

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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STANDARD FOR COOKED CURED HAM

CXS 96-1981

Adopted 1981. Revised in 1991, 2014, 2015. Amended in 2019.

1. SCOPE

This standard applies to products designated as "Cooked Ham" packaged in any suitable packaging material.

It does not apply to cooked ham products with compositional characteristics different from those specified. These products shall be designated with a qualifying statement which describes the true nature in such a way that it does not misled the consumer and that it does not lead to confusion with products covered by this Standard.

2. DESCRIPTION

The product shall be made of meat from the hind leg of a pig - divided transversely from the remainder of the side at a point not further anteriorly than the end of the hip bone. All bones and detached cartilage, tendons and ligaments shall be removed. Skin and fat may or may not be removed.

The meat shall be cured and may be smoked, spiced and/or flavoured.

The heat treatment to which the product has been subjected and the type of cure and packaging shall be sufficient to ensure that the product presents no public health hazard and remains wholesome under the conditions of storage, transport and sale.

3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Essential Ingredients

- Uncured ham;
- Brine consisting of water and food-grade salt and sodium or potassium nitrite.

3.2 Optional Ingredients

- Sucrose, invert sugar, dextrose (glucose), lactose, maltose, glucose syrup (including corn syrup), honey;
- Spices, seasonings and condiments;
- Water soluble, aromatic hydrolyzed protein;
- Food grade gelatine.

3.3 Essential Quality Factors

3.3.1 Raw material

The ingredients from which the product is prepared shall be of a quality suitable for human consumption and free from objectionable odours and flavours.

3.3.2 Final product

The product shall be clean and substantially free from staining and contamination from the container. The meat shall be uniformly and thoroughly cured and the product shall be capable of being sliced.

3.4 Meat Content

- Average percentage meat-protein on fat-free basis > 18.0%
- Minimum percentage meat-protein on fat-free basis = 16.5%

(absolute minimum)

(For canned products the percentage of meat-protein is calculated on the total content of the can and corrected for gelatine, if added - see Section 8.1).

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

Preservatives and humectants used in accordance with Tables 1 and 2 of the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CXS 192-1995) in food category 08.2.2 "Heat-treated processed meat, poultry, and game products in whole pieces or cuts" and its parent food categories are acceptable for use in foods conforming to this Standard. Only certain Table 3 food additives (as indicated in Table 3) are acceptable for use in foods conforming to this Standard.

Use of flavouring substances should be consistent with the *Guidelines for the Use of Flavourings* (CXG 66-2008).

Section 4.1 of the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CXS 192-1995), referring to the conditions applying to carry-over of food additives from ingredients and raw materials into foods, shall apply.

5. CONTAMINANTS

The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the Maximum Levels of the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CXS 193-1995).

The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides and/or veterinary drugs established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

6. HYGIENE

It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CXC 1-1969), the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Meat* (CXC 58-2004), the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Acid and Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods* (CXC 23-1979) and other relevant Codex texts such as Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice.

The products should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the *Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods* (CXG 21-1997).

7. LABELLING

The provisions of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985), the following specific provisions apply:

7.1 The Name of the Food

The name of the food to be declared on the label shall be "Cooked Ham".

The name of the product shall include, as appropriate, the designation:

- "with skin"
- "in/with natural juice"
- "X added" applying to gelatine, agar, alginates or carrageenan
- "smoked"
- "smoking agent added".

A declaration that accurately describes the method of preparation, processing or presentation shall be given so as to appear simultaneously visible with the name of the product if its omission would mislead the consumer.

7.2 Date Marking and Storage Instructions

For shelf-stable products the date of minimum durability shall be declared by the year.

For products which are not shelf-stable, i.e. which may be expected not to keep for at least 18 months in normal conditions of storage and sale, and which are packaged in a container ready for offer to the consumer or for catering purposes, the date of minimum durability shall be declared by day, month and year.

For products which are not shelf-stable and which are packaged in containers not sold directly to the consumer or for catering purposes, adequate storage and distribution instructions shall be declared.

7.3 Labelling of Non-Retail Containers

Information, as appropriate needed for labelling of retail containers is given either on the non-retail containers or in accompanying documents except that the name of the food, date marking and storage instructions, lot identification and the name and address of the manufacturer or packer shall appear on the non-retail container.

However, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer or packer, may be replaced by an identification mark provided that such mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.

8. METHODS OF ANALYSIS

For checking the compliance with this Standard, the methods of analysis and sampling contained in the *Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling* (CXS 234-1999) relevant to the provisions in this Standard shall be used.

8.1 Correction for Added Gelatine

For products in which the amount of added gelatine is not known, 0.5% protein should be deducted from the percentage protein expressed on a fat-free basis.