

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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REGIONAL STANDARD FOR HARISSA (Red hot pepper paste)

(Near East)¹

CXS 308R-2011

Adopted in 2011. Subject to endorsement by CCFL, CCFA and CCMAS.

¹ Members of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in the region of Near East are indicated on the Codex website at <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius>.

1. SCOPE

This Standard applies to harissa (red hot pepper paste) as defined in Section 2, manufactured and intended for direct human consumption.

It does not apply to other traditionally-prepared types of harissa.

2. DESCRIPTION

“Harissa” designates the preserved pulp of fresh red hot pepper, of the *Capsicum annuum* variety, concentrated and with the composition provided for in Section 3 and preserved using thermal treatment only.

3. INGREDIENTS AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Ingredients

- Fresh red hot peppers of the *Capsicum annuum* variety
- Fresh garlic
- Coriander
- Caraway
- Salt

3.2 Quality factors

3.2.1 Ingredients

The peppers used in the preparation of processed Harissa shall be sufficiently ripe, wholesome, with a deep red colour, free of spoilage, rot and impurities and free of insects.

3.2.2 Final product

3.2.2.1 Sensory factors

- Natural homogenous red color with a minimum of color on a “hunter” scale of the value of a/b not less than 1/4 and free of black particles.
- The taste shall be typical to the product, spicy (hot), free from bitterness or burned taste or any other foreign taste.
- The smell shall be typical of the product and free of foreign smells.

3.2.2.2 Consistency/texture

The final product shall be free of crusts and seeds using a 2 mm sieve.

3.2.2.3 Acidity

Total acidity, expressed as citric acid, shall not exceed 3.6% of total dry residues.

3.2.2.4 Dry extract

Dry extract shall be not less than 14% of total soluble solids (excluding salt)

3.2.2.5 Added salt

The percentage of added salt shall not exceed 1.5% of dry weight basis.

3.2.2.6 Acid insoluble ash

The percentage of acid insoluble ash shall not exceed 0.15% of the total weight of dry extract.

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

No food additives may be used in harissa.

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 established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

6. FOOD 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), 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. WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

7.1 Fill of Container

Minimum Fill

- (a) The container should be well filled with the product, which should occupy not less than 90% (minus any necessary head space according to good manufacturing practices) of the water capacity of the container. The water capacity of the container is the volume of distilled water at 20°C, which the sealed container will hold when completely filled.
- (b) Flexible containers should be filled as full as commercially practicable.

8. LABELLING

The product covered by the provisions of this Standard shall be labelled in accordance with the latest edition of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985). In addition, the following specific provisions apply:

The name of the product shall be "harissa".

9. PACKAGING AND STORAGE

Harissa must be packed in suitable and clean containers, tightly closed, and all materials in contact with the product must be authorized for use in food packaging.

10. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

To be completed.