



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization



Food safety is everyone's business in street food vending

The importance of food safety

An estimated 2.5 billion people eat street food worldwide every day. It provides a source of inexpensive, convenient and in some cases nutritious meals, attractive and varied foods for tourists and a source of income for a vast number of people, particularly women.

While street foods are appreciated for their unique flavours and convenience, they are also often perceived to be a major public health risk due to unsafe food handling.

Lack of knowledge among street food vendors about the causes of foodborne diseases is a major public health risk factor. Interventions at all government levels are required to ensure that the standard of safety for such foods is the best attainable in the local situation.



What are the benefits of taking action for food safety?

FOR VENDORS

- Improved preparation practices and business;
- Improved product quality;
- Consumer trust leading to higher sales;
- Greater market access and higher earning potential;
- Safer working environment.

FOR CONSUMERS

- Access to safer and more nutritious food;
- Better health and nutritional status for themselves and their families.

How to improve food safety

STREET FOOD VENDORS

Use only potable water for drinking, cooking and making ice. Don't reuse water used for washing utensils, food or hands.

Separate raw and cooked food. Avoid direct and indirect contact between raw and cooked or prepared foods which will be consumed without heating.

When transporting, handling and storing prepared foods:

- Keep the vehicle used for transport of prepared foods clean and do not carry animals.
- Minimize the time required to transport food from where it is prepared to where it is sold to facilitate:
 - keeping prepared foods hot at a temperature of above 60°C;
 - keeping prepared foods cold at less than 5°C (on ice or in a fridge).
- Reduce the time that food is displayed and keep it protected from dust and out of consumers reach.
- Cook foods thoroughly to at least 70°C. When reheating, keep food at 70°C for two minutes. Don't keep leftovers until the next day if cold storage is unavailable.

- Keep vending units, equipment and utensils clean and covered and sanitize surfaces.
- Wash hands with soap and clean water and wear clean clothing.

AUTHORITIES

Ensure the supply of water is of acceptable quality and in sufficient quantities for drinking, washing, cleaning and cooking, for example from a central system or a hand pump.

Provide training for street vendors and ongoing education as well as educate consumers who, through their purchasing power, provide a strong motivating force to improve the safety of street-vended food.

Educate consumers on the importance of picking vendors that ensure food safety.

On World Food Safety Day (7 June), use posters to increase knowledge of food safety practices; organize visual displays and handouts featuring food safety literature, recipes and education materials.