

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



Food and Agriculture  
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**STANDARD FOR DRIED OREGANO**

**CXS 342-2021**

**Adopted in 2021**

## 1. SCOPE

This standard applies to dried leaves/flowers of oregano, as defined in Section 2.1, 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

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

- a) Whole;
- b) crushed/rubbed: processed to varying degrees, ranging from a coarse to fine crush; and
- c) ground/powdered: processed into a powder.

2.2.2 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.

### 3.2 Quality factors

#### 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 geo-climatic 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
- 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 <sup>1</sup> (maximum % mass fraction)	0.5	2	2	N/A <sup>(5)</sup>
Foreign matter content <sup>2</sup> (maximum % mass fraction)	0.1	0.1	0.1	N/A
Tolerance for oregano powder among non-powder styles (% smaller than the particle size indicated) <sup>3</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 /100g)	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>4</sup> (applies to whole only)	10	10	22	N/A

<sup>1</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>2</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>3</sup> Particle size is evaluated upon request accompanied by supporting documents.

<sup>4</sup> Excreta from other animals such as reptiles and birds.

<sup>5</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 refer to 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 3 of the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CXS 192-1995) are acceptable for use in powdered form of the foods conforming to this standard.

#### 5. CONTAMINANTS

- 5.1 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) and *Code of Practice for Weed Control to Prevent and Reduce Pyrrolizidine Alkaloid Contamination in Food and Feed* (CXC 74-2014) and other relevant Codex texts.
- 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 this standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the *General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CXC 1-1969), the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Moisture Foods* (CXC 75-2015), Annex III on spices and dried culinary herbs, and other relevant Codex texts such as codes of hygienic practice and codes of practice.
- 6.2 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).

#### 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

- 8.1 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). In particular, the following specific provisions apply:

##### 8.2 Name of the product

- 8.2.1 The name of the product shall be “dried oregano” or “oregano” when the omission of the word dry would not mislead or confuse the consumer.
- 8.2.2 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.

##### 8.3 Country of origin and country of harvest

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

##### 8.4 Commercial identification

- Class/Grade, if applicable
- Particle size (optional)

##### 8.5 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.

## **9. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING**

### **9.1 Methods of analysis**

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

### **9.2 Sampling plan**

To be developed.