



# African - Enjera Bread (also known as Injera)

## Background

Enjera or Injera is a pancake-like bread made out of teff (an Ethiopian grain) flour. It is typically eaten in Ethiopia, Somalia and Eritrea. Enjera is not only a type of bread, but is also an eating utensil, since traditional Ethiopian dining does not include the use of spoons, knives or forks. Prepared foods are served on top of a large, round piece of injera. Additional pieces of injera are served on the side. Small pieces of the bread are torn and used to scoop up the food for eating.

## Preparation Procedure

The preparation of injera takes place over several days because it involves a fermentation process. Once the teff flour is mixed with water, it is placed in a bowl covered with a dish towel and left at room temperature until it bubbles and turns slightly sour. This may take as long as three days. The finished, fermented mixture has the consistency of a very thin pancake batter. Once the batter is ready, it is poured into a hot, large, round skillet and cooked briefly until air holes form and the edges lift from the pan. It is only cooked on one side. A variety of stews (both meat and vegetable), side vegetables, and salads are ladled onto the injera for serving. After the foods are eaten with the injera that is served on the side, the injera bread that lines the tray is eaten. This is the tastiest part, because the injera on the plate has soaked up the juice and flavor of each dish.

Enjera may also be cut or torn into small pieces and added to soups.

## Foodborne Illness Risk Factor – Improper Holding Temperatures

After preparation, injera is moist and has a lemony smell. Since it is made from flour, *Bacillus cereus*, a bacterium that can cause illness if consumed, is a possible hazard with this product. If operators choose to hold this product at room temperature, they must provide documentation that shows that the water activity is below .85, or the pH is 4.6 or below, or that the combination of the two factors renders the product non-potentially hazardous. They also have the option to use time only and serve or discard the product within 4 hours.

## Information for Operators Who Prepare and/or Sell Enjera

If you prepare or sell injera bread, it is a health code violation to keep the product at room temperature without any time controls. To be compliant with the regulations and to minimize any risk to consumers, you must adhere to one of the following options:

- Maintain injera at 41°F or less or 135°F or higher.
- If you receive prior approval from this department, you may use time as a control. Injera may be stored at room temperature if it is disposed of after 4 hours and if there is a documented time-tagging system in place.
- Submit three separate samples of injera that are prepared using a standardized recipe to a certified food laboratory for analysis. If the pH of the product is 4.6 or less or if the water activity of the product is less than 0.85, the product is not a potentially hazardous food and may be left at room temperature. The laboratory test results must be available upon request at the establishment at all times.