



Agenda item 4

CX/NE 25/12/6

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE NEAR EAST

Twelfth Session

Muscat, Oman

28 September - 2 October 2025

REGIONAL STANDARD FOR MAAMOUL (AT STEP 7)

Prepared by the Electronic Working Group chaired by Saudi Arabia and co-chaired by Lebanon

Codex Members and Observers wishing to submit comments at Step 6 on this draft should do so as instructed in CL 2025/43-NE available on the Codex webpage/Circular letters:

<http://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius/circular-letters/en/>

Background

- During the 11th session of the Codex Committee for the Near East (CCNE11), the Committee agreed to submit the proposed regional standard for maamoul to the 46th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC46) for adoption at Step 5. CCNE11 also agreed to re-establish the Electronic Working Group (EWG), chaired by Saudi Arabia and co-chaired by Lebanon to continue work as necessary.
- Following adoption at Step 5 by CAC46, the EWG, continued its work on the standard, working in both Arabic and English; the EWG was open to all Members and Observers of the region. The focus was on the text in square brackets, particularly on addressing quality factors and related methods of analysis (sections 3.5 and 8), considering the relevant discussions held at CCNE11.

Participation and Methodology

- Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, as chair and co-chair of the EWG respectively, invited all interested Members and Observers of CCNE to participate in the review of the regional standard for maamoul. In addition to the chair and co-chair three Members from the region and two members from outside the region, namely: Egypt, Iraq, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates and United States of America as well as one international nongovernmental organization participated in the EWG (Annex II).
- The initial draft prepared by the EWG Chairs was circulated twice, in accordance with the proposed timeline of activities (Table 1), to collect comments from members of the EWG. Comments were received from one Member during the first round of comments, which were taken into consideration for the preparation of the subsequent draft. No comments were received during the second round.
- The final report, as prepared by the EWG Chairs, was shared for further review by the members of EWG. Comments received were consolidated by the EWG Chairs for submission to the Codex Secretariat.

Table 1. Timeline of activities

Date	Subject
28 July 2024	Due date for answer to the invitation and establish EWG members.
18 August 2024	Open the 1st round of comments on the proposed draft regional standard for maamoul
17 October 2024	Deadline for submission of first round comments
3 November 2024	Revised draft standard circulated for 2nd round of comments.
2 January 2024	Deadline for submission of comments

1 February 2025	EWG Report and final draft standard based on comments submitted to the Codex Secretariat
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Discussions

6. The revisions to the standard for maamoul were made based on the EWG's comments and consequent discussions between the chair and co-chair. The following changes were introduced to enhance the flexibility and clarity of the text:
- The deletion of "different extraction ratios" for wheat flour was agreed upon to allow greater flexibility in using various flour types, avoiding limitations to a specific extraction ratio.
 - The addition of a comma between "wheat flour" and "semolina" was discussed to improve readability and better separate these ingredients in the list.
 - Additionally, the introduction of quality factors such as pH, water activity, and moisture content was discussed to ensure the consistency and shelf stability of maamoul.
 - Relevant methods of analysis have been included under Section 8. Although these methods are widely employed within the industry or have demonstrated validity for similar products, their specific application to maamoul has not yet undergone formal validation and would require further consideration by CCMAS.
 - Clarification regarding extraneous matter, including insects and their parts, was also added to strengthen hygiene requirements and prevent contamination.
 - In line with the ongoing work in CCNE on alignment of regional standards with the *General standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021), provisions for labelling of NRC have been included as provided in the recommendations contained in the *Codex Procedural Manual*.
 - Other editorial changes were proposed for clarity.

Conclusion

7. The EWG notes that all outstanding issues have been addressed and consider the work on the standard to be complete.

Recommendation

8. CCNE12 is invited to:
- consider the standard for maamoul, as presented in Annex I, for finalisation and recommendation for adoption at Step 8 by CAC; and
 - submit the provisions on food additives and food labelling to the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) and the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) respectively, for endorsement prior to CAC adoption; and
 - submit the provisions on the methods of analysis and sampling to the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) for endorsement.

REGIONAL STANDARD FOR MAAMOUL

(Step 6/7)

(Deleted text is in strikethrough and proposed text is underlined)

1. SCOPE

This standard applies to maamoul for direct human consumption as defined in section 2.

2. DESCRIPTION**2.1 Product definition**

Maamoul: a type of baked product prepared from a wheat flour and/or semolina and fat-based dough, which is filled as described in section 3.3 and coated as described in section 3.4.

3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS**3.1 Essential dough ingredients**

3.1.1 Cereal products such as: wheat flour (~~different extraction ratios~~), and/or semolina, wheat germ, maize germ, wheat bran, malt flour, barley flour, oat flour, rice flour, and rye flour.

Rationale:

The deletion of different extraction ratios to provide flexibility in using various types of flour without being limited to one specific extraction type. Furthermore, addition of the comma clarifies the separation between "wheat flour" and "semolina," making the list easier to read and understand.

3.1.2 Fat/oil substance such as: animal fats and/or vegetable oil

3.1.3 Other ingredients such as: baking powder, yeast, enzymes.

3.2 Optional dough ingredients

3.2.1 Food grade salt.

3.2.2 Water, flavored water (e.g. ~~rose water~~, flower water).

Rationale:

The replacement of "rose water" with "flower water" makes the definition more inclusive by recognizing other commonly used floral flavourings in Maamoul.

3.2.3 Sugar and its products, honey, molasses (e.g. date).

3.2.4 Milk and milk products such as: milk, milk powders, and its solids, casein, sweetened condensed milk, liquid or whey powder.

3.2.5 Edible starches such as: maize starch, rice starch, potato starch, tapioca starch, wheat starch.

3.2.6 Spices such as: ginger, saffron, cardamom, cumin, anise

3.2.7 Miscellaneous such as: Cocoa powder, coffee powder, chocolate, egg products, nuts.

3.3 Filling ingredients

3.3.1 Filling ingredients such as:

- Fruits, and their products such as: dried fruits, desiccated coconut, fruit paste and date paste
- Nuts and their products.
- Sugar based fillings e.g. molasses, halwa (e.g. starch based halwa, halwa tehenia, etc.)

3.4 Coating ingredients

3.4.1 Coating ingredients such as: cocoa powder, coffee powder, chocolate, and icing sugar.

3.5 Quality factors

3.5.1 The product shall be free from extraneous matter (organic (e.g. insects, their parts, and their stages) and inorganic (e.g. stones, sand, dust) components.

Rationale:

The revision offers greater specificity to prevent contamination from all forms of insects, including their parts and stages, ensuring hygiene requirements.

3.5.2 ~~Maamoul~~ The product shall have crumbly texture and always be filled with ingredients as described in section 3.3.

Rationale:

The wording change ensures consistency in the text, referring to the product in the same manner throughout the document for harmonization.

3.5.3 pH

The pH shall be between 5 – 7.

3.5.4 Water Activity

The water activity shall be between 0.5 – 0.7 (A_w).

3.5.5 Moisture

The moisture content shall be between 8 – 15%.

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

Food additives used in accordance with Tables 1 and 2 of the *General standard of food additives* (CXS 192-1995) in food category 07.2.1 (Cakes, cookies and pies (e.g. fruit-filled or custard types)) or listed in Table 3 of the *General standard for food additives* are acceptable for use in 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).

5.2 It is recommended that the manufacture of products covered by the provisions of this standard, steps are taken to prevent and reduce formation of acrylamide in accordance with the *Code of practice for the reduction of acrylamide in foods* (CXC 67 – 2009).

6. HYGIENE

6.1 It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this Standard be prepared, packed, transported, stored 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) and other relevant Codex texts such as codes of hygienic practice and codes of practice.

6.2 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).

7. LABELLING

The products covered by the provisions of this Standard shall be labelled in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985) and *General Standard for the labelling of non-retail containers of foods* (CXS 346-2021). In addition, the following specific provisions apply:

7.1 Name of Product

The product name shall be “Maamoul” with type of filling.

7.2 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. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING¹

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.

Provision	Method	Principle	Type
Extraneous materials	AOAC 972.32	Physical separation and microscopic examination (flotation method)	I
	ISO 2171	Gravimetry	II
pH	AOAC 981.12	Potentiometry	IV
	ISO 1842	Potentiometry	IV
Water Activity	ISO 18787	Electrometry	II
Moisture	ISO 712	Gravimetry	I

¹ The listed table will not appear in the final standard. Once endorsed by CCMAS, the methods will be included in the *Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling* (CXS 234-1999) and relevant reference included in the standard.

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