



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization

CODEX
ALIMENTARIUS
INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS
STANDARD

**STANDARD FOR
CANNED SHRIMPS
OR PRAWNS**
CXS 37-1991



ADOPTED 1991
AMENDED 2024

CXS 37-1991

History of the standard

This publication was redesigned and published in 2026.

2026 Corrigendum

For consistency, the word analyses has been changed to analysis in Section 7: “Sampling, examination and analysis”.

2024 Amendments

Following decisions taken at the Forty-seventh Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in November 2024, Section 6.2: “Labelling of non-retail containers” was added to include a reference to the General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods (CXS 346-2021); and Section 7: “Sampling, examination and analysis” was amended by replacing methods of analysis and numeric performance criteria with a reference to the Recommended methods of analysis and sampling (CXS 234-1999).

Amendments and revisions made prior to 2024:

Amended in 2011, 2013, 2016 and 2018.

Revised in 1995.

Adopted in 1991.

1 Scope

This standard applies to canned shrimps or canned prawns.ⁱ It does not apply to specialty products where shrimp constitutes less than 50 percent m/m of the contents.

2 Description

2.1 Product definition

Canned shrimp is the product prepared from any combination of species of the families Penaeidae, Pandalidae, Crangonidae and Palaemonidae from which heads, shell, antennae have been removed.

2.2 Process definition

Canned shrimp are packed in hermetically sealed containers and shall have received a processing treatment sufficient to ensure commercial sterility.

2.3 Presentation

The product shall be presented as:

Peeled shrimp – shrimp which have been headed and peeled without removal of the dorsal tract.

Cleaned or de-veined – peeled shrimp which have had the back cut open and the dorsal tract removed at least up to the last segment next to the tail. The portion of the cleaned or de-veined shrimp shall make up 95 percent of the shrimp contents.

Broken shrimp – more than 10 percent of the shrimp contents consist of pieces of peeled shrimp of less than four segments with or without the vein removed.

2.3.1 Other forms of presentation

Any other presentation shall be permitted provided that it:

- is sufficiently distinctive from other forms of presentation laid down in this standard;
- meets all other requirements of this standard; and
- is adequately described on the label to avoid confusing or misleading the consumer.

2.3.2 Size

Canned shrimp may be designated as to size in accordance with:

- the actual count range may be declared on the label; or
- provisions given in Annex I: "Size designation of canned shrimp".

ⁱ Hereafter referred to as "shrimp".

3 Essential composition and quality factors

3.1 Shrimp

Shrimp shall be prepared from sound shrimp of the species in Section 2.1: “Product definition” which are of a quality fit to be sold fresh for human consumption.

3.2 Other ingredients

The packing medium and all other ingredients used shall be of food-grade quality and conform to all applicable Codex standards.

3.3 Final product

Products shall meet the requirements of this standard when lots examined in accordance with Section 9: “Lot acceptance” comply with the provisions set out in the *Recommended methods of analysis and sampling* (CXS 234-1999).¹ Products shall be examined by the methods provided in the *Recommended methods of analysis and sampling* (CXS 234-1999).

4 Food additives

Acidity regulators, colours and sequestrants used in accordance with Table 1 and Table 2 of the *General standard for food additives* (CXS 192-1995)² in food category 09.4 (Fully preserved, including canned or fermented fish and fish products, including molluscs, crustaceans, and echinoderms) and only certain Table 3 acidity regulators as indicated in Table 3 of the *General standard for food additives* (CXS 192-1995) are acceptable for use in foods conforming to this standard.

5 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),³ *Code of practice for fish and fishery products* (CXC 52-2003),⁴ *Code of hygienic practice for low-acid and acidified lowacid canned foods* (CXC 23-1979)⁵ and other relevant Codex 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).⁶

6 Labelling

In addition to provisions of the *General standard for the labelling of pre-packaged foods* (CXS 1-1985),⁷ the following specific provisions apply:

6.1 Name of the food

The name of the product as declared on the label shall be “shrimp”, or “prawns”, and may be preceded or followed by the common or usual name of the species in accordance with the law and custom of the country in which the product is sold and in a manner not to mislead the consumer. The name of the product shall be qualified by a term descriptive of the presentation in accordance with Section 2.3: “Presentation” to Section 2.3.1: “Other forms of presentation”.

If the canned shrimp are labelled as to size, the size shall comply with the provisions of Section 2.3.2: “Size” and Annex I: “Size designation of canned shrimp”.

Broken shrimp defined in Section 2.3: “Presentation” shall be so labelled.

6.2 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).⁸

7 Sampling, examination and analysis

7.1 Sampling

- Sampling of lots for examination of the final product as prescribed in Section 3.3: “Final product” shall be in accordance with an appropriate sampling plan with an AQL of 6.5.
- Sampling of lots for examination of net weight and drained weight shall be carried out in accordance with an appropriate sampling plan meeting the criteria established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

7.2 Examination

7.2.1 Sensory and physical examination

Samples taken for sensory and physical examination shall be assessed by persons trained in such examination in accordance with the *Recommended methods of analysis and sampling* (CXS 234-1999) and the *Guidelines for the sensory evaluation of fish and shellfish in laboratories* (CXG 31-1999).⁹

7.2.2 Determination of size designation

The size, expressed as the number of shrimp per 100 g of drained product, is determined by the following equation:

$$\frac{\text{Number of whole shrimp in unit}}{\text{Actual drained weight of unit}} \times 100 = \text{Number of shrimp / 100g}$$

7.3 Analysis

For checking 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.

8 Definition of defectives

A sample unit will be considered defective when it fails to meet any of the following final product requirements referred to in Section 3.3: “Final product”:

8.1 Foreign matter

The presence in the sample unit of any matter, which has not been derived from shrimp, does not pose a threat to human health, and is readily recognized without magnification or is present at a level determined by any method including magnification that indicates non-compliance with good manufacturing or sanitation practices.

8.2 Odour/flavour

A sample unit affected by persistent and distinct objectionable odours or flavours indicative of decomposition or rancidity.

8.3 Texture

- excessive mushy flesh uncharacteristic of the species in the presentation; or
- excessively tough flesh uncharacteristic of the species in the presentation.

8.4 Discolouration

A sample unit affected by distinct blackening of more than 10 percent of the surface area of individual shrimp which affects more than 15 percent of the number of shrimp in the sample unit.

8.5 Objectionable matter

A sample unit affected by:

- struvite crystals – any struvite crystal greater than 5 mm in length.

9 Lot acceptance

A lot shall be considered as meeting the requirements of this standard when:

- the total number of defectives as classified according to Section 8: “Definition of defectives” does not exceed the acceptance number (c) of an appropriate sampling plan with an AQL of 6.5;
- the total number of sample units not meeting presentation requirements in Section 2.3: “Presentation” does not exceed the acceptance number (c) of an appropriate sampling plan with an AQL of 6.5;
- the average net weight and the average drained weight of all sample units examined is not less than the declared weight and provided there is no unreasonable shortage in any individual container; and
- the food additives, hygiene and labelling requirements of Section 4: “Food additives”, Section 5: “Hygiene” and Section 6: “Labelling” are met.

ANNEX I

Size designation of canned shrimp

The terms “extra-large”, “jumbo”, “large”, “medium”, “small”, “tiny” may be used provided that the range is in accordance with Table A1.

Table A1: Number of whole shrimp (including pieces greater than four segments) per 100 g of drained product

Size designation	Range
Extra-large or jumbo	13 or less
Large	14-19
Medium	20-34
Small	35-65
Tiny	more than 65

Referenced texts

- 1 *Recommended methods of analysis and sampling* (CXS 234-1999).
- 2 *General standard for food additives* (CXS 192-1995).
- 3 *General principles of food hygiene* (CXC 1-1969).
- 4 *Code of practice for fish and fishery products* (CXC 52-2003).
- 5 *Code of hygienic practice for low-acid and acidified low-acid canned foods* (CXC 23-1979).
- 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 of foods* (CXS 346-2021).
- 9 *Guidelines for the sensory evaluation of fish and shellfish in laboratories* (CXG 31-1999).

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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FAO and WHO. 2026. *Standard for canned shrimps or prawns*.
Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 37-1991. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.
<https://openknowledge.fao.org/handle/20.500.14283/ce0112en>

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