



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

**CODEX
ALIMENTARIUS**
INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS
STANDARD

**REGIONAL STANDARD
FOR MIXED ZAATAR
(NEAR EAST)**
CXS 341R-2020



ADOPTED 2020
AMENDED 2025

CXS 341R-2020

History of the standard

2025 Amendment

Following adoption by the Forty-eighth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Section 7.2: “Labelling of non-retail containers” was amended to align with the *General Standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).

This publication was redesigned and published in 2025.

Adopted in 2020.

1 Scope

This standard determines the requirements and characteristics that shall be present in mixed zaatar intended for direct human consumption.

2 Description

2.1 Definition

2.1.1 Mixed zaatar

It is a mix consisting of dried raw zaatar and dried raw broadleaf zaatar, as defined below, and the husk of sumac, and sesame seeds, to which other ingredients may be added. The classification of mixed zaatar shall be as shown in Section 2.2: "Classification".

2.1.2 Dried raw zaatar

It is composed of the leaves and/or blossoms of the following wild and cultivated plants, which are dried and then manually or mechanically crumbled but not powdered.

- *Origanum* spp.
- *Thymbra* spp.
- *Thymus* spp.
- *Satureja* spp.

2.1.3 Dried raw broadleaf zaatar

It is composed of the leaves and/or blossoms of the wild or cultivated broadleaf zaatar, namely *Origanum syriacum* (at least 75 percent) or constitutes a mix (25 percent maximum) of the leaves and blossoms of the following varieties, which are dried and then manually or mechanically crumbled but not powdered.

- *Origanum ehrenbergii*
- *Thymbra spicata*
- *Coridothymus capitatus*
- *Thymus syriacus*
- *Satureia thymbra*

2.2 Classification

Mixed zaatar is classified as follows:

2.2.1 Grade 1 mixed zaatar

It shall consist of at least 40 percent raw broadleaf zaatar mixed exclusively with sesame seeds and sumac husk, with the possibility of adding salt to a maximum level of 4 percent.

2.2.2 Grade 2 mixed zaatar

It shall consist of at least 30 percent raw zaatar or raw broadleaf zaatar mixed with sesame seeds and sumac husk, with the possibility of adding grains, nuts, spices and condiments, as well as salt to a maximum level of 4 percent.

2.2.3 Grade 3 mixed zaatar

It shall consist of at least 15 percent raw broadleaf zaatar or raw zaatar mixed with sesame seeds and sumac husk which should be added to a level of at least 5 percent, with the possibility of adding salt to a maximum level of 4 percent and citric acid according to good manufacturing practices (GMP). Optional ingredients as listed in Section 3.1.2: “Optional ingredients for Grade 3 mixed zaatar only” may be added provided they all meet GMP.

3 Essential composition and quality factors

3.1 Composition

3.1.1 Main ingredients for mixed zaatar

Dried raw zaatar as defined in Section 2.1.2: “Dried raw zaatar”, dried raw broadleaf zaatar, as defined in Section 2.1.3: “Dried raw broadleaf zaatar”, the husk of sumac, and sesame seeds.

3.1.2 Optional ingredients for Grade 3 mixed zaatar only

- legumes
- grains
- culinary herbs
- spices and condiments (e.g. cumin)
- pomegranate molasses
- vegetable oil
- nuts
- wheat bran

3.2 Quality factors

3.2.1 General requirements

The following characteristics shall be observed in mixed zaatar:

- All the ingredients used in the preparation of mixed zaatar shall be in conformity with their corresponding Codex Alimentarius standards.
- The final product shall not be in a powder form in order to ensure its main ingredients are recognizable by microscopic inspection (leaves, blossoms, straws, etc.) or visible to the naked eye, to avoid fraud and concealing of impurities therein, and to ensure that higher levels of volatile oils are maintained.
- The product must have a special flavour and smell and be free of any extraneous odours and flavours, including rancidity and mouldiness, as well as of any extraneous substances.
- The product should be stored in a cool and dry place.

3.2.2 Physical and chemical characteristics of mixed zaatar

3.2.2.1 Physical requirements

Mixed zaatar shall be free of living insects and spiders, any visible mouldiness, dead insects and parts thereof, contamination by rodents, birds and snails waste.ⁱ In addition, mixed zaatar shall comply with the physical requirements specified in Table 1.

Table 1: Physical requirements for mixed zaatar

Parameter	Requirement
Extraneous vegetable matter, ^a maximum % mass fraction	2.0
Foreign matter content, ^b maximum % mass fraction	1.0

Notes:

^a Vegetative matter associated with the plant from which the product originates – but is not accepted as part of the final product.

^b Any visible objectionable foreign detectable matter or material not usually associated with the natural components of the product, such as sticks, stones, burlap bagging, metal, etc.

3.2.2.2 Chemical requirements

Table 2: Chemical requirements for mixed zaatar

Parameter	Requirement		
	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
Moisture, % mass fraction (dry basis), maximum	12.0	12.0	12.0
Total table salt, % mass fraction (dry basis), maximum	4.0	4.0	4.0
Acid-insoluble ash, % mass fraction (dry basis), maximum	1.0	1.0	1.0

ⁱ Magnifications might be used for detection in some cases and the magnifying power used should be indicated in the test results report.

4 Food additives

No food additives are permitted in Grade 1 and Grade 2 mixed zaatar. Only the following food additive is permitted in Grade 3 mixed zaatar (Table 3).

Table 3: Food additives in Grade 3 mixed zaatar

INS No.	Name of additive	Maximum level
Acidity regulators		
330	Citric acid	GMP

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).¹

The products covered by this standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

6 Hygiene

It is recommended that the products covered by this standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the *General principles of food hygiene* (CXC 1-1969)² and other relevant Codex texts such as the *Code of hygienic practice for low-moisture foods* (CXC 75-2015).³

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).⁴

7 Labelling

The products covered by this standard shall be labelled in accordance with the *General standard for the labelling of prepackaged foods* (CXS 1-1985).⁵ Any health claims shall be in conformity with the *Guidelines for use of nutrition and health claims* (CXG 23-1997),⁶ when necessary. In addition, the following specific provisions apply:

7.1 Name of the product

The name of the product shall be “mixed zaatar”.

The classification shall be indicated according to Section 2.2: “Classification” next to the product name.

7.2 Labelling of non-retail containers

The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).⁷

8 Methods of analysis and sampling

For checking compliance with this standard, the methods of analysis and sampling contained in the *Recommended methods of analysis and sampling* (CXS 234-1999)⁸ relevant to the provisions in this standard shall be used.

Referenced texts

- 1 *General standard for contaminants and toxins in food and feed* (CXS 193-1995).
- 2 *General principles of food hygiene* (CXC 1-1969).
- 3 *Code of hygienic practice for low-moisture foods* (CXC 75-2015).
- 4 *Principles and guidelines for the establishment and application of microbiological criteria related to foods* (CXG 21-1997).
- 5 *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985).
- 6 *Guidelines for use of nutrition and health claims* (CXG 23-1997).
- 7 *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).
- 8 *Recommended methods of analysis and sampling* (CXS 234-1999).

Codex Alimentarius

A collection of international food standards developed to protect consumer health and ensure fair practices in the food trade. Codex standards are adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, an intergovernmental body with 189 Members, established by FAO and WHO. The standards are recognized by the World Trade Organization as the benchmark for the safety of internationally traded food.

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