

Microbial Quality of Traditional Qatari Foods Sold by Women Street Vendors in Doha, Qatar

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Abstract : During the past few years the traditional market of Qatar has become an attraction to many customers who eat from the numerous women street vendors selling Qatari traditional dishes. To gain an understanding on the safety of these street vended foods, we designed the study to test microbiological quality of 14 different Qatari foods sold in Souk Wagif, the main traditional market in Qatar. This study was conducted to mainly identify presence or absence of microbial pathogens. A total of 56 samples were purchased from 10 different street vendors and the samples were collected randomly on different days. The samples were tested for microbial contaminants at Central Food Laboratories, Doha, Qatar. The qualitative study was conducted using Real Time-PCR to screen for; Salmonella spp., Listeria monocytogenes, Escherichia coli and E. coli O157:H7. Out of the 56 samples, only two samples "Biryani" and "Khabess" contained E. coli. However, both samples tested negative for E. coli O157:H7. The microbial contamination of the Qatari traditional street vended foods was 3%. This result may be attributed to the food safety training requirement set by the regulatory authorities before issuing any license to food handlers in Qatar as well as the food inspection conducted by the food health inspectors on a regular basis.

Keywords : microbiological quality, street vended food, traditional dishes, Qatar

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