

Guidelines for Safer Steamboat Meals

A public health document prepared by:
Singapore Food Agency

INTRODUCTION

This document gives tips for both operators and patrons to enjoy safer steamboat meals, which includes the traditional steamboat in hot pot as well as barbeque on hot plate.

Steamboat is a popular cuisine in Singapore. Steamboat is usually a Do-It-Yourself meal. The operators would prepare and display the raw food ingredients on a showcase such as a chiller, and patrons would then select raw food ingredients from the display counters and cook the food in a hot pot or on a hot plate. Therefore, both food operators and patrons play important roles in ensuring hygienic food preparation for consumption.

GUIDELINES

Hygiene Tips for Operators

1) General

- a) Conduct daily checks on employees to ensure that those who are unwell do not handle food.
- b) Put up signage to educate patrons on good food and personal hygiene as well as to advise them to cook food thoroughly before consumption.

2) Purchase and Storage of Food Ingredients

- a) Buy food ingredients from reputable, licensed suppliers.
- b) Check the package and expiry date of food.
- c) Store food based on First-Expire-First-Out (FEFO) principle.

- d) Store perishable food ingredients promptly. Chilled food should be stored in a chiller and frozen food in a freezer.

3) Preparation of Food Ingredients

- a) Thaw frozen food appropriately in chiller or microwave. Do not thaw food at room temperature.
- b) Observe good food and personal hygiene. Wash hands before handling food and after using toilet.
- c) Wash all raw steamboat ingredients, such as vegetables, thoroughly before serving to patrons.
- d) Ensure food served as cooked food is cooked thoroughly.
- e) Avoid contact between raw and cooked food to prevent cross contamination.
- f) Display raw and cooked food in separate areas. Serve raw and cooked food in separate plates.
- g) Perishable food ingredients that require chilling should be displayed in chiller. Display food ingredients in smaller batches and replenish more frequently.
- h) Provide separate utensils such as tongs or chopsticks, preferably with different appearances or colour codes, for patrons to handle raw food and cooked food separately so as to avoid cross contamination.
- i) Provide patrons with common serving utensils for the steamboat pot.
- j) Do not reuse left over food and soup base.

Hygiene Tips for Patrons

1) General

- a) Pay attention to the hygiene guidelines provided by the food operators.

- b) Wash hands thoroughly before food handling, eating or after visiting the toilet.

2) Handling of Food

- a) Pay attention to the appearance, smell or texture of the food ingredients. Inform the operator immediately and do not consume the food if the food is suspected to be turning bad or spoilt.
- b) For self-service counters, do not use bare hands to handle food. Use only designated utensils provided by the operators to handle a particular food item to prevent contamination of food on display.
- c) Use separate tongs and utensils to handle raw and cooked food, to avoid cross contamination.

3) Preparation of Food

- a) Cook food thoroughly before consumption. Undercooked food may contribute to higher risk of food poisoning.
- b) Different food may require different cooking time. Consider cooking food in batches according to the type of food.
- c) The following practices may lead to cross contamination or undercooked food:
 - i. Hot pot is overloaded such that the soup base has not come to a boil.
 - ii. Adding raw items into a pot of cooked food.
 - iii. Placing raw food next to cooked food on a hot plate.