

CATERING SCIENCE

FOOD ADDITIVES

A food additive is defined as any substance or mixture of substances, other than base foodstuff, which is present in the food as a result of any aspect of production, processing, storage or packing.

An expert committee on Food Additives made up of representatives of FAO and WHO has defined food additives as nonnutritive substances added intentionally to food, generally in small quantities, to improve its appearance, flavour, texture or storage properties. This definition excludes substances added primarily for their nutritive value, such as vitamins and minerals.

There are two types of additives

1. Intentional additives. Those which are added with the purpose of increasing or improving or simply changing the food in such a way as to make it better.
2. Unintentional additives. These may accidentally enter food as a result of their use in agricultural production, raising animals, food processing or packing, are not additives in the technical sense of the term but they are food contaminants.

NEED FOR FOOD ADDITIVES.

For centuries, man has recognised the effects and used whatever was available for – marigold for colour, wood ashes for leavening, the lining of calves stomach for cheese making, etc. They were used as long as one did not fall sick immediately. Today over 3000 different chemical compounds are used as food additives.

They are used for a number of reasons.

1. To provide protection against food spoilage during storage, transportation, distribution or processing.
2. The convenience food revolution would not have been possible without the use of food additive. The use of ready –to-cook, instant, heat and serve foods has gone up. They make up for nearly 60% of the food that the Americans buy. Such foods result in a large amount of saving of time and effort.
3. “Fortified” and “enriched” foods are possible to make today because of food additives. Vitamins and minerals are important to maintain good health. Potassium Iodide added to common salt, bread enriched with B –complex are examples of food helping in maintaining good nutrition.
4. Preservatives in the form of additives help in safeguarding the food against microbial decomposition due to presence of moisture. Rancidity in foods containing fats can also be prevented.
5. Additives improve the colour of the food. Even those colours that are not available in nature are available now with the help of chemicals.
6. They improve the flavour of the foods.
7. They impart firmness to the foods and retard chemical reaction in the foods.

REFERENCES:

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