

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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GROUP STANDARD FOR CHEESES IN BRINE

CXS 208-1999

Adopted in 1999. Amended in 2001, 2010, 2018, 2021.

1. SCOPE

This Standard applies to Cheeses in Brine, intended for direct consumption or further processing, in conformity with the description in Section 2 of this Standard. Subject to the provisions of this Group Standard, Codex standards for individual varieties of Cheeses in Brine may contain provisions which are more specific than those in this Standard.

2. DESCRIPTION

Cheeses in Brine are semi-hard to soft ripened cheeses in conformity with the *General Standard for Cheese* (CXS 283-1978). The body has a white to yellowish colour and a compact texture suitable for slicing, with none to few mechanical openings. The cheeses have no actual rind and have been ripened and preserved in brine until delivered to, or prepacked for, the consumer. Certain individual Cheeses in Brine contain specific herbs and spices as part of their identity.

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;
- Safe and suitable enzymes;
- Sodium chloride;
- Potable water;
- Herbs and spices where part of the identity of the Cheese in Brine.

3.3 Composition

	Soft	Semi-hard
Minimum fat in dry matter, %	40	40
Minimum dry matter, %	40	52

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

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

Only certain acidity regulators in Table 3 of the *General Standard for Food Additives* (CXS 192-1995) are acceptable for use in foods conforming to this Standard.

Additive functional class	Justified use
Colours	-
Bleaching agents	-
Acidity regulators	X
Stabilizers	-
Thickeners	-
Emulsifiers	-
Antioxidants	-
Preservatives	-
Foaming agents	-
Anticaking agents	-
Packaging gas	-

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 Cheese in Brine. However, the word "Cheese in Brine" may be omitted in the designation of an individual Cheese in Brine variety reserved by a Codex standard for individual Cheese in Brine, 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.

7.2 Declaration of milkfat content

The milkfat 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. 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.

8. METHODS OF SAMPLING AND 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) relevant to the provisions in this Standard, shall be used.

8.1 Sampling

Special requirements for Cheese in Brine: A representative piece of cheese is placed on a cloth or on a sheet of absorbent paper for 5 to 10 min. A slice of 2–3 cm is cut off and sent to the laboratory in a sealed insulated box for analysis.