



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

CODEX
ALIMENTARIUS
INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS
STANDARD

**REGIONAL STANDARD
FOR HARISSA
(RED HOT PEPPER PASTE)
– NEAR EAST
CXS 308R-2011**



ADOPTED 2011
AMENDED 2025

CXS 308R-2011

History of the standard

2025 Amendments

Following decisions taken at the Forty-eighth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in November 2025, amendments were made to include labelling provisions in Section 8: “Labelling”.

This publication was redesigned and published in 2025.

Adopted in 2011.

1 Scope

This standard applies to harissa (red hot pepper paste) as defined in Section 2: “Description”, 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: “Ingredients and quality factors” 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; and
- 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 colour with a minimum of colour on a “hunter” scale of the value of a/b not less than one-quarter 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 percent of total dry residues.

3.2.2.4 *Dry extract*

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

3.2.2.5 *Added salt*

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

3.2.2.6 *Acid insoluble ash*

The percentage of acid insoluble ash shall not exceed 0.15 percent 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).¹

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),² 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).³

7 Weights and measures

7.1 Fill of container

7.1.1 Minimum fill

- a) The container should be well filled with the product, which should occupy not less than 90 percent (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 shall be labelled in accordance with the *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985).⁴

8.1 Name of the food

The name of the food shall be “harissa”.

8.2 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).⁵

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.

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 *Principles and guidelines for the establishment and application of microbiological criteria related to foods* (CXG 21-1997).
- 4 *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985).
- 5 *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).

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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