Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

World Health Organization

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS
INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS
STANDARD

STANDARD FOR SPICES IN THE FORM OF DRIED FRUITS AND BERRIES – REQUIREMENTS FOR LARGE CARDAMOM
CXS 368-2026

ADOPTED 2026 | CXS 368-2026

History of the standard

Adopted in 2026.

1 Scope

This standard applies to dried or dehydrated fruits and berries of large cardamom as defined in Section 2.1: "Product definition" below, offered for direct human consumption, or as an ingredient in food processing or for repackaging if required. It excludes the product for industrial processing.

2 Description

2.1 Product definition

Dried or dehydrated large cardamom is a product obtained from sufficiently developed fruits of *Amomum subulatum* Roxb. of Zingiberaceae family, as described in Table 1: "Common, trade and scientific name of dried and dehydrated large cardamom", wherein the capsules/pods are ovoid in form with a distinct ribbed surface.

Table 1: Common, trade and scientific name of dried or dehydrated large cardamom

Common name	Trade name	Scientific name
Large cardamom	Large cardamom Black cardamom	*Amomum subulatum* Roxb.

2.2 Styles

Dried or dehydrated large cardamom may be:

- whole unopened capsules/pods: Intact capsules/pods that have not lost seed;
- seeds: seeds obtained after opening of the capsules/pods;
- powdered seeds: powder obtained by grinding cardamom seeds; or
- powdered whole capsules/pods: powder obtained from grinding whole/open capsules/pods with seeds.

Other styles distinctly different from those four are allowed, provided they are labelled accordingly.

2.3 Sizing (optional)

Whole large cardamom may be sized by count per weight, weight per volume, by diameter, or in accordance with pre-existing trade practice.

3 Essential composition and quality factors

3.1 Composition

Dried or dehydrated large cardamom as described in Section 2: "Description" above, shall conform to the requirements contained in Annex I.

3.2 Quality factors

Dried or dehydrated large cardamom shall be safe and suitable for human consumption.

3.2.1 Odour, flavour and colour

Dried or dehydrated large cardamom shall have a characteristic odour, flavour and colour, which can vary depending on geo-climatic factors/conditions, and shall be free from any foreign odour, flavour, and colour especially from rancidity and mustiness. Dried or dehydrated large cardamom colour varies from maroon or light to dark brown in whole, light to dark brown or black in seed and light to dark brown in ground form.

3.2.2 Chemical and physical characteristics

Dried or dehydrated large cardamom shall comply with the chemical and physical characteristics specified in Annex I (Table A1: "Chemical characteristics" and Table A2: "Physical characteristics").

The defects allowed must not affect the general appearance of the product as regards its quality, keeping quality and presentation in the package.

4 Food additives

Anticaking agents listed in Table 3 of the *General standard for food additives* (CXS 192-1995)[1] are acceptable for use only in ground/powdered form of dried or dehydrated large cardamom.

5 Contaminants

The products covered by this standard shall comply with the maximum levels specified in the *General standard for contaminants and toxins in food and feed* (CXS 193-1995),[2] and produced in accordance with the *Code of practice for the prevention and reduction of mycotoxins in spices* (CXC 78-2017)[3] and other relevant Codex 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 shall be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the *General principles of food hygiene* (CXC 1-1969),[4] the *Code of hygienic practice for low-moisture foods* (CXC 75-2015),[5] Annex III on spices and dried culinary herbs, and other relevant Codex texts.

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).[6]

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 shall be labelled in accordance with the *General standard for the labelling of prepackaged foods* (CXS 1-1985).[7] In addition, the following specific provisions apply:

8.1 Name of the product

- The name of the product shall be the common name as described in Section 2.1: "Product definition".
- The style of the product shall be as described in Section 2.2: "Styles".
- The trade name and/or the scientific name may be indicated.

8.2 Country of origin and country of harvest

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

8.3 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).[8]

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)[9] relevant to the provisions in this standard shall be used.

ANNEX I

Chemical and physical characteristics for dried or dehydrated large cardamom

Table A1: Chemical characteristics for dried or dehydrated large cardamom

Product name	Form/style	Moisture content % w/w (max)	Total ash % w/w (max) on dry basis	Acid insoluble ash % w/w (max) on dry basis	Volatile oils ml/100 g (min) on dry basis
Large cardamom	Whole	12	8	2	1
	Seeds	12	8	2	1
	Powdered seeds	11	8	2	1
	Powdered whole capsules/pods	11	8	2	1

Note:

For capsules, the determination of moisture content, total ash and acid insoluble ash shall be made on the whole capsules. The determination of volatile oil shall be made on the seeds obtained by separating skin and shall not apply to powdered capsules with seeds.

ANNEX I

Table A2: Physical characteristics for dried or dehydrated large cardamom

Product name	Form/style	Empty, malformed and split capsules by count/100 capsules (max)[a]	Immature and shrivelled capsules % w/w (max)[b]	Light seeds % w/w (max)[c]	Insect defiled % w/w (max)[d]	Extraneous matter% w/w (max)[e]	Foreign matter % w/w (max)[f]	Whole dead insects, (by count) /100 g (max)[g]	Live insects (by count)[h]	Mammalian excreta mg/ kg (max)[i]	Other excreta mg/kg (max)[j]	Mould visible/ Mouldy material % w/w (max)
Large cardamom	Whole	5	7	N/A	1	5	0.5	4	0	6.6	2.2	1
	Seeds	N/A	N/A	5	N/A	2	0.5	4	0	6.6	2.2	1
	Powdered seeds	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Powdered capsules/ pods	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A

Notes:

[a] Capsules which have no seeds or are scantily filled with seeds.
[b] Capsules which are not "fully developed".
[c] Light seeds include seeds that are brown or red in colour, and broken, immature and shrivelled seeds.
[d] Capsules and seeds exhibiting definite evidence of insect feeding.
[e] Vegetative matter associated with the plant from which the product originates but not accepted as part of the final product.
[f] Any visible/detectable objectionable foreign matter or material not usually associated with the natural components of the spice plant, such as sticks, stones, burlap bagging, metal, etc.
[g] If the total number of whole dead insects found in the total number of the sub samples exceeds the specified value in the table.
[h] Live insects present in the consignment.
[i] If the average of the total number of subsamples exceeds the listed milligram per kg and/or lb.
[j] Excreta from other animals, such as reptiles and birds.
N/A – Not applicable, does not refer to zero. It means that the style of the above product has not been evaluated for this provision and currently do not have values.

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 the prevention and reduction of mycotoxins in spices* (CXC 78-2017).

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 prepackaged foods* (CXS 1-1985).

8 *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021).

9 *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.

Codex Secretariat
Contacts

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

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Rome, Italy

FAO and WHO. 2026. *Standard for spices in the form of dried fruits and berries – requirements for large cardamom.* Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 368-2026. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome. https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ce0139en