

Rice-based desserts

Food Act 2006

Rice-based desserts, or 'rice cakes', are ready-to-eat, fresh, soft and elastic products made from rice or glutinous rice (or rice flour), sugar and other ingredients such as beans and nuts. They are popular in Asia and are commonly sold in Asian grocery stores. Usually prepared by steaming, they can be moulded into different shapes and can consist of layers with different colours. Some products are boiled and look like a soup.

Rice-based desserts are usually served at room temperature, as they go hard when stored cold.

The risks

Rice-based desserts are nutrient-rich, have a high water content and a neutral pH, making them an ideal environment for food poisoning bacteria and as such, potentially hazardous if not stored correctly. However, when made under certain conditions, these products, when stored at room temperature, can be safely consumed up until the end of the day after manufacture.

Food safety tips

The risk of food poisoning from rice-based desserts can be minimised when stored at room temperature, if the following control measures are taken:

1. Use high quality ingredients.
2. Ensure effective cooking of ingredients.
3. Practise good hygiene and sanitation to prevent contamination after processing.
4. Discard at the end of the day after manufacture.

Labelling requirements

Food that is made and packaged at the place from where it is sold is required to have the following information accompanying or displayed with, the food:

- Name of the food.
- Directions for use and storage (use by- the day after manufacture at the latest, if stored at room temperature).
- Declaration of allergens and other substances e.g. gluten, nuts.

Products that are made and/or packaged at different premises must be fully labelled in English, in accordance with the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

The Queensland Health 'Label Buster' is a useful resource for food businesses to understand the labelling requirements and is available at www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/industry-environment/food-safety/resources.

Further information

The Queensland Department of Health has a variety of fact sheets with detailed information on food safety. These can be accessed at www.health.qld.gov.au/public-health/industry-environment/food-safety.

If you have any further questions relating to the sous vide method of cooking, contact the local government for the area where you are located. Contact details can be found in the White Pages or at www.qld.gov.au/about/how-government-works/local-government-directory.

Acknowledgements

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