Kup-mari. Commercial operators intending to prepare foods in this manner must be approved off-site caterers or hold a temporary food premises licence for the event. Some non-profit organisations may be exempt from food licensing, however they are still required to notify Council of any proposed food stalls.

Purchasing food

- All food is to be purchased from licensed food suppliers to ensure it has been properly handled, prepared and stored. Potentially hazardous foods such as meats, seafood, dairy and processed fruits / vegetables must be stored and transported under temperature control (eg. at 5°C or below in a refrigerated vehicle or in eskies well stocked with ice).

Food preparation

- A temporary hand washing facility must be provided on-site. A suitable container with a tap at the base situated on a table and a waste water container located underneath will be acceptable. Liquid soap and paper towel must also be provided at the hand washing facility. All waste water must be disposed of to sewer (eg. pour into toilet).
- All food handlers must wash their hands with soap and running water before handling food and regularly during food processing. The use of disposable gloves is recommended (Note: The wearing of gloves does not negate the requirement that food handlers wash their hands).
- All meat must be completely thawed before cooking. Defrost meat in a refrigerator or coldroom. Defrosting meat can take 24 – 48 hours depending on the size of meat portions.
- All food contact surfaces such as cutting boards, benches, food containers and utensils (eg. knives) must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitised before use.
- Prepare the meat for cooking as quickly as possible. The fire and pit should be ready before starting to prepare the meat.
- Fresh fruit and vegetables should be washed before processing.
- Meat must be cut into small enough portions to ensure it will be thoroughly cooked in the allocated time. The portions of meat should be similar in size to ensure they are all thoroughly cooked within the same timeframe.
- All food is to be effectively wrapped (eg. with at least 2 layers of aluminium foil) so that it is sealed to prevent contamination by dirt, ash, grass, etc. If the food is to be wrapped in fresh leaves they must be thoroughly washed prior to use.

The pit oven

- The oven must be located:
 - away from septic outflows;
 - away from drains and ground water; and

- away from dry foliage that could start a fire.
- If rocks are used in the oven they must be capable of withstanding extreme heat and be large enough to hold their heat for enough time to thoroughly cook the food. Sedimentary rocks and river stones are considered to be unsafe as they may explode or shatter. Volcanic rocks or iron bars may also be used.
- The number of rocks used, the size of the fire and the time allowed for heating the rocks must be adequate to ensure the rocks will generate enough heat to thoroughly cook the volume of food.
- The wrapped food should be placed in the oven in such a way that it can be safely retrieved. It is recommended that a metal rack or wire baskets are used.
- The wrapped food should be covered with a protective layer to separate the soil from the food. The protective layer can be made up of green leaves, paperbark, hessian bags or other suitable materials that have been soaked in water.
- Once the cooked meat is removed, use a probe thermometer to measure the internal temperature. Roast meats should reach an internal temperature of at least 74°C to ensure they are thoroughly cooked.

Food service area

- A suitable kitchen or stall with a roof must be available to prepare food after cooking. A marquee with three walls is recommended particularly in windy and /or dusty conditions.
- A non-slip, impervious flooring must be supplied for the food preparation area. (eg. sealed timber boards, linoleum or groundsheets). Flooring must be secured to prevent trip hazards (eg with tent pegs).
- Adequate bench space and cutting boards must be provided to carve the meat and prepare for service to the public. Benches and cutting boards must be smooth and impervious for effective cleaning and must be cleaned and sanitised before use.
- Use a clean cutting board and utensils to prepare the cooked meats.
- Food must be protected from contamination by customers.
- A bain-marie can be used to maintain cooked food at a temperature of 60° C or above.

Two hour / four hour rule

- All food that is not stored in a refrigerator or bain marie must be used within 4 hours of cooking and disposed after this time.

Waste disposal

- The stall must have a lined bin large enough to contain all waste.
- All waste must be disposed of appropriately where it will not cause a nuisance or create a food source for pests.

General Requirements

- No food preparation is to take place at home or other private residence without approval from Council's Public Health Unit.

For further food safety information please contact the **Public Health Unit** on **4044 3044**.