

Here's how to...

# Calibrate a Thermometer

One of the most important tools in the kitchen is a food thermometer. Using a food thermometer is the only reliable way to prevent undercooking, ensure food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature, and prevent foodborne illness by cooling food properly.

## Why Calibrate?

*Don't forget to sanitize thermometers before and between readings!*

A food thermometer is useless if it is not accurate. Storing and serving food at the wrong temperature could allow harmful bacteria and pathogens to grow within the food, causing your customers to get sick.

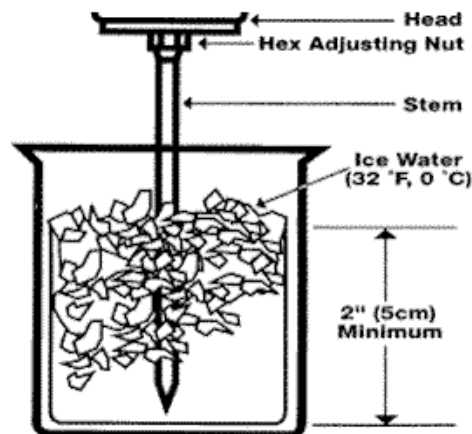
There are 2 ways to check the accuracy of a food thermometer: 1) using ice water, or 2) using boiling water. Many food thermometers have a calibration nut under the dial that can be adjusted, as needed.

## Ice Water Method



To calibrate a thermometer using the ice water method, follow these steps:

1. Fill a large glass with finely crushed ice.
2. Add clean tap water to the top of the ice and stir well.
3. Immerse the thermometer stem into the ice water at least 2 inches.
4. Make sure the stem is not touching the sides or bottom of the glass.
5. Wait 30 seconds; read your temperature.
6. If the thermometer does not read 32°F, adjust the nut under the head of the thermometer until the pointer reads the correct temperature.
7. If the thermometer does not have an adjustment nut, make a note of the discrepancy and add or subtract this number from each of your temperature checks.



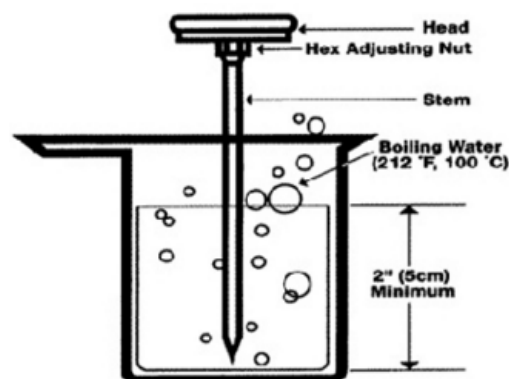
## Boiling Water Method

### HIGH ALTITUDE

Water boils at a lower temperature in higher altitudes. Check with your local Health Department for the exact temperature of boiling water in your area.

To calibrate a thermometer using the boiling water method, follow these steps:

1. Bring a pot of clean tap water to a full rolling boil.
2. Immerse the stem of the thermometer into the boiling water at least 2 inches.
3. Make sure the stem is not touching the sides or bottom of the glass.
4. Wait 30 seconds; read your temperature.
5. If the thermometer does not read 212°F, adjust the nut under the head of the thermometer until the pointer reads the correct temperature.
6. If the thermometer does not have an adjustment nut, make a note of the discrepancy and add or subtract this number from each of your temperature checks.



## When to Calibrate

Thermometers can be very sensitive and decrease in accuracy over time. Therefore it is important to calibrate:

- At least once a week.
- Whenever the thermometer is dropped.
- More often, if you are alternating between hot and cold temperatures frequently.

### DID YOU KNOW?

As with any cooking utensil, thermometers must be hand-washed daily with hot soapy water. Be careful not to submerge thermometers completely in water or handle glass thermometers too roughly.