
Seasonal Food Surveillance on Rice Dumplings

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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Background

- Rice dumpling is a popular festive food for the Tuen Ng Festival every year.
- The Centre for Food Safety recently conducted a seasonal food surveillance project on rice dumplings. The objective was to provide information on the safety of rice dumplings to consumers and the trade in a timely manner.

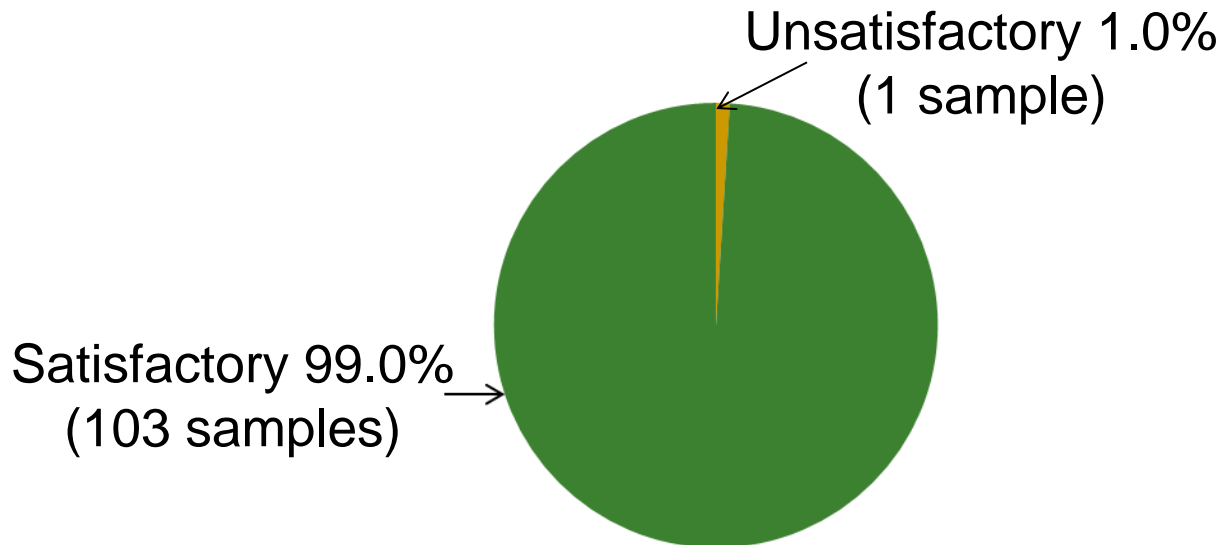


Types of test

- Testing of 104 samples have been completed:
 - **Chemical analysis**
 - colouring matters (e.g. sudan dyes, red 2G)
 - preservatives (e.g. boric acid, salicylic acid and benzoic acid)
 - metallic contamination (e.g. lead, arsenic, cadmium, mercury, copper)
 - pesticides (e.g. methamidophos and DDT)
 - **Microbiological analysis** (e.g. *Salmonella*, *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Bacillus cereus*)
 - **Nutrition content analysis** (e.g. fat, sugar and sodium, etc.)

Overall result

- One of the 104 samples was unsatisfactory. Overall satisfactory rate was 99.0%.



Unsatisfactory sample

- The unsatisfactory sample is shown below:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Glutinous rice dumpling	Boric Acid (Preservatives)	410 ppm ⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ Boric acid is not a permitted preservative under the Preservatives in Food Regulation of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, Cap.132.

Follow-up actions

- Trace source of food items in question.
- Request vendors to stop sale of incriminated food items.
- Take follow-up samples for analysis.
- Take prosecution actions if there is sufficient evidence.

Advice for the trade

- Food manufacturers should purchase food ingredients from reliable suppliers.
- The trade should adhere to Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) for manufacturing food products, and comply with and the legal requirements when using food additives.

Advice for consumers

- Observe the "Five Keys to Food Safety" in purchasing, storing, preparing and cooking rice dumplings :
 - Choose
 - Buy rice dumplings from reliable retail outlets.
 - Pay attention to the hygienic conditions of the premises where rice dumplings are sold and the storage temperature to ensure good quality.
 - Keep clean
 - Wash hands thoroughly with liquid soap and running water before consumption and dry them with a dry towel or paper towel.

Advice for consumers (Cont'd)

- **Separate raw and cooked food**
 - Cooked but unconsumed rice dumplings should be kept in a covered container and put in the upper compartment of the refrigerator after cooled. Raw food should be kept in the lower compartment to prevent cross-contamination.

- **Cook thoroughly**
 - Reheat rice dumplings thoroughly until the core temperature reaches 75 degrees Celsius or above before consumption.
 - Opened rice dumplings should be discarded if they have been kept under room temperature for over two hours.
 - Do not reheat leftover rice dumplings more than once .

Advice for consumers (Cont'd)

□ Safe temperature

- Rice dumplings should be stored at 4°C or below, or follow the instructions on the package and store them properly.
- Rice dumplings in general have relatively high energy, high fat and high salt content. To enjoy healthy eating during festive days, sharing and controlling the portion of rice dumplings is recommended. Furthermore, it is also advised to reduce the use of condiments like sugar or soya sauce when eating rice dumplings.