



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

**CODEX**  
**ALIMENTARIUS**  
INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS  
STANDARD

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**STANDARD FOR  
DRIED OREGANO**  
CXS 342-2021



ADOPTED 2021  
AMENDED 2025

CXS 342-2021

# History of the standard

## 2025 Amendment

Following decisions taken at the Forty-eighth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in November 2025, amendments were made in Section 4: “Food additives”, to align with the *General standard for food additives* (CXS 192-1995).

This publication was redesigned and published in 2025.

## 2022 Amendments

The following amendments were made to the text of the standard following decisions taken at the Forty-fifth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in December 2022.

Page	Location	Original text	Amended text
4	Section 8.4: “Labelling of non-retail containers”	Information for non-retail containers shall be given either on the package 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.	The labelling of non-retail containers should be in accordance with the <i>General standard for the labelling of non-retail container of foods</i> (CXS 346 2021).

Adopted in 2021.

# 1 Scope

This standard applies to dried leaves/flowers of oregano, as defined in Section 2.1: “Product definition”, offered for direct consumption, as an ingredient in food processing or for repackaging if required. It excludes dried oregano intended for industrial processing.

# 2 Description

## 2.1 Product definition

Dried oregano is the product obtained from the leaves and the flowering tops of the plants mentioned in Table 1 and processed in an appropriate manner, undergoing operations such as cleaning, drying, rubbing and sifting.

**Table 1: Dried culinary herbs covered by this standard**

General name	Scientific name
Oregano	<i>Origanum</i> spp. L., except <i>Origanum majorana</i> L.
Mexican oregano	<i>Lippia</i> spp. L.

## 2.2 Styles

Dried oregano may be offered in one of the following styles:

- whole;
- crushed/rubbed: processed to varying degrees, ranging from a coarse to fine crush; or
- ground/powdered: processed into a powder.

The particle size of ground/powdered styles is determined by contractual agreement between buyer and seller.

## 3 Essential composition and quality factors

### 3.1 Composition

Product as defined in Section 2: "Description".

### 3.2 Quality factors

Canned stone fruits shall have normal flavour, odour and colour and shall possess a texture characteristic of the product. The product shall be substantially free from pits or pieces of pit if greater than 2 mm in dimension, except in the case that the product is unpitted.

#### 3.2.1 Moisture content

Dried oregano (whole, crushed/rubbed or ground/powdered) shall not contain more than 12 percent moisture.

#### 3.2.2 Odour, flavour and colour

Dried oregano shall have a characteristic odour and flavour, varying according to the composition/chemical content of the main components of the volatile oil (carvacrol and/or thymol), which may vary depending on geoclimatic factors/conditions. Dried oregano shall be free from any foreign odour or flavour and especially from mustiness. Dried oregano shall have a characteristic colour varying from pale greyish yellow green to dark green.

#### 3.2.3 Classification

Whole and crushed/rubbed oregano may be classified in three classes/grades according to the physical and chemical requirements as specified in Table 2 and Table 3, respectively:

- extra;
- class/grade I; and
- class/grade II.

When dried oregano is treated as unclassified/ungraded, the chemical and physical characteristics of class/grade II apply as the minimum requirements.

#### 3.2.4 Physical characteristics

Whole, crushed/rubbed and ground/powdered oregano shall comply with the physical requirements specified in Table 2.

**Table 2: Physical requirements for whole, crushed/rubbed and ground/powdered oregano (allowed tolerance for defects)**

Parameter	Whole or crushed/rubbed oregano			Ground/ powdered oregano
	Extra	Class/Grade I	Class/Grade II	
Extraneous matter (maximum % mass fraction) <sup>a</sup>	0.5	2	2	N/A <sup>e</sup>
Foreign matter content (maximum % mass fraction) <sup>b</sup>	0.1	0.1	0.1	N/A
Tolerance for oregano powder among non-powder styles (% smaller than the particle size indicated) <sup>c</sup>	5	10	20	N/A
Dead insects (maximum number/100 g)	3	3	3	N/A
Visible mould/insect damage (maximum % m/m) (applies to whole only)	1	3	5	N/A
Live insects (count/100 g)	0	0	0	0
Mammalian excreta maximum (mg/kg) (applies to whole only)	1.0	2.2	2.2	N/A
Other excreta (maximum mg/kg) <sup>d</sup> (applies to whole only)	10	10	22	N/A

**Note:**

<sup>a</sup> Vegetative matter associated with the plant from which the product originates but not accepted as part of the final product, such as stems/sticks, etc.

<sup>b</sup> Any visible/detectable objectionable foreign matter or material not usually associated with the natural components of the spice plant, such as stones, burlap bagging, metal, foreign leaves, etc.

<sup>c</sup> Particle size is evaluated upon request accompanied by supporting documents.

<sup>d</sup> Excreta from other animals such as reptiles and birds.

<sup>e</sup> N/A: Not applicable, means that this form of the above product has not been evaluated for this provision, and currently we do not have values. N/A does not mean zero.

**3.2.5 Chemical characteristics**

Whole, crushed/rubbed and ground/powdered oregano shall comply with the chemical requirements specified in Table 3.

**Table 3: Chemical requirements for whole, crushed/rubbed and ground oregano**

Parameter	Whole or crushed/rubbed oregano			Ground/ powdered oregano
	Extra	Class/Grade I	Class/Grade II	
Total ash, % mass fraction (dry basis), maximum	9	10	10	12
Acid insoluble ash, % mass fraction (dry basis), maximum	1.2	2	2	2.5
Volatile oils, ml/100 g (dry basis), minimum	2.5	2.0	1.5	1.3

## 4 Food additives

Anticaking agents listed in Table 1 and Table 2 of food category 12.2.1 (herbs and spices) of the *General standard for food additives* (CXS 192-1995)<sup>1</sup> are acceptable for use in the ground/powdered form of the foods conforming to this standard.

## 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)<sup>2</sup> and *Code of practice for weed control to prevent and reduce pyrrolizidine alkaloid contamination in food and feed* (CXC 74-2014)<sup>3</sup> and other relevant Codex Alimentarius texts.

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),<sup>4</sup> Annex III: "Spices and dried culinary herbs" in the *Code of hygienic practice for low-moisture foods* (CXC 75-2015),<sup>5</sup> and other relevant Codex Alimentarius texts such as codes of hygienic practice and codes of practice.

The products shall 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).<sup>6</sup>

## 7 Weights and measures

Containers shall be as full as practicable without impairment of quality and shall be consistent with a proper declaration of contents for the product.

## 8 Labelling

The products covered by this standard shall be labelled in accordance with the *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985).<sup>7</sup> In particular, the following specific provisions apply:

### 8.1 Name of the product

The name of the product shall be “dried oregano”, or “oregano” when the omission of the word dried would not mislead or confuse the consumer.

The general name and style of the product shall be as described in Table 1 and Section 2.2: “Styles”. The scientific name of the product is optional.

### 8.2 Country of origin and country of harvest

- Country of origin shall be declared.
- Country of harvest (optional).
- Region of harvest and year of harvest (optional).

### 8.3 Commercial identification

- Class/grade, if applicable.
- Particle size (optional).

### 8.4 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 in foods* (CXS 346-2021).<sup>8</sup>

## 9 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)<sup>9</sup> relevant to the provisions in this standard shall be used.

## Referenced texts

- 1 *General standard for food additives* (CXS 192-1995).
- 2 *General standard for contaminants and toxins in food and feed* (CXS 193-1995).
- 3 *Code of practice for weed control to prevent and reduce pyrrolizidine alkaloid contamination in food and feed* (CXC 74 2014).
- 4 *General principles of food hygiene* (CXC 1-1969).
- 5 *Code of hygienic practice for low-moisture foods* (CXC 75-2015).
- 6 *Principles and guidelines for the establishment and application of microbiological criteria related to foods* (CXG 21 1997).
- 7 *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985).
- 8 *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers in foods* (CXS 346-2021).
- 9 *Recommended methods of analysis and sampling* (CXS 234 1999).



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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.

### **Codex Secretariat**

Contacts

codex@fao.org  
codexalimentarius.org  
x.com/FAOWHOCodex  
youtube.com/@UNFAO

### **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations**

Rome, Italy

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