

Annex 4 - sous vide cooking method

This section gives an overview of the sous vide cooking method and how it can be used to cook burgers which appear to be LTTC.

Sous vide consists of placing food in a vacuum sealed bag, then cooking it in a water bath. The food is cooked for a longer time and at a lower temperature than conventionally cooked food. Burgers cooked this way may look pink in the middle, despite being cooked throughout to a time/temperature combination equivalent of 70°C for two minutes. Meats are often quickly grilled or fried after the sous vide process to caramelise and/or give the browned appearance expected by the consumer.

Best practice

Food businesses may wish to appoint an expert food safety consultant as sous vide is a complex process and must be carefully controlled to ensure it is safe.

The sous vide system must be validated before it is introduced to check it will work as intended. Checks must be carried out to ensure the burgers consistently achieve a time/ temperature combination of 70°C for two minutes or equivalent.

If burgers are prepared at the catering business, and are not cooked and consumed straight away, an appropriate shelf life is required. It is the responsibility of the food business to determine the shelf life of the burgers in line with their food safety management system. This date should be determined by a HACCP validation study

Best practice

It is recommended the burgers are used within the shortest time possible to minimise the growth of any harmful bacteria.

Handling and storage of the burgers after cooking must be hygienic. Food businesses are advised to refer to the guidance on [vacuum packed foods](#) and the [E. coli cross-contamination guidance](#).

Best practice

It is best practice to provide a consumer message to explain that the food business has used specific cooking methods to produce beef burgers which appear to be LTTC. This is to help consumers understand that cooking pink burgers at home is not recommended.