



HEALTHY TONGA TOURISM

A GUIDE TO FOOD
SAFETY AND HYGIENE
FOR TOURIST
ACCOMMODATION
BUSINESSES IN TONGA

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Healthy Tonga Tourism is a New Zealand Aid Programme funded collaboration. The Tongan Ministry of Infrastructure and Tourism, the Tongan Ministry of Health and ESR are working in partnership to provide public and environmental health support to the Tourism Industry in Tonga. The project delivers approaches to public health practice which contribute to a healthy and safe stay for visitors and enhance the Kingdom of Tonga's economic sustainability.



1. Purpose of Guide

This *Guide to Food Safety and Hygiene for Tourist Accommodation Businesses in Tonga* is designed as a training and reference resource for health inspectors, Tonga Mark assessors and accommodation business owners to enable them to identify risks to providing safe and hygienic food storage and preparation and to plan appropriate improvements. The guide is equally useful for communities, schools, churches and other settings that provide food to guests.

As hosts, tourist accommodation business owners have a duty of care to provide safe and healthy services and physical environment for their guests. The provision of safe food is one of these services.

2. Safe Food

Safe food will not cause illness when consumed and will enhance the experience of guests dining with you. For many visitors a key part of the holiday experience is the food which they are served. It can provide a strong positive association which will influence a guests willingness to visit both you and the Kingdom of Tonga in the future; and equally importantly will affect how they recount their visit to friends who may also choose to visit Tonga.

The safe and hygienic preparation of food for serving to guests is of great importance. There are many factors which contribute to developing good food safety and hygiene practice.

3. Food Safety and hygiene

For the purposes of these guidelines the first areas of concern for the food safety and hygiene are as shown below. These do not constitute all that is required for a sanitary system but are major steps towards the development of good practice in the kitchen.



SAFE FOOD AND PREPARATION

- ▶ Good quality produce
- ▶ Safe water
- ▶ Washing produce
- ▶ Adhere to expiry dates.



TEMPERATURE CONTROL

- ▶ Thorough cooking
- ▶ Keep food at safe temperature (avoid the danger zone 5 – 60°C).



FOOD STORAGE

- ▶ Fresh produce and dry produce storage
- ▶ Stock control/rotation
- ▶ Cold storage temperature and monitoring
- ▶ Food type separation
 - Cooked and raw
 - Meat, fish and vegetables.



SURFACE HYGIENE

- ▶ Preparation surfaces
- ▶ Food type separation
- ▶ Equipment hygiene
- ▶ Cleaning materials
- ▶ Washing procedures.



PERSONAL HYGIENE

- ▶ Hand hygiene
- ▶ General personal hygiene
- ▶ Illness/sickness of staff.



4. Food safety and hygiene checklist

To help focus attention on the most important barriers to contamination, a checklist has been developed (see Appendix 1), categorising elements of the food safety and hygiene practices into **Essential**, **Desirable** and **Optional**, recognising that some risks are more important to eliminate, reduce or manage than others. It provides space for recording and tracking the status of the **Essential** elements, recommendations for improvements and improvements made over time.

The target status for all elements should be **GREEN** (= acceptable). For elements where risks have been identified that need to be eliminated, reduced or managed, there is an option of **ORANGE** status (meaning improvements are underway) or **RED** (meaning improvements are needed).

OTHER BENEFITS OF APPLYING THE CHECKLIST INCLUDE:

- ▶ making transparent and explicit to accommodation business owners the Ministry of Health's expectations regarding food safety and hygiene
- ▶ providing for consistency of inspection for all health inspectors
- ▶ providing a way to track improvements over time.

The following three sections provide guidance to assist with completing the checklist and developing plans to eliminate, reduce or manage risks.



5. Essential elements of food safety and hygiene

The elements of food safety and hygiene considered to be essential are discussed in this section. These elements focus on preventing contamination in the first instance, during storage, preparation and presentation. The discussions pay particular attention to microbial contamination because pathogenic microorganisms cause illness rapidly and when microorganisms are food they rapidly increase in their numbers. Whereas illness from chemical contamination although potentially significant, occurs less frequently as acute illness or has extended exposure periods leading to illness.

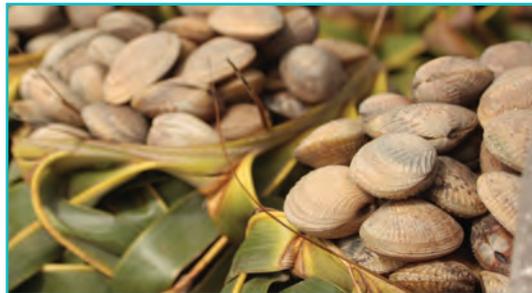
SAFE FOOD PREPARATION

AREA

ACTIONS

Ensuring raw products and produce are of good quality eg.

- ▶ Meat, Fish and Shellfish
- ▶ Vegetables and Salad
- ▶ Dairy Products
- ▶ Baked Goods
- ▶ Dry Goods
- ▶ Herbs and Spices
- ▶ Produce



- Identify reliable providers/ suppliers
- Ensure product is in good condition when received/ collected (in date, at right temperature, no signs of damage e.g bruising, vermin traces, insect eggs or maggots).
- Correct storage conditions by produce type.
- Dispose of old or spoiled stock.

Safe water for food washing and preparation



- Use clean water which has been treated to kill bugs (e.g. chlorinated or boiled - recommended).
- Wash vegetables for salads in running tap water, not in a bowl.

Produce used in a timely manner – Expiry dates and best before dates



- Produce used in a timely manner – (Expiry dates and best before dates).
- If expiry date is shown on product, stick to it!
- Note date when produce is received.
- Rotate stock to ensure oldest produce is used first.
- When food is made to be stored – write a 'prepared on' and 'use by' date to the container.

Food hygiene



- Ensure good surface and equipment hygiene is used (see following sections).
- Ensure good personal hygiene is used (see following sections).
- Ensure good food type separation is achieved(see following sections).

FOOD STORAGE

AREA

ACTIONS

Dry goods storage (in the kitchen)



- Ensure stock is rotated regularly; older stock should be used before newer.
- Check stock is within expiry date before using.
- Ensure effective pest prevention is used for insects and rodents.
- Control the moisture/humidity of the storage area to reduce produce being spoiled through damp.

Fresh produce storage (in the kitchen)



- Ensure stock is rotated regularly; older stock should be used before newer.
- Check stock is within expiry date before using.
- Temperature control to prevent spoilage.
- Keep food types separate (e.g. keep raw salads away from vegetables for cooking).
- Ensure effective pest prevention is used for insects and rodents.

Produce and prepared food in cold storage (in the kitchen)



- Check temperature setting of refrigerator is at 4°C (40°F).
- Check seals on refrigerator to ensure they seal all the way around.
- Ensure refrigerator is regularly cleaned
- Ensure stock is rotated regularly; older stock should be used before newer.
- Check stock is within expiry date before using.
- Keep raw and cooked meat apart.
- Keep raw and cooked fish apart.
- Keep prepared dishes and unprepared produce separate.
- Keep dairy products in the refrigerator until just before use.

FOOD STORAGE

AREA

Produce and prepared food in cold storage (in the kitchen) *continued*



ACTIONS

- Allow prepared dishes to cool sufficiently before putting into the refrigerator.
- RICE – if to be cooled, should be done so using cold water to speed up cooling and reduce time to refrigeration.

Separation of food types (in the kitchen and during service)



- Keep different meats separate (eg fish, chicken, pork).
- Keep meat and fish in clean containers that do not leak to contain any juices that are produced.
- Store raw meat in the refrigerator away from and below cooked meat.
- Store raw fish in the refrigerator away from and below cooked fish.
- Separate washed and prepared salads from unwashed salad vegetables.

TEMPERATURE CONTROL

AREA

Thorough cooking (in the kitchen)



ACTIONS

- Meat should reach appropriate temperature for the correct period of time before serving – as detailed in the Good Practice Top Tips sheet #1.
- Meat juices should 'run clear' prior to serving to indicate it is cooked.
- Soups and liquids should be held at or above 70°C for at least 1 minute during cooking.

TEMPERATURE CONTROL (continued)

AREA

ACTIONS

Hot food – Safe holding and serving temperature (in the kitchen and during service)



- Reheat hot dishes, as quickly as possible, to more than 60°C prior to service.
- Once reheated maintain temperature at or above 60°C for hot dishes through service.
- Minimise the time that prepared dishes spend in the 'Danger Zone' of 5 – 60°C.
- If a dish is reheated and not consumed – dispose of it to avoid multiple trips through the danger zone.
- Limit the amount of time that hot dishes are kept before consumption.
- Ensure dishes can be covered and serving utensils are specific for each dish.

Cold food – Safe holding and serving temperature (in the kitchen and during service)



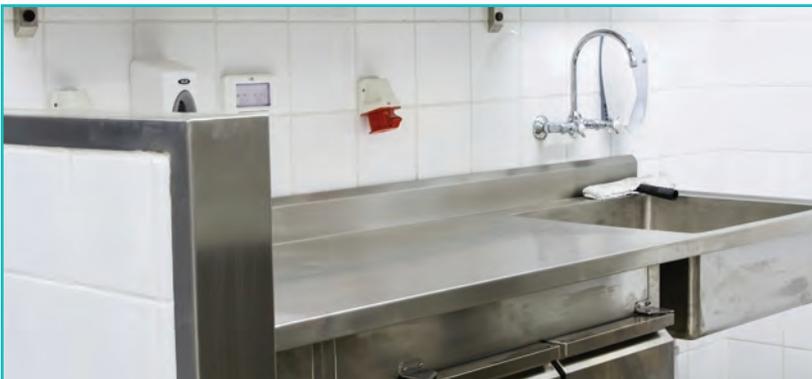
- Hold cold dishes at 4°C before and during service.
- Minimise time in 'Danger Zone' of 5 – 60°C before dishes are consumed.
- serving utensils are specific for each dish.

SURFACE HYGIENE

AREA

Preparation surfaces

- ▶ Bench/work top
- ▶ Chopping board
- ▶ Preparation boards
- ▶ Mixing bowls
- ▶ Sinks and basins
- ▶ Takeaway platters and bowls.



ACTIONS

- Surface should be smooth, easily cleaned material.
- Surface should be cleaned thoroughly with hot soapy water **between preparation of different food types.**
- Ensure no food is left on preparation surfaces after end of working day. (Food which can be left at room temperature should be in a covered container, not left on a preparation surface).
- Surface should be sterilised (at least daily with a correct concentration bleach solution or anti-microbial surface cleaner as detailed in the *Good Practice Top Tips sheet #2*.
- Allow cleaned and sterilised surfaces to **air dry** after final rinse off.

Equipment and utensils hygiene

- ▶ Chopping and preparation boards
- ▶ Knives
- ▶ Preparation and serving utensils
- ▶ Bowls, pans and pots
- ▶ Blending, mixing and grating equipment
- ▶ Other food contact equipment and utensils



- Clean thoroughly in hot soapy water between preparation of different food types.
- Allow equipment and utensils to air dry.
- If possible, sterilise daily with a correct concentration bleach solution or anti-microbial cleaner as detailed in the *Good Practice Top Tips sheet #* or place into boiling water for 10 minutes.
- Ensure equipment and utensils are stored in clean, dry (sanitary) conditions/places/areas.
- Wash out and sterilise (boil or bleach) all used cloths, brushes and mop-heads as detailed in *Good Practice Top Tips sheet #2*.

SURFACE HYGIENE (continued)

AREA

Hygiene in other areas



ACTIONS

- Clean kitchen floor between each meal preparation and service.
- Ensure clean white aprons or uniforms are available for kitchen staff during service.
- Dispose of waste food, produce and packaging between each service or more frequently when necessary.

Cleaning facilities and materials



- Pot and dish wash area should have two basins with access to hot water and liquid detergent.
- Hot water for washing should be available, on tap preferably or from heating pans of water.
- Household bleach for surface sterilisation should be available, along with instructions for dilution to correct concentration for each task.
- Cleaning cloths should be kept for specific tasks (e.g. one for cleaning surfaces, one for equipment, one for dishes).
- Floor mops and buckets should be stored away from food preparation area unless being used for cleaning.

Wash procedures



- Clean surfaces "Rinse, Wash, Strilise, Rinse, Air-dry".
- Equipment – "Rinse, Wash, Rinse, Air-dry".
- Cloths should be changed between services, and washed and sterilised.
- Cleaning cloths should be washed and sterilised separate from mops.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

AREA

Hand Hygiene



ACTIONS

- Wash hands when entering the kitchen.
- Wash hands with warm water and soap before handling food and equipment.
- Wash hands when changing food type being prepared (e.g. Salad, meat, vegetables).
- Dry hands with disposable towels or personal towels or use an air drier, NOT dishcloths or plate prep cloths.
- Cover cuts and grazes with gloves or sticking plaster (eg. band aid).
- Keep hands away from face, hair and other body areas during preparation.
- Remove non-essential jewellery, and have short finger nails.
- Cover coughs and sneezes – then wash hands with warm water and soap.

General personal hygiene



- Ensure staff are cleanly presented for work.
- Ensure clothing is clean and provides sufficient cover of the skin.
- Cover hair with a hat or hairnet, or use other method to prevent contact with or shedding into dishes.

Illness or sickness of staff



- Report any gastro (vomiting and/or diarrhoea) to immediate supervisor, manager or head of kitchen staff before starting shift.
- Viral infections (colds, coughs etc.) – Keep mouth and nose covered and regularly wash hands with luke warm water and soap during preparations of dishes.
- Bacterial infections (chest infections, infected wounds) wear appropriate cover to prevent contamination of preparation or service area.

6. Desirable Elements of Food Safety and Hygiene

The elements of food safety and hygiene considered to be desirable are discussed in this section. These elements mostly focus on aspects that provide additional steps or barriers that will provide additional assurance that good food safety and hygiene is being achieved. They are a combination of processes in the food preparation process and record-keeping.

SAFE FOOD PREPARATION

AREA

ACTIONS

Ensuring raw products and produce are of good quality



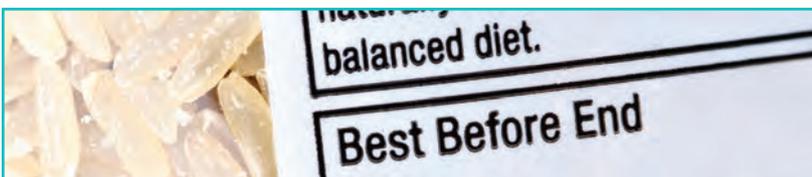
- Regular checks on the source of produce from trusted supplier (for eg. Direct from the farm and avoid purchasing from roadside stalls).

Safe water for food washing and preparation



- Water tested for microbial contamination and found to be safe on a monthly period.

Produce used in a timely manner –(Expiry dates)



- Add use-by dates to all prepared dishes.

Food hygiene



- Regular training/refreshers for all kitchen and service staff and cleaners.
- Cover dishes or produce that are out of storage but not being prepared.

FOOD STORAGE

AREA

Dry goods storage (in the kitchen)



ACTIONS

- Temperature regulation.
- Use rigid containers with lids for goods which are not fully used when opened (e.g. Flour, Rice, breakfast cereals or bread), this will prevent vermin and insects from getting in the product.

Fresh produce storage (in the kitchen)



- Add use-by dates to produce when received.

Produce and prepared food in cold storage (in the kitchen)



- Measure refrigerator temperature daily or more frequently and record on a log sheet (eg. A Maths book with a table to show all records).
- Display "Good Practice Top Tips".
- Add use-by dates to any dishes or produce in refrigerator.

FOOD STORAGE (continued)

AREA

**Separation of food types
(in the kitchen and during service)**



ACTIONS

- Provide different storage areas for raw and cooked produce or dishes (eg. Store in separate refrigerators, cupboards or shelves).

TEMPERATURE CONTROL

AREA

Thorough cooking (in the kitchen)



ACTIONS

- Use a meat thermometer to ensure meat is at cooking temperature for long enough.
- Check liquids with thermometer or ensure they come to the boil where possible.

**Hot food – Safe holding and serving temperature
(in the kitchen and during service)**



- Use a 'Bain Marie' to maintain dishes at temperature over 60°C.

TEMPERATURE CONTROL *(continued)*

AREA

**Cold food – Safe holding and serving temperature
(in the kitchen and during service)**



ACTIONS

- Use an ice tray to keep cold dishes chilled during service.

SURFACE HYGIENE

AREA

Preparation surfaces



ACTIONS

- Separate preparation areas or surfaces e.g using designated chopping boards for food types such as coloured boards representing each produce type.
- Consider colour coding areas or chopping boards.
- Cleaning timetable for all surfaces identified.
- Have periodic 'Deep clean' to ensure hard to reach sections are sanitary.
- Regular training/refreshers for all kitchen staff.

Equipment hygiene



- Consider colour coding of knives and other preparation equipment by food type (eg. All knives with red handles for raw meats and vegetables, all knives with blue handles for bread, pastries etc).
- Have periodic 'Deep clean' to ensure hard to reach sections and equipment storage areas remain sanitary.
- Regular training/refreshers for all kitchen and service staff.

SURFACE HYGIENE (continued)

AREA

Hygiene in other areas



ACTIONS

- Display reminders of good practice for cleaning.
- Regular training/refreshers for all kitchen and service staff.

Cleaning facilities and materials



- Colour code wash basins for each stage of wash process.
- Drying racks to speed up air-drying.

Wash procedures



- Facility provided to soak equipment or cloths in wash solutions for reasonable period of time in bleach solutions prepared fresh as detailed in *Good Practice Top Tips #2*.
- Regular training/refreshers for staff.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

AREAS

Hand Hygiene



ACTIONS

- Provide training and regular reminders to all staff.
- Provide designated handwash basin.
- Display Good Practice Top tips #3 handwashing guide at hand wash basin.

General personal hygiene



- Cover feet.
- Conduct a weekly inspection for all kitchen staff on individual grooming and personal hygiene, senior staff to make sure staff are appropriately presented for each shift.

Illness or sickness of staff



- Stand down period for sick staff.
- Monitor other staff and guests for signs of possible transmission of illness.
- Maintain record of sickness and action taken to manage the problem.

7. Optional elements of food safety and hygiene

The elements of food safety and hygiene considered to be optional, but good practice, are discussed in this section. They are mostly about providing the evidence that the businesses food safety and hygiene control plan is working.

Good record keeping of maintenance, checks, problems and fixes.

A well maintained set of records demonstrates to the authorities that food safety and hygiene practice is being actively managed and revised to deliver consistently safe cuisine for guests and staff. The decision about what should be recorded should be discussed with the Ministry of Health Environmental Health inspectors and should reflect the specific challenges which your business faces.

It should be remembered that the records are to help identify areas where improvement can be made but also to record and demonstrate the success of the application of the guidelines to your kitchen and food service. They should be used to demonstrate that the processes in place are sufficient to provide a safe and hygienic environment in which to prepare food.

8. Useful contacts

Ministry of Health

Supervising Public Health Inspector, Vaiola Hospital, Tongatapu

Tourism Division (Tonga Mark)

Institute of Environmental Science and Research Limited (Healthy Tonga Tourism project)

Mr Matt Ashworth

Dr. Jan Gregor

healthytongatourism@esr.cri.nz

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Appendix 1: Examples of food and produce for inclusion in food safety and hygiene guidelines

MEAT	Beef, chicken, pork, lamb
FISH	Swordfish, tuna, kina, shellsish, crabs, lobster
VEGETABLES	Onions, potatoes, sweet potatoes (kumala), taro, taro leaves, breadfruit, carrots, beans, chillies
DAIRY PRODUCTS	Milk, butter, cheese, yoghurt, eggs
HERBS AND SPICES	Fresh and dried
BAKED GOODS	Bread, biscuits, cakes
DRY GOODS	Flour, rice, breakfast cereal, pasta, dried pulses, sugar
PRODUCE	Jam, honey, marmalade

Appendix 2: Food safety and hygiene checklist

Healthy Tonga Tourism food safety and hygiene checklist

Name of Business _____ Date _____ Assessed by _____

	Year (Quarter)				Year (Quarter)				Evidence of good management	Action required or in progress	
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4			
1. Essential for food safety and hygiene											
Indicate status as green (acceptable), orange (making improvement), red (improvement needed)											
Safe food preparation											
Food storage											
Appropriate temperature control											
Surface hygiene											
Personal hygiene											
2. Desirable for food safety and hygiene (indicate with ✓ or X)											
Safe food preparation											
Food storage											
Appropriate temperature control											
Surface hygiene											
Personal hygiene											
3. Optional for food safety and hygiene (indicate with ✓ or X)											
Safe food preparation											
Food storage											
Appropriate temperature control											
Surface hygiene											
Personal hygiene											

(MUST be doing active checks and maintenance)

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