

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



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



**World Health
Organization**

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GROUP STANDARD FOR UNRIPENED CHEESE INCLUDING FRESH CHEESE

CXS 221-2001

Adopted in 2001. Amended in 2008, 2010, 2013, 2018, 2021.

1. SCOPE

This Standard applies to unripened cheese including fresh cheese, intended for direct consumption or further processing, in conformity with the description in Section 2 of this Standard. Subject to the provisions of this Standard, Codex Standards for individual varieties of unripened cheese may contain provisions, which are more specific than those in this Standard and in these cases; those specific provisions shall apply.

2. DESCRIPTION

Unripened cheeses including fresh cheeses are products in conformity with the *General Standard for Cheese* (CXS 283-1978), which are ready for consumption shortly after manufacture.

3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Raw materials

Milk and/or products obtained from milk.

3.2 Permitted ingredients

- Starter cultures of harmless lactic acid and/ or flavour producing bacteria and cultures of other harmless micro-organisms;
- Rennet or other safe and suitable coagulating enzymes;
- Sodium chloride;
- Potable water;
- Gelatine and starches: Notwithstanding the provisions in the *General Standard for Cheese* (CXS 283-1978), these substances can be used in the same function as stabilizers, provided they are added only in amounts functionally necessary as governed by Good Manufacturing Practice taking into account any use of the stabilisers/thickeners listed in Section 4;
- Vinegar;
- Rice, corn and potato flours and starches: Notwithstanding the provisions in the *General Standard for Cheese* (CXS 283-1978), these substances can be used in the same function as anti-caking agents for treatment of the surface of cut, sliced, and shredded products only, provided they are added only in amounts functionally necessary as governed by Good Manufacturing Practice taking into account any use of the anti-caking agents listed in Section 4.

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

Only those additive classes indicated as justified in the table below may be used for the product categories specified.

Acidity regulators, anticaking agents, colours, preservatives, stabilizers and thickeners used in accordance with Tables 1 and 2 of the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CXS 192-1995) in food category 01.6.1 (Unripened cheese including fresh cheese) and only certain acidity regulators, anticaking agents, colours, foaming agents, preservatives, stabilizers and thickeners in Table 3 are acceptable for use in foods conforming to this Standard.

Additive functional class	Justified use	
	Cheese mass	Surface/rind treatment
Colours:	X	X ^(d)
Bleaching agents:	–	–
Acidity regulators:	X	–
Stabilizers:	X ^(c)	–
Thickeners:	X ^(c)	–
Emulsifiers:	–	–
Antioxidants:	–	–
Preservatives:	X	X ^(a)
Foaming agents:	X ^(b)	–

Anticaking agents:	–	X ^(a)
Packaging gas	–	–

- (a) For the surface treatment of sliced, cut, shredded or grated cheese only
- (b) For whipped products only
- (c) Stabilizers and thickeners including modified starches may be used in compliance with the definition for milk products and only to the extent they are functionally necessary taking into account any use of gelatine and starch as provided for in Section 3.2.
- (d) For edible cheese rind

X The use of additives belonging to the class is technologically justified.

– The use of additives belonging to the class is not technologically justified.

5. CONTAMINANTS

The products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum levels for contaminants that are specified for the product in the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CXS 193-1995).

The milk used in the manufacture of the products covered by this Standard shall comply with the maximum levels for contaminants and toxins specified for milk by the *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed* (CXS 193-1995) and with the maximum residue limits for veterinary drug residues and pesticides established for milk by the CAC.

6. 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), the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Milk and Milk Products* (CXC 57-2004) and other relevant Codex texts such as 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).

7. LABELLING

In addition to the provisions of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985) and the *General Standard for the Use of Dairy Terms* (CXS 206-1999), the following specific provisions apply.

7.1 Name of the food

The name of the food shall be unripened cheese. However, the words “unripened cheese” may be omitted in the designation of an individual unripened cheese variety reserved by a Codex standard for individual cheeses, and, in the absence thereof, a variety name specified in the national legislation of the country in which the product is sold, provided that the omission does not create an erroneous impression regarding the character of the food.

In case the product is not designated by an alternative or a variety name, but with the designation “unripened cheese”, the designation may be accompanied by a descriptive term such as provided for in Section 7.1.1 of the *General Standard for Cheese* (CXS 283-1978).

Unripened cheese may alternatively be designated “fresh cheese” provided it is not misleading to the consumer in the country in which the product is sold.

7.2 Declaration of milkfat content

The milk fat content shall be declared in a manner found acceptable in the country of sale to the final consumer, either (i) as a percentage by mass, (ii) as a percentage of fat in dry matter, or (iii) in grams per serving as quantified in the label, provided that the number of servings is stated.

Additionally, the following terms may be used:

High fat	(if the content of FDM is above or equal to 60%)
Full fat	(if the content of FDM is above or equal to 45% and less than 60%)
Medium fat	(if the content of FDM is above or equal to 25% and less than 45%)
Partially skimmed	(if the content of FDM is above or equal to 10% and less than 25%)
Skim	(if the content of FDM is less than 10%)

7.3 Labelling of non-retail containers

Information required in Section 7 of this Standard and Sections 4.1 to 4.8 of the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985) and, if necessary, storage instructions, shall be given either on the container or in accompanying documents, except that the name of the product, lot identification and the name and address of the manufacturer or packer shall appear on the container, and, in the absence of such a container on the cheese itself. However, lot identification and the name and address of the manufacturer or packer may be replaced by an identification mark, provided that such mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.

8. METHODS OF ANALYSIS AND SAMPLING

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.