

Tasting Samples Guidelines



For a food pantry to prepare tasting samples for guests, the facility must have the following:

A Packing Area That:		
Is well lit	Yes	No*
Is free of food pantry traffic	Yes	No*
Is free of insects or rodents	Yes	No*
Has an acceptable indoor work surface	Yes	No*
(An acceptable work surface is indoors and made of a hard and solid material such as stainless steel. Wood is not allowed. The surface must not absorb liquid, and must be smooth and without cracks, pitting, open seams, rust or corrosion.)		
Work surface appears clean or easily cleaned	Yes	No*
Has a hand wash sink onsite (An adjacent restroom sink can be used)	Yes	No*
Hand wash sink has:		
Soap	Yes	No*
Hot and cold running water	Yes	No*
Paper towels or air hand dryer	Yes	No*
Hand Wash Sign stating: "Wash hands when dirty, after using the toilet, before packing or preparing food."	Yes	No*
Onsite workers trained in food safety within the past 5 years.	Yes	No*

**Any 'No' answer must be resolved prior to preparing foods for sampling in this facility.*

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WHY PREPARE AND SERVE SAMPLES

When guests taste a food, they're much more likely to take it home and prepare it themselves—especially if it's something new to them. Offering samples is a great way to encourage healthier eating and to help move items that may be harder to distribute.

HOW TO SERVE SAMPLES SAFELY

When preparing food for others, food safety must always come first. Please follow these rules:

- All food must be prepared on-site (nothing brought from home).
- Pantry ingredients may be used for client samples.
- Keep portions small—2 ounces or less.
- Use a new, clean plate for seconds.
- Wash hands properly before handling food.
- No jewelry is allowed.
- Restrain hair (hat, net, or tie).
- Never touch cooked or ready-to-eat food with bare hands.
- Be mindful of food allergies. Ask guests or clearly post all ingredients.

THE DANGER ZONE: 40 °F – 140 °F

Food left at room temperature can quickly become unsafe. Bacteria multiply rapidly between 40 °F and 140 °F, sometimes doubling every 20 minutes.

- Never leave food out for more than 2 hours.
- If it's hotter than 90 °F, limit to 1 hour.

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KEEP FOODS SEPARATE

- Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw and cooked foods apart:
- Never put cooked food on a plate that held raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs.
- Wash and sanitize all dishes, utensils, knives, cutting boards, and surfaces.
- Store raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs on the bottom shelf of the fridge in sealed containers or bags.

CLEAN WITH CARE

Foodborne bacteria can't be seen, smelled, or tasted—but they can make you sick. Keep surfaces and tools safe by cleaning properly:

- Use paper towels, not sponges.
- Do not use Lysol/Clorox wipes—they are not food-safe.
- Wash the tops of all cans before opening.