

# CODEX STANDARD FOR COUSCOUS

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CODEX STAN 202-1995

## 1. SCOPE

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- 1.1 The term "couscous", as defined in Section 2 below, refers to processed couscous destined for direct human consumption.
- 1.2 Subject to the provision of Section 8.1.2 this standard does not apply to couscous intended for the same use but prepared from cereals other than durum wheat.

## 2. DESCRIPTION

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- 2.1 This standard applies to couscous, i.e. the product prepared from durum wheat semolina (*Triticum durum*) the elements of which are bound by adding potable water and which has undergone physical treatment such as cooking and drying.
- 2.2 Couscous is prepared from a mixture of coarse and fine semolina. It can be prepared from "coarse medium" semolina.

## 3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

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### 3.1 Quality factors – general

- 3.1.1 Couscous shall be clean, safe and fit for human consumption.
- 3.1.2 All processes applied to materials used for the production of couscous must be carried out in order to:
- limit the reduction of nutritive value
  - avoid undesirable modification of properties of couscous

### 3.2 Quality factors – specific

#### 3.2.1 Moisture content

The moisture content of couscous shall not exceed 13.5%.

## 4. FOOD ADDITIVES

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No food additives shall be added during the industrial processing of couscous.

## 5. CONTAMINANTS

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### 5.1 Heavy metals

Couscous shall be free from heavy metals in amounts which may represent a hazard to health.

### 5.2 Pesticide residues

Couscous shall comply with those maximum residue limits established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission for this commodity.

### 5.3 Mycotoxins

Couscous shall comply with those maximum mycotoxin limits established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission for this commodity.

## 6. HYGIENE

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- 6.1 It is recommended that the product covered by the provisions of this standard be prepared in accordance with the appropriate sections of the *Recommended International Code of Practice – General Principles of Food Hygiene* (CAC/RCP 1-1969), and other Codes of Practice recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission which are relevant to the product.

- 6.2 To the extent possible in good manufacturing practice, the product shall be free from objectionable matter.
- 6.3 When tested by appropriate methods of sampling and examination, the product:
- (a) shall be free from micro-organisms capable of development in the food under normal conditions of storage; and
  - (b) shall not contain any substance originating from micro-organisms in amounts which may represent a health hazard.

## 7. PACKAGING

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- 7.1 Couscous shall be packaged for retail sale in containers which will safeguard the hygienic, nutritional and technological qualities of the product.
- 7.2 Containers, including packaging material, shall be made of substances which are safe and suitable for their intended use. They shall not impart any toxic substance or undesirable odour or flavour to the product.

## 8. LABELLING

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In addition to the provisions of the Codex *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods* (CODEX STAN 1-1985), the following specific provisions apply:

### 8.1 Name of the product

- 8.1.1 The name of the product to be shown on the label shall be "couscous".
- 8.1.2 Products intended for the same use but prepared from cereals other than durum wheat may be designated as "couscous" on condition that this appellation be immediately followed by a specification of the cereals used.

### 8.2 Labelling of non-retail containers

Information for non-retail containers shall either be given 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. However, lot identification and the name and address of the manufacturer or packer may be replaced by an identification mark, provided that such a mark is clearly identifiable with the accompanying documents.

## 9. METHODS OF SAMPLING AND ANALYSIS

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See relevant Codex texts on methods of analysis and sampling.

## ANNEX

In those instances where more than one factor limit and/or method of analysis is given, it is strongly recommended that users specify the appropriate limit and method of analysis.

### 1. SEMOLINA KERNEL SIZES

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- 1.1 Coarse semolina is a semolina with a kernel diameter between 475 and 700 microns.
- 1.2 Fine semolina is a semolina with a kernel diameter between 130 and 183 microns.
- 1.3 "Coarse medium semolina" is a semolina with a kernel diameter between 183 and 700 microns.
- 1.4 Medium semolina is a semolina with a kernel diameter between 183 and 475 microns.

### 2. COMPOSITION

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- 2.1 Semolina proportions in the mixture intended for the preparation of couscous are:
  - 20–30% for fine semolina
  - 70–80% for coarse semolina

"Coarse medium" semolina is a semolina obtained from a mixture of:

  - 25–30% for coarse semolina
  - 70–75% for medium semolina

### 3. QUALITY FACTORS

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- 3.1 Granularity (microns) min. 630 microns to max. 2000 microns, with a tolerance of 6%.
- 3.2 Ash(%) maximum 1.1%

### 4. ANALYSIS

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- 4.1 **Ash**  
ISO 2171-1980, Cereals, Legumes and Derived Products – Determination of ash.