

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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STANDARD FOR PICKLED FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

CODEX STAN 260-2007

Adopted in 2007. Amendment: 2015.

1 SCOPE

This Standard applies to products, as defined in Section 2 below, and offered for direct consumption, including for catering purposes or for repacking if required. The products covered by this Standard include, but are not limited to onions, garlic, mango, radish, ginger, beetroot, royal plum, peppers, hearts of palm, cabbage, lettuce, lemons, baby corn (young corn), and green mustard (*Brassica juncea* ssp). It does not apply to the product when indicated as being intended for further processing. This Standard does not cover pickled cucumbers, kimchi, table olives, sauerkraut, chutneys and relishes.

2 DESCRIPTION

2.1 Product Definition

Pickled fruits and vegetables is the product:

- (a) prepared from sound, clean and edible fruits and/or vegetables, with or without seeds, spices, aromatic herbs and/or condiments;
- (b) processed or treated to produce an acid or acidified product preserved through natural fermentation or acidulants. Depending on the type, appropriate ingredients are added in order to ensure preservation and quality of the product;
- (c) processed in an appropriate manner, before or after being hermetically sealed in a container, so as to ensure the quality and safety as well as to prevent spoilage; and/or
- (d) packed with or without a suitable liquid packing medium (e.g., oil, brine or acidic media such as vinegar) as specified in Section 3.1.2, with ingredients appropriate to the type and variety of pickled product, to ensure an equilibrium pH of less than 4.6.

2.2 Styles

- (a) Any presentation of the product should be permitted provided that the product meets all requirements of the Standard;
- (b) Style presentations could include for example, whole, pieces, halves, quarters, cubes, shredded or chopped.

2.3 Types of Pack

2.3.1 Solid Pack – without any added packing medium.

2.3.2 Regular Pack – with a packing medium added, as specified in Section 3.1.2.

3 ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Composition

3.1.1 Basic Ingredients

Fruits and vegetables and liquid packing medium when appropriate, as defined in Sections 2.1(a), 2.1(d) and 3.1.2, in combination with one or more of the other permitted ingredients listed in Section 3.1.3.

3.1.2 Packing Media

3.1.2.1 For pickled fruits, in accordance with the *Guidelines on Packing Media for Canned Fruits* (CAC/GL 51-2003).

3.1.2.2 For pickled vegetables, in accordance with the following provisions:

(a) **Basic Ingredients**

Water, and if necessary salt or oil or acidic media such as vinegar.

(b) **Optional Ingredients**

Packing media for pickled vegetables may contain ingredients subject to labelling requirements of Section 8 and may include, but is not limited to:

- (1) foodstuff with sweetening properties such as sugars (including syrups) as defined in the *Standard for Sugars* (CODEX STAN 212-1999), honey as defined in the *Standard for Honey* (CODEX STAN 12-1981) or juices and/or nectars as defined in the *General Standard for Fruit Juices and Nectars* (CODEX STAN 247-2005) and;
- (2) aromatics plants, spices or extracts thereof, seasoning (in accordance with the relevant Codex standards for spices or culinary herbs);
- (3) vinegar;
- (4) oil (in accordance with the relevant Codex standards for vegetable oils);
- (5) tomato puree (in accordance with the *Standard for Processed Tomato Concentrates* (CODEX STAN 57-1981));
- (6) malt extract;
- (7) sauce (e.g., fish sauce);
- (8) soy sauce;
- (9) other ingredients as appropriate.

3.1.3 Other Permitted Ingredients

- (a) cereal grains;
- (b) dried fruits;
- (c) malt extract;
- (d) nuts;
- (e) pulses;
- (f) sauce (e.g., fish sauce);
- (g) soy sauce;
- (h) foodstuff with sweetening properties such as sugars (including syrups) and honey as defined in the *Standards for Sugars* (CODEX STAN 212-1999) and *Honey* (CODEX STAN 12-1981) respectively; and
- (i) other ingredients as appropriate.

3.2 Quality Criteria

The product shall have colour, flavour, odour and texture characteristic of the product.

3.2.1 Other Quality Criteria

3.2.1.1 Pickled fruits and/or vegetables in edible oil

The percentage of oil in the product shall not be less than 10% by weight.

3.2.1.2 Pickled fruits and/or vegetables in brine or an acidic medium

The percentage of salt in the covering liquid or the acidity of the media shall be sufficient to ensure the keeping quality and proper preservation of the product.

3.2.1.3 Definition of Defects

- (a) Blemishes - means any characteristic including, but not limited to, bruises, scab, and dark discolouration, which adversely affects the overall appearance of the product.
- (b) Harmless extraneous material - means any vegetable part (such as, but not limited to, a leaf or portion thereof, or a stem) that does not pose any hazard to human health but affects the overall appearance of the final product.

3.2.1.4 Defects and Allowances

The product should be practically free from defects as defined in Section 3.2.

3.3 Classification of “Defectives”

A container that fails to meet one or more of the applicable quality requirements, as set out in Section 3.2 (except those based on sample averages), should be considered as a “defective”.

3.4 Lot Acceptance

A lot should be considered as meeting the applicable quality requirements referred to in Section 3.2 when:

- (a) for those requirements which are not based on averages, the number of “defectives”, as defined in Section 3.3, does not exceed the acceptance number (c) of the appropriate sampling plan with an AQL of 6.5; and
- (b) the requirements, which are based on sample averages, are complied with.

4 FOOD ADDITIVES

Acidity regulators, antifoaming agents, antioxidants, colours, firming agents, flavour enhancers, preservatives, sequestrants, and sweeteners used in accordance with Tables 1 and 2 of the *General Standard of Food Additives* in the food category in which the individual pickled fruit or vegetable fall into (i.e., one of the following categories: 04.1.2.3, 04.1.2.10, 04.2.2.3, and 04.2.2.7) or listed in Table 3 of the General Standard are acceptable for use in foods conforming to this Standard.

5 CONTAMINANTS

- 5.1 The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum levels of the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Foods and Feed* (CODEX STAN 193-1995).
- 5.2 The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

6 HYGIENE

- 6.1 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* (CAC/RCP 1-1969), *Code of Hygienic Practice for Low and Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods* (CAC/RCP 23-1979) and other relevant Codex texts such as codes of hygienic practice and codes of practice.
- 6.2 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* (CAC/GL 21-1997)¹.

7 WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

7.1 Fill of Container

7.1.1 Minimum Fill

The container should be well filled with the product (including packing medium when appropriate) 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.

7.1.2 Classification of “Defectives”

A container that fails to meet the requirement for minimum fill of Section 7.1.1 should be considered as a “defective”.

7.1.3 Lot Acceptance

A lot should be considered as meeting the requirement of Section 7.1.1 when the number of “defectives”, as defined in Section 7.1.2, does not exceed the acceptance number (c) of the appropriate sampling plan with an AQL of 6.5.

¹ For products that are rendered commercially sterile in accordance with the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Low and Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods* (CAC/RCP 23-1979), microbiological criteria are not recommended as they do not offer benefit in providing the consumer with a food that is safe and suitable for consumption.

7.1.4 *Minimum Drained Weight*

7.1.4.1 The drained weight of the product should be not less than the following percentages, calculated on the basis of the weight of distilled water at 20°C which the sealed container will hold when completely filled².

- (a) Whole and Halves Style should not be less than 40% of the net weight;
- (b) Pieces Style and Other Styles should not be less than 50% of the net weight (except for pickled red cabbage should not be less than 45% of the net weight).

7.1.4.2 *Lot Acceptance*

The requirements for minimum drained weight should be deemed to be complied with when the average drained weight of all containers examined is not less than the minimum required, provided that there is no unreasonable shortage in individual containers.

8 LABELLING

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

8.2 Name of the Product

8.2.1 Pickled fruits and/or vegetables shall be labelled according to the type and in combination with the name of major ingredient. Example - a pickle made from ginger shall be labelled "Pickled Ginger in Brine".

8.2.2 The presentation style should be declared on the label of the food.

8.2.3 The name of the product shall include the indication of the packing medium as set out in Section 2.1(d).

8.3 Labelling of Non-Retail Containers

Information for non-retail containers shall be given either on the container or in accompanying documents, except that the name of the product, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer, as well as storage instructions, shall appear on the container. However, lot identification, and the name and address of the manufacturer, packer, distributor or importer may be replaced by an identification mark, provided that such a mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.

9 METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

PROVISION	METHOD	PRINCIPLE	TYPE
Arsenic	AOAC 952.13 (Codex General Method)	Colorimetry, diethyldithiocarbamate	II
	ISO 6634:1982	Spectrophotometry, silver diethyldithiocarbamate	III
Benzoic acid	NMKL 103 (1984); or AOAC 983.16	Gas Chromatography	III
	NMKL 124 (1997)	Liquid Chromatography	II
Drained weight	AOAC 968.30 (Codex General Method for processed fruits and vegetables)	Sieving Gravimetry	I
Fill of containers	CAC/RM 46-1972 (Codex General Method for processed fruits and vegetables)	Weighing	I

² For non-metallic rigid containers such as glass jars, the basis for the determination should be calculated on the weight of distilled water at 20°C which the sealed container will hold when completely filled less 20 ml.

PROVISION	METHOD	PRINCIPLE	TYPE
Lead	AOAC 972.25 (Codex General Method)	Atomic absorption spectrophotometry (Flame absorption)	III
pH	NMKL 179:2005	Potentiometry	II
	AOAC 981.12		III
Sorbate	NMKL 103 (1984); or AOAC 983.16	Gas Chromatography	III
	NMKL 124 (1997)	Liquid Chromatography	II
Sulphur Dioxide	EN 1988-1:1998-02 AOAC 990.28 General method for sulphites (food additives)	Optimized Monier-Williams method	III
Tin	AOAC 980.19 (Codex General Method)	Atomic absorption spectrophotometry	II

DETERMINATION OF WATER CAPACITY OF CONTAINERS

(CAC/RM 46-1972³)

1. SCOPE

This method applies to glass containers⁴.

2. DEFINITION

The water capacity of a container is the volume of distilled water at 20°C which the sealed container will hold when completely filled.

3. PROCEDURE

3.1 Select a container which is undamaged in all respects.

3.2 Wash, dry and weigh the empty container.

3.3 Fill the container with distilled water at 20°C to the level of the top thereof, and weigh the container thus filled.

4. CALCULATION AND EXPRESSION OF RESULTS

Subtract the weight found in 3.2 from the weight found in 3.3. The difference shall be considered to be the weight of water required to fill the container. Results are expressed as ml of water.

³ As amended by the Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling, ALINORM 03/23, Appendix VI-H.

⁴ For determination of water capacity in metal containers the reference method is ISO 90.1:1986.