

PRODUCT REFERENCE

Retorted goods for human consumption

Overview



(Source: <http://retortprocessing.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/packaging.jpg>)

Retort is a high temperature sterilisation process of cooking food in a container after it has been hermetically sealed. The product either goes through a continuous retort (i.e. continually moving conveyor system) or may be cooked in a batch retort (i.e. big sealed pressure cooker).

Many different types of food may be retorted e.g. canned fruit and vegetables, canned meals (e.g. Irish stew), canned soups, retort pouches of tuna, etc.

Importers and department staff should always refer to BICON for the current conditions and ensure these are met.

Retorted products

To be classed as a retorted product in accordance with the department's requirements, the product must be:

- hermetically sealed in a container before being heat treated to a minimum core temperature of 100°C, obtaining an F_0 value of at least 2.8; and
- imported in the unopened hermetically sealed container in which it was retorted; and
- commercially sterile and shelf stable.

Acceptable packaging

Acceptable packaging of retorted products may include the following:

- Cans: metal, high heat resistant plastic and composite
- Glass jars or bottles
- Retort pouches
- High heat resistant plastic containers with heat sealed lids or lids closed by a double seam (excludes snap off plastic lids)
- Tetra Recart®

Note: Tetra Aseptic packs are not capable of withstanding a retort process. An aseptic packing process is where the product is heat treated outside of the packaging and later transferred to the packaging where it is hermetically sealed. Aseptic processing is not equivalent to a retort process.

Tetra Recart®



Tetra Brik® Aseptic



The only form of retortable Tetra Pak branded packaging is Tetra Recart®. Aseptically filled Tetra Pak branded packaging (e.g., Tetra Brik Aseptic) do not undergo a retort process and do not comply with import conditions for retorted goods.

Retort pouches/packaging

A retort pouch/package is a lightweight, flexible container or pouch in which foods are heated and sterilised. Retort pouches generally have the following features:

1. Manufactured from a laminate of flexible plastic and/or metal foils.
2. Material used for manufacture of retort pouches may be thicker than the polyethylene used for vacuum pouches.
3. Soft and flexible to touch.

Shelf stable

Shelf stable refers to food that can be stored for an extended period of time within its packaging at room temperature without losing quality. For example canned food will last many years on the shelf.

Hermetically sealed

A package is hermetically sealed if it is “airtight”. E.g. Heat sealed plastic bag, sealed can or glass jar with screw cap. Note, many foods are only packed in hermetically sealed containers, but do not undergo heat treatments in that package and are therefore not retorted.



Source: <http://heatermeals.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/HeaterMeals-Pouch-1.jpg>

Source: <http://ittechnology24.com/global-retort-packaging-market-research-report-2018-2023-amcor-limited-berry-plastics-corporation-mondi-group-otsuka-holdings-company-limited-sonoco-astrapak-limited/>