



FOOD SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR BRINGING FOOD HOME & REHEATING

To help you enjoy your food, please find below a guide to reheating and storing your take home food safely.

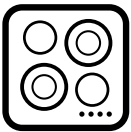
GENERAL FOOD-SAFETY RULES FOR REHEATING

- Reheat food to at least 75°C/167°F throughout.
- This is the temperature that kills harmful bacteria. If you can't monitor the temperature ensure food is piping hot throughout with steam and the central point piping hot.
- Reheat food **only once**. Repeated chilling and reheating increases contamination risk.
- Heat until steaming hot. No cold spots.
- Stir halfway (especially in microwaves) to distribute heat.
- Cover food while reheating to retain moisture and heat more evenly.

IMPORTANT: Use a Suitable Container

- Our meals are delivered in brown round boxes that are NOT suitable for reheating. Please ensure you transfer your meal to a clean, food-safe container (such as a ceramic bowl or glass dish) before heating in a microwave or oven.
- Mixed meals are safe to reheat together. Always ensure that the thickest part of the meal reaches a core temperature of at least 75°C/167°F for 2 minutes and it must be piping hot throughout. **Stir halfway and only reheat once.**

REHEATING FOOD



ON THE STOVETOP /HOB

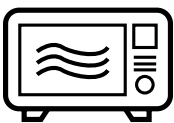
- Add a small amount of water or broth to avoid drying.
- Heat on medium and stir frequently.
- Ensure the centre is piping hot (75°C/167°F) for at least 30 seconds. No cold spots.



IN THE OVEN

- Preheat to 160-180°C (320-356°F).
- Place food in oven-safe dish, loosely covered with foil.
- Heat until thoroughly hot, no cold spots, approx. 25 mins.

IN THE MICROWAVE



Microwaves heat unevenly, so extra care is needed. To microwave safely:

- Use a microwave-safe container (no metal, cracked plastic, or single-use containers).
- Cover with a microwave-safe lid or plate to trap steam and heat evenly.
- Heat on high until steaming (usually 1.5-4 minutes, depending on portion size).
- Stir halfway through, especially soups, stews, rice, and pasta.
- Check the temperature – the centre should reach 75°C/167°F for at least 30 seconds
- Allow stand time (1-2 minutes) after microwaving; food continues to cook.

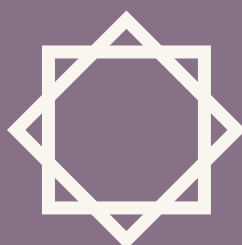
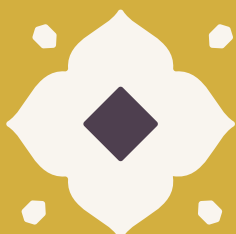
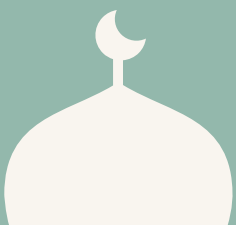
Foods that need extra care:

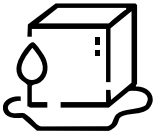
- Rice – reheat only once, ensure piping hot.

REHEATING FOOD FROM FROZEN

Either thaw first in the fridge OR reheat from frozen:

- **Microwave:** Use defrost setting first, then heat until 75°C/167°F.
- **Oven:** Bake at 160-180°C (320-356°F); may take 30-60 minutes.
- **Stovetop:** For soups/curries, heat gently until fully steaming.





THAWING YOUR MEALS

- Thaw in the fridge overnight, microwave on defrost, or cook from frozen.
- Never thaw at room temperature (as this encourages bacteria growth).

STORAGE

- Once food is collected it must be **refrigerated within 1 hour**.
- Take it **straight home**.
- Place it in the **fridge within 1 hour** of collection.
- Keep refrigerated at **5°C or below** until ready to eat.
- Check the **“Use by” date** on the label.
- Meals should be eaten **on the day of collection**, unless the label states otherwise.
- Do not eat the meal if it has been left out of the fridge for more than **2 hours**.
- Do not use if the packaging is damaged, leaking, or swollen.

STORING PRE-PREPARED MEALS



REFRIGERATING YOUR MEALS

- Store at a minimum temperature of 5°C.
- Keep cooked food above raw meat to prevent cross-contamination.
- Use airtight containers.

Food Item	Safe Time in Fridge
Cooked meat / poultry	3-4 days
Cooked rice or pasta	3-4 days
Soups / stews	3-4 days
Cooked vegetables	3-5 days
Pre-prepared Lunch Boxes	2-3 days

FREEZING YOUR MEALS



- Only freeze the meal if the label clearly states **“Suitable for home freezing.”**
- Freeze on the day of collection.
- Defrost in the fridge and use within 24 hours.
- Use freezer-safe, airtight containers.
- Label with date + contents.
- Most cooked meals last 1-2 months in the freezer for best quality.

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR SAFE CONSUMPTION

- If in doubt, throw it out.
- If you are unsure whether the meal is safe to eat, please do not use it. Contact the Mellors school catering team for advice.

Renew your connections with our recipes. Scan the QR code to learn more...

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