

SOP: Cooking Time, Temperature, and Method Guidelines

This SOP provides detailed **cooking time, temperature, and method guidelines** to ensure food safety, quality, and consistency. It covers recommended cooking temperatures for various types of foods, appropriate cooking methods tailored to each food item, and precise cooking times to guarantee thorough preparation and optimal taste. Adhering to these guidelines helps prevent foodborne illnesses, maintain nutritional value, and achieve desired texture and flavor in all cooking processes.

1. Purpose

To establish standardized cooking times, temperatures, and methods for common food items, promoting safe and high-quality food preparation.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all kitchen staff responsible for food preparation in the facility.

3. Guidelines Table

Food Item	Cooking Method	Internal Temp (°F/°C)	Cooking Time	Notes
Poultry (Whole & Ground)	Roast, Grill, Bake, Sauté	165°F / 74°C	30-90 min (whole), 10-15 min (pieces)	Check thickest part, no pink juices
Beef, Veal, Lamb (Steaks, Roasts)	Grill, Broil, Roast	145°F / 63°C (Rest 3 min)	20-60 min (roast), 3-7 min/side (steak)	Medium-rare to medium
Ground Beef, Pork, Lamb	Sauté, Grill, Pan-fry	160°F / 71°C	8-12 min	Browned throughout
Pork (Chops, Roasts)	Roast, Grill, Sauté	145°F / 63°C (Rest 3 min)	20-30 min (roasts), 4-8 min/side (chops)	Light pink center acceptable
Fish & Shellfish	Bake, Grill, Sauté, Steam	145°F / 63°C	4-10 min (fillets), 3-5 min/side (shrimp)	Opaque, flakes easily
Egg Dishes	Boil, Scramble, Bake	160°F / 71°C	3-10 min	Firm yolk/whites
Casseroles	Bake	165°F / 74°C	25-60 min	Check internal temp
Vegetables	Steam, Boil, Roast, Sauté	N/A	3-30 min	Fork-tender, vibrant color
Rice & Grains	Boil, Steam	N/A	15-60 min	Tender, water absorbed

4. Methods & Best Practices

- Always use a calibrated food thermometer to verify internal temperature.
- Follow resting periods (typically 3 minutes) after cooking meats for juices to redistribute and final temperature to be reached.
- Rotate or stir foods during cooking for even heat distribution, especially in microwaves or ovens.
- Avoid overcrowding pans or trays to ensure consistent cooking.
- Document and verify all cooking temperatures and times, especially for high-risk foods.

5. Reference Temperatures (US FDA/USDA)

- **Poultry:** 165°F / 74°C
- **Ground meats:** 160°F / 71°C
- **Steaks, Roasts (Beef, Pork, Lamb):** 145°F / 63°C (+3-min rest)

- **Eggs (dishes):** 160°F / 71°C
- **Fish:** 145°F / 63°C
- **Casseroles:** 165°F / 74°C

6. Documentation & Records

Record the following for each cooked batch:

- Date & time of cooking
- Food item
- Cooking method
- Final internal temperature
- Staff initials

7. Corrective Actions

- If minimum temperature is not reached, continue cooking and recheck.
- Discard food if safe temperature cannot be achieved after reasonable time.
- Sanitize thermometer after each use to prevent cross-contamination.

8. Review & Updates

Review SOP annually or when regulations/standards are updated.