

FARMERS MARKETS



Food Safety Tips When Providing Food Samples

One of the key factors to increase sales at the farmers market is to provide food samples. In order to keep the samples free of contamination, vendors should follow proper safety tips.

Processed food samples

Some examples of processed foods include canned items, bakery items and jams. Food samples can be prepared at a licensed facility prior to arrival or prepared on-site at the farmers market.

- For bakery or cheese items, vendors may cut foods into pieces and insert toothpicks into each one at a licensed facility or at the farmers market and then place them on a plastic tray covered with plastic wrap.
- For canned items, vendors may open one jar at a time and provide samples with a disposable paper cup, toothpicks or disposable utensils.
- Meat item samples may be served directly from a covered grill using toothpicks or tissues. If the cooked meat is held hot for a length of time, the meat must be kept at a temperature of 140 F or above.
- All food samples that require temperature control must be maintained at a proper temperature.
- Always use clean and sanitized utensils, knives, cutting boards and containers to cut and prepare the food samples.
- Discard the food after two hours or before it starts to discolor.
- Ensure that all food samples are properly packed or covered and protected from insects at all times.
- Ensure that the serving is done in a manner that the sample does not touch bare hands. Use clean and disposable gloves to serve the food samples.

Fresh fruit and vegetable samples

All fresh fruits and vegetables that require cutting or slicing must be prepared at the farmers market or in a licensed kitchen prior to arrival.

- Always use clean and sanitized utensils, knives, cutting boards and containers to cut and prepare the samples.
- Fruits and vegetables must be rinsed thoroughly in clean water.
- Use clean and disposable gloves while preparing and handling food samples.
- Fresh produce that has been cut must be stored at a temperature at or below 40 F.
- Discard the food after two hours or before it starts to discolor.
- Use single-use containers, such as paper plates, napkins, cups, toothpicks or plastic utensils, to provide food samples.
- Ensure that all food samples are properly packed or covered and protected from insects at all times.
- Use clean and disposable gloves to serve the food samples.

Other food samples

- The food used for samples must be free from spoilage, filth or other contamination.
- Tea, coffee or other hot foods used as samples must be held at 140 F or above.
- Ensure that all food samples are properly packed or covered.
- Avoid contact with food samples with bare hands.
- Use disposable utensils, toothpicks, paper sampling cups or wax paper to distribute food samples.

Personal hygiene – hand washing

Wash hands properly for at least 20 seconds before cutting or preparing food samples. Also, clean the exposed portions of the arms, including surrogate prosthetic devices for hands or arms. The following procedure must be followed to properly wash hands and arms.

- Rinse hands and arms under clean and warm running water.
- Apply soap and rub all surfaces of the fingers and hands for at least 10-15 seconds. Also, ensure that the parts under the fingernails and between the fingers or fingertips are properly cleaned.
- Rinse hands and arms thoroughly with clean and warm running water.
- Dry the hands and exposed portions of the arms with paper towels or a hot air hand dryer. Also, make sure that you use paper towels or a proper barrier to turn on or off the faucet or open or close the doorknob.

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Pub. 3864-J (Online Only) 11/22

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