

CODEX STANDARD FOR CHILLI PEPPERS
(CODEX STAN 307-2011)

1. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This Standard applies to commercial varieties of chilli peppers¹ grown from *Capsicum spp.*, of the *Solanaceae* family, to be supplied fresh to the consumer, after preparation and packaging. Chilli peppers for industrial processing are excluded.

2. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

2.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the chilli peppers must be:

- whole, the stalk (stem) may be missing, provided that the break is clean and the adjacent skin is not damaged;
- sound, produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded;
- firm;
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter;
- practically free of pests and damage caused by them affecting the general appearance of the produce;
- free of abnormal external moisture excluding condensation following removal from cold storage;
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste;
- free of damage caused by low and/or high temperatures.

2.1.1 Chilli peppers must be harvested at an appropriate degree of development in accordance with the criteria proper to the variety and the area in which they are grown.

The development and condition of the chilli peppers must be such as to enable them:

- to withstand transport and handling; and
- to arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.

2.2 CLASSIFICATION

Chilli peppers are classified in three classes defined below:

2.2.1 “Extra” Class

Chilli peppers in this class must be of superior quality. They must be characteristic of the variety. They must be free of defects, with the exception of very slight superficial defects affecting an area of up to 0.5% of the produce surface, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package.

2.2.2 Class I

Chilli peppers in this class must be of good quality. They must be characteristic of the variety. Slight defects, however, may be allowed, affecting an area of up to 2.0% of the product surface, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package.

¹ Chilli peppers presenting a minimum pungency of 900 Scoville Index. For levels of pungency see Annex.

2.2.3 Class II

This class includes chilli peppers which do not qualify for inclusion in the higher classes, but satisfy the minimum requirements specified in Section 2.1 above. Defects, however, may be allowed, affecting an area of up to 3.0% of the product surface, provided the chilli peppers retain their essential characteristics as regards the quality, the keeping quality and presentation.

3. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

Size is determined by length of the chilli pepper in accordance with the following table:

Size code	Length (in centimetres)
1	≤ 4
2	$4 < 8$
3	$8 < 12$
4	$12 < 16$
5	> 16

4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES

Tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each package for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated.

4.1 QUALITY TOLERANCES

4.1.1 "Extra" Class

Five percent by number or weight of chilli peppers not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class I or, exceptionally, coming within the tolerances of that class.

4.1.2 Class I

Ten percent by number or weight of chilli peppers not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class II or, exceptionally, coming within the tolerances of that class.

4.1.3 Class II

Ten percent by number or weight of chilli peppers satisfying neither the requirements of the class nor the minimum requirements, with the exception of produce affected by rotting or any other deterioration rendering it unfit for consumption.

4.2 SIZE TOLERANCES

For all classes, 10% by number or weight of chilli peppers corresponding to the size immediately above and/or below that indicated on the package.

5. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION

5.1 UNIFORMITY

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only chilli peppers of the same origin, quality, size and variety. The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of the entire contents.

5.2 PACKAGING

Chilli peppers must be packed in such a way as to protect the produce properly. The materials used inside the package must be new², clean, and of a quality such as to avoid causing any external or internal damage to the produce. The use of materials, particularly of paper or stamps bearing trade specifications is allowed, provided the printing or labelling has been done with non-toxic ink or glue.

Chilli peppers shall be packed in each container in compliance with the Recommended International Code of Practice for Packaging and Transport of Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CAC/RCP 44-1995).

5.2.1 Description of Containers

The containers shall meet the quality, hygiene, ventilation and resistance characteristics to ensure suitable handling, shipping and preserving of the chilli peppers. Packages must be free of all foreign matter and smell.

6. MARKING OR LABELLING

6.1 CONSUMER PACKAGES

In addition to the requirements of the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985), the following specific provisions apply:

6.1.1 Nature of Produce

If the produce is not visible from the outside, each package shall be labelled as to the name of the produce and the variety and may be labelled as to the level of pungency.

6.2 NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS

Each package must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside, or in the documents accompanying the shipment.

6.2.1 Identification

Name and address of exporter, packer and/or dispatcher. Identification code (optional)³.

6.2.2 Nature of Produce

Name of the produce if the contents are not visible from the outside. Name of the variety, level of pungency (optional).

6.2.3 Origin of Produce

Country of origin and, optionally, district where grown or national, regional or local place name.

6.2.4 Commercial Identification

- Class;
- Size;
- Variety;
- Pungency.

6.2.5 Official Inspection Mark (optional)

7. CONTAMINANTS

7.1 The produce covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum levels of the Codex General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed (CODEX STAN 193-1995).

7.2 The produce covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

² For the purposes of this Standard, this includes recycled material of food-grade quality.

³ The national legislation of a number of countries requires the explicit declaration of the name and address. However, in the case where a code mark is used, the reference "packer and/or dispatcher (or equivalent abbreviations)" has to be indicated in close connection with the code mark.

8. HYGIENE

8.1 It is recommended that the produce covered by the provisions of this Standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the Recommended International Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969), Code of Hygienic Practice for Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CAC/RCP 53-2003), and other relevant Codex texts such as Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice.

8.2 The produce should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods (CAC/GL 21-1997).

ANNEX
LEVELS OF PUNGENCY

PUNGENCY	SCOVILLE UNITS	TOTAL CAPSAICINOIDS (microg/gm dry weight)
MILD	900 – 1,999	60 - 133
MEDIUM	2,000 - 19,999	134 - 1,333
HOT	20,000 - 100,000	1,334 - 6,600
EXTRA HOT	> 100,000	> 6,600

Note: 15 Scoville heat units = 1 microgram/grams dry weight