

SAFE FOOD TEMPERATURE CHART

2026 Edition | Based on the US FDA Food Code | °F with °C equivalents

TEMPERATURE DANGER ZONE: 41°F - 135°F (5°C - 57°C)

Bacteria multiply fastest in this range. Keep TCS food out of the danger zone whenever possible.

MINIMUM INTERNAL COOKING TEMPERATURES

165°F
74°C

Poultry (whole & ground), stuffed meats, stuffing, casseroles, reheated leftovers

155°F
68°C

Ground meats (beef, pork), sausage, eggs cooked for hot holding

145°F
63°C

Whole cuts of beef, pork, lamb, veal; fish & seafood; eggs served immediately

135°F
57°C

Fruits, vegetables, grains & legumes cooked for hot holding

HOLDING & STORAGE

- Cold holding **41°F (5°C) or below**
- Hot holding **135°F (57°C) or above**
- Freezer storage **0°F (-18°C)**
- Receiving TCS food **41°F (5°C) or below**

COOLING - THE 2-STEP RULE

- STEP 1** 135°F to 70°F within 2 hours
- STEP 2** 70°F to 41°F within next 4 hours

Total cooling time: 6 hours maximum.

REHEATING

Reheat to 165°F (74°C) within 2 hours before returning food to hot holding.

THE 4-HOUR RULE & DATE MARKING

Discard TCS food left in the danger zone for more than 4 hours (cumulative).

Date-mark ready-to-eat TCS food held over 24 hours - use or discard within 7 days at 41°F (5°C) or below.

OUTSIDE THE US?

UK (FSA): chill below 8°C (5°C recommended); hot hold at 63°C or above.

Canada: commonly 4°C cold / 60°C hot - confirm provincial rules and your PCP.

THERMOMETER CHECK

Probe the thickest part of the food. Avoid bone, fat, and container walls.

Calibrate weekly in ice slush:
it should read 32°F / 0°C.