



108/A

Cooking conversion factors of commonly consumed Sri Lankan food items

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Cooking conversion factor is defined as what is retained in the food after preparation, i.e., the proportion between the cooked and raw food. It mainly depends on the cooking method and type of the foods. It is important to find out the nutrient content of cooked foods and recipes and also to find out the raw purchased amount of foods. Information on the effect of wide range of cooking practices on nutritive value of cooked foods is not available in Sri Lanka.

This study was done to determine the cooking conversion factors of commonly consumed Sri Lankan food items using different cooking methods. Commonly consumed food items from different food groups such as cereals, legumes, vegetables and animal based foods were purchased from local markets (Pannala and Makandura) and the inedible portion was trimmed off. A weight of 100g raw edible portion was taken for processing. This edible portion was processed using various cooking methods such as frying, tempering and boiling. The final weight of each food item was measured using a digital scale. Cooking conversion factor of food was calculated as follows:

$$= \frac{\text{Weight of cooked food (g)}}{\text{Weight of raw food (g)}}$$

Table 1 shows the conversion factor of studied food items.

Food types	Boiling	Tempering	Frying
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
Rice, red, long grain (raw)	3.03 (0.01)		
Rice, Basmati	2.87 (0.01)		
Rice, samba, white, short grain (raw)	2.82 (0.01)		
Dhal (Mysore)	2.20 (0.01)		
Cow pea, dried, raw	2.23 (0.01)		
Potato, without peel	1.00 (0.01)	0.82 (0.01)	0.54 (0.02)
Mukunuwenna	0.97 (0.02)	0.76 (0.01)	
Spinach	0.96 (0.01)	0.78 (0.01)	
Egg, chicken	1.01 (0.01)		0.87 (0.01)
Meat, chicken, (with inedible part)	0.73 (0.01)		0.67 (0.01)
Fish, tilapia, boiled (with spine)	0.86 (0.02)		0.64 (0.02)

Conclusion: In Sri Lanka, commonly used nutrition composition table contains nutrient content of raw edible foods. Determination of conversion factor is important to find out the nutrient content of cooked food.

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