

## **Guidance for small scale home producers of chutneys, pickles, flavoured oils and jams**

If you are handling or preparing food at home as a commercial business, you must comply with the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006. This leaflet gives advice on how to follow the rules on good food hygiene.

This guidance is intended for home-made chutneys, pickles, flavoured oils and jams for sale to the public. These items should be safe to eat, as long as the people who make them follow good food hygiene practices.

Before you start producing food from home you must make sure you have a good knowledge of food hygiene. While a formal qualification is not a requirement a 'Level 2 Food Safety in Catering Certificate' or its equivalent is recommended. This shows your customers that you take your responsibility for food safety seriously.

### **General Food Safety Advice for all products**

- Clear the preparation area so that there are no small or loose items on worktops or shelves above.
- Ensure chopping boards, pans and utensils are clean and kept in good condition.
- Use clean disinfected jars/bottles and invert them after disinfection until you are ready to fill them, to prevent foreign body contamination. Disinfect them by placing them in the oven (10 minutes at gas mark 3/160°C), by passing them through the hot cycle of the dishwasher or submerging them in hot water (above 90°C) for 10 minutes. The jars or bottles must be fully dry before use.
- Store products in a cool, dry environment.
- Always stick to standard recipes and cooking methods; the amount of vinegar and/or sugar is essential for safety. For example, ensure weights of ingredients are known and follow instructions on how long to boil/simmer each batch.
- Keep records of each batch produced. This would typically include the food name, date of production, number of jars/bottles produced, use by or best before date, lot or batch number, records of any temperatures or pH measurements. If you supply other businesses, you must be able to identify what you have supplied them with in case you need to recall the food in the event of a problem.
- Remove animals from the kitchen.
- If you have young children or toddlers, keep them out of the kitchen while you are preparing food for your business.
- Do not wash laundry and carry out other domestic tasks whilst preparing your products.
- Protect cooling products from contamination.
- You must register your business with us. Registration is free. Please contact us for a registration form or one is available online at [www.northnorfolk.org](http://www.northnorfolk.org).
- You must have a documented food safety system in place. This is a document which shows that you, as a food business operator, have assessed the hazards involved within your processes and what controls you have put in to place to reduce those risks. If you comply with these simple rules and keep a record of when things go wrong you will comply with this requirement. Please contact the department for more information.
- Any allergens present in the ingredients and any genetically modified ingredients should be identified (Allergens include: Gluten, Lupin, eggs, milk, soya, nuts, peanuts, sesame seeds, sulphur dioxide). For an up to date list of food allergens, and for general advice on hygiene and labelling matters visit [www.food.gov.uk](http://www.food.gov.uk).
- Floors, walls, ceilings and work surfaces must be in good condition.
- There must be enough storage space for ingredients and finished products.
- Hot and cold water must always be available at the sinks.

## Specific advice for Jams, Pickles and Chutney

- Thoroughly wash, dry and where necessary peel fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs.
- Ensure lids/stoppers are clean and tight fitting but do not re-use lids. Lids must be put on immediately after bottling, whilst the product is still hot for the vacuum seal to be formed.
- Use a jam thermometer to ensure the jam is heated to the correct temperature (setting point). Jam sets around 105°C. Heating to this temperature will destroy a significant number of harmful bacteria. The setting point of low sugar jams will vary.
- For pickles and chutneys, it is important to ensure the pH is 4.5 or lower and/or the water activity is below 0.9 throughout the product during the shelf-life to control the risk of *C. botulinum*. If this cannot be guaranteed, products should be stored in a refrigerator, even before they are opened.

## Extra advice for flavoured oils

- When making oils, use dried herbs, spices and vegetables to ensure that moisture levels are kept to minimum or thoroughly dry ingredients well before adding. The bottles used should be completely dry before use to store flavoured oils.
- Ensure that the pH is consistently pH 4.5 or lower throughout the product including the added ingredients. Acids including phosphoric, citric or acetic acid can be added to oils to help reduce the pH. pH meters should be used. Litmus paper can offer a guide but is not very accurate. This is a critical control point and must be followed to protect consumer safety.
- The maximum shelf life of the product should be 10 days. It can be kept for longer if the pH is shown to be 4.5 or lower for the duration of its shelf-life. This must be determined by independent analysis.
- Unless you have undertaken independent analysis it is difficult to determine an appropriate shelf life for your product. Some recipes give an indication of shelf life but this may not have been assessed by a microbiological laboratory. Never exceed the shelf life and it would be sensible to give your products a shorter shelf life than stated unless you have used an accredited microbiological laboratory to undertake a shelf life study.

## Food Labelling

For full details on how to comply with labelling requirements, please contact Norfolk County Council Trading Standards on 0344 800 8013

## Personal hygiene

- Always wear a clean apron, and tie hair back or use a fine mesh hair-net.
- Cover any wounds with a waterproof plaster.
- Do not wear jewellery, perfume or nail varnish.
- Do not handle or prepare food if you are unwell. If you have had food poisoning or diarrhoea do not handle or prepare food for at least 48 hours after the symptoms have stopped.
- There must be no smoking in the kitchen.
- Always wash hands before preparing food.

Further specific advice on hygiene matters contact:

Commercial Team, North Norfolk District Council, Holt Road, Cromer, Norfolk NR27 9EN  
Tel: 01263 516008  
Email: [commercial@north-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:commercial@north-norfolk.gov.uk)  
[www.northnorfolk.org](http://www.northnorfolk.org)

Details of food hygiene courses can be found at: [www.northnorfolk.org/environment/20276.asp](http://www.northnorfolk.org/environment/20276.asp)

**For information on food labelling or composition** contact Trading Standards on:

Tel: 0344 800 8013  
Email: [trading.standards@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:trading.standards@norfolk.gov.uk)