

Scope: This is a research-based routing tool, not a time-temperature chart, storage guide, process-validation tool, or food-safety diagnosis.

Sous Vide Compatibility & Thickness Checklist

Use this sous vide compatibility checklist before borrowing any schedule. Match exact food, form, shape, thickness method, starting state, and bath setup to a food-specific guide. If any field is different or unknown, stop. This checklist routes you to a guide; it does not say a cook is safe.

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Start with two possible results

MATCH - open exact guide and verify its stated assumptions. A match means route eligibility only.

STOP / NO MATCH - do not borrow a schedule. Find an exact guide, follow official device or process instructions, or seek qualified food-safety help when needed.

Match food, form, shape, thickness method, starting state, and bath setup before using a schedule. If a field does not match guide assumptions, stop. Do not add minutes from another chart.

Sous vide compatibility flow

1. Find a guide that names your exact food and cut

Start with a guide that names the food and cut in front of you. A similar protein is not a substitute. For an unfamiliar process or no exact food route, begin with the [Perfect Sous Vide beginner's guide](#) and locate food-specific guidance before selecting a schedule.

STOP / NO MATCH: The guide names a different food or cut, or you cannot identify the cut.

2. Match food form, not only ingredient name

Check whether food is intact, injected, mechanically tenderized, ground, rolled, tied, or stuffed. A schedule for an intact cut does not automatically cover a prepared or altered form. For steak, use the [steak temperature guide](#) only when its stated scope fits the meat and preparation.

STOP / NO MATCH: Form differs from the guide, or guide does not expressly cover it.

3. Match shape and thickness method

Heat-transfer models depend on food geometry, the path from surface to coldest point, starting condition, and bath conditions. Use the destination guide's named shape and thickness method. Do not use one measurement from an irregular, tapered, rolled, stuffed, or bone-in piece to fit an unrelated slab-style schedule. [Douglas Baldwin's practical guide to sous vide cooking](#) explains why shape, dimensions, starting temperature, and bath conditions remain part of a process model.

STOP / NO MATCH: Shape is irregular or unmapped, you cannot use the guide's thickness method, or the guide does not name a bone-in form. Do not calculate a universal adjustment.

4. Match starting state and bath setup

Match thawed, chilled, or frozen state exactly as the food-specific guide states. Do not use a universal frozen add-on. Then check that bags preserve the loading and flow conditions required by the guide or device manual. Crowding, touching bags, or blocked circulation calls for correction under those instructions, not a universal single-layer rule. Baldwin also treats circulating-water conditions as part of the heating model. [Source: Baldwin](#).

STOP / NO MATCH: Starting state is not covered, circulation is unknown, or bag placement blocks conditions required by the applicable guide or manual.

5. Match serving path and bag condition

This checklist applies only to deciding whether to open a food-specific cooking guide for an immediate-service path. For cook-chill or reheating, use guidance explicitly covering cooling, cold holding, and reheating. A geometry match alone does not establish pathogen reduction, chilling, storage, reheating, or suitability for a higher-risk diner.

If a bag floats, leaks, or has unknown process history, stop the schedule comparison. Read the [sous vide bag floating guide](#); do not assume elapsed time transfers to a new bag or a different process.

People at higher risk of foodborne illness may need guidance beyond a route match. The [FDA's foodborne illness information](#) explains who may face greater risk. This page does not make individual suitability decisions.

Print-friendly compatibility checklist

Use this compact checklist on screen or print it as a reference. This standalone Gutenberg asset does not include a verified one-page Letter print stylesheet or PDF, so browser printing may include other page content.

Compact stop-or-route checklist

Compatibility gates — every item must match before MATCH

- ☐ Guide names my exact food and cut.
- ☐ Food form matches guide scope: intact, injected, mechanically tenderized, ground, rolled, tied, or stuffed.
- ☐ Shape and thickness method match guide scope.
- ☐ Starting state is expressly covered: thawed, chilled, or frozen.
- ☐ Bag placement and bath circulation follow guide or device-manual conditions.
- ☐ Serving path is immediate service, not cook-chill, storage, or reheating.
- ☐ Bag is sealed and process history is known.

Conditional gate — complete applicable condition before MATCH

- ☐ Boneless / not applicable.
- ☐ Bone-in, and guide expressly covers this bone-in form.
- ☐ Any other condition named by guide is confirmed.

Acknowledgments — do not create a MATCH

- ☐ I will stop if a guide field differs or remains unknown.
- ☐ I understand MATCH does not establish pathogen reduction or individual suitability.

MATCH — use exact guide: Only when every compatibility gate matches and every applicable conditional gate is confirmed by that guide.

NO MATCH — stop and find different evidence: Any compatibility gate differs or remains unknown.

CONDITIONAL — verify source conditions: An exact guide may be a candidate, but an applicable condition still needs confirmation. Do not use its schedule yet.

Boundary/source note: This checklist routes to a food-specific guide. It does not supply a schedule or establish pathogen reduction, chilling, storage, reheating, or higher-risk-diner suitability. [Baldwin source](#).

Keep three questions separate

Question	What this checklist can do	What it cannot decide
Geometry applicability	Route when food form, shape, thickness method, starting state, and bath setup fit a guide's assumptions.	Whether a different shape or state can use a borrowed schedule.
Pathogen reduction	Flag it as a separate process question.	Establish an outcome from checked boxes or a geometry match.
Cook-chill, storage, and reheating	Flag a separate route when food will not be served now.	Provide cooling, cold-holding, storage, or reheating instructions.

Baldwin distinguishes heating calculations from pathogen-reduction calculations and treats cook-chill as a separate process with its own cooling and storage controls. That is why this page returns only a guide route or a stop decision, never a universal process conclusion. [Source: Baldwin](#).

Open an exact guide

Steak

Use only after cut, form, shape, starting state, and setup match its scope. [Open steak guide](#).

Chicken

Use only after food form, thickness method, starting state, and serving path match its scope. [Open chicken guide](#).

Pork chops

Use only after exact chop form, geometry, starting state, and bath setup match its scope. [Open pork chops guide](#).

Bag floating, leaking, or unknown history

Do not treat this as a schedule extension. [Open bag floating guide](#).

New to sous vide or no exact match

Use this route to understand process basics before choosing a food-specific source. [Open beginner's guide](#).

Sources and method

Research-based checklist. It does not report hands-on cooking tests or a universal validated schedule. It synthesizes food-guide scope with process-model limits so a reader can identify when a schedule should not be transferred.

- [Douglas Baldwin, *A Practical Guide to Sous Vide Cooking*](#) - geometry, starting condition, circulation, heating, pathogen reduction, and cook-chill process distinctions.
- [U.S. Food and Drug Administration, foodborne illness information](#) - higher-risk boundary.
- Perfect Sous Vide food-specific guides linked above - exact food and preparation scope.

Final boundary: A geometry match alone does not establish pathogen reduction, chilling, storage, reheating, or suitability for a higher-risk diner. For cook-chill or reheating, use guidance explicitly covering cooling, cold holding, and reheating.