

1. SCOPE

This standard applies to date paste prepared from fruits of the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*).

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 Date paste: a food product prepared from fruits of the date palm (*Phoenix dactylifera*) that are sound, consistent in colour, harvested at the appropriate stage of maturity, washed, pitted and capped.
- 2.2 Parthenocarpic dates: dates produced without pollination, characterized by thin flesh, immature characteristics and absence of pits.
- 2.3 Unripe dates: dates that are light in weight, pale in colour, with shrivelled or little flesh and rubbery in texture.

3. QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Dates used for making date paste shall be:

- 3.1.1 Free from diseases and contain no parthenocarpic or unripe fruits;
- 3.1.2 Free from insects or insect fragments, eggs, larvae or frass;
- 3.1.3 Free of dirt and foreign matter.

3.2 The characteristics of date paste shall be as follows:

- 3.2.1 It shall be soft, consistent in colour and texture, free of blackness or dryness and no alteration in smell or flavour;
- 3.2.2 It shall contain no whole, broken pits, stalks or extraneous fragments;
- 3.2.3 It shall be free of fermentation and mould;
- 3.2.4 It may be made from a single variety of dates or a blend of several varieties, provided to specify those varieties (on the label);
- 3.2.5 Moisture content shall not exceed 20%;
- 3.2.6 Mineral matter content shall not exceed 1 gram per kilogram;
- 3.2.7 Total ash content shall not exceed 1.2%;
- 3.2.8 Acid insoluble ash content shall not exceed 0.1%.

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

No additives are allowed in the products covered by this Standard.

5. CONTAMINANTS

- 5.1 The products 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).
- 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 Code of Practice — General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969) 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 for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods (CAC/GL 21-1997).

7. PACKAGING

Date paste shall be packaged in containers having the following characteristics:

- 7.1 They shall preserve the organoleptic characteristics and quality of the product;
- 7.2 Materials used in their manufacture shall be fit for food use and compatible with the characteristics of date paste;
- 7.3 They shall protect the product from contamination;
- 7.4 They shall protect the product from desiccation, leakage, spoilage and discoloration.

8. METHODS OF SAMPLING AND ANALYSIS

- 8.1 Moisture
According to AOAC 934.06.

- 8.2 Mineral matter content
According to ISO 762:1982.
- 8.3 Ash
According to AOAC 940.26.
- 8.4 Acid insoluble ash content
According to AOAC 900.02D.

9. LABELLING

The product shall be labelled in accordance with the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985, Rev. 2010), with the additional provisions that the label shall not be placed directly on the date paste, and that the following information shall appear on the container:

- 9.1 the name of variety and, if more than one varieties of dates have been used, the names of each variety.

10. STORAGE

The transport and storage of the product shall be subject to the following requirements:

- 10.1 During transport, it shall not be put at risk of mechanical damage, contamination or spoilage;
- 10.2 It shall be stored in refrigerated facilities, or facilities that are well ventilated, and kept away from heat sources, moisture, insects and rodents.