

# FOOD SAFETY & REGULATORY MEASURES

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## Microbiological quality of street food sold in Sicily-Italy

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Street foods are ready-to-eat foods and beverages prepared and/or sold by vendors and hawkers especially in streets and other similar public places. Street vended foods are not only appreciated for their unique flavors, convenience and the role which they play in the cultural and social heritage of societies but also for their nutritional value. The aim of this study was to investigate on microbiological contamination of 55 street foods (n=9 boiled octopus; n=19 panelle/fritters made from gram flour; n=18 spleen and lung; n=9 stigghiole/guts) normally traded in Sicily (Italy). Food samples were tested for aerobic mesophilic bacteria (AMB), *Enterobacteriaceae*, *Escherichia coli*, coagulase-positive staphylococci, *Bacillus cereus* and sulfite reducing anaerobes counts and presence of *Salmonella* and *Listeria monocytogenes*. All isolates were confirmed by MALDI-TOF. High level of contamination for AMB, *Enterobacteriaceae* and coagulase-positive staphylococci were found especially in stigghiole and spleen and lung samples. *Salmonella* and *L. monocytogenes* were not detected. The results of this study show that the microbiological quality of street foods sold in Sicily is quite variable. The authors stress the importance of selection of raw material of high quality as well as the control of cooking and storage temperatures in order to minimize bacterial potential hazards.

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