

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS

INTERNATIONAL FOOD STANDARDS



Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations



World Health
Organization

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**REGIONAL STANDARD FOR KAVA PRODUCTS
FOR USE AS A BEVERAGE WHEN MIXED WITH WATER**

North America and South West Pacific

CXS 336R-2020

Adopted in 2020. Amended in 2023.

2023 Amendments

Following decisions taken at the Forty-sixth Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in December 2023, amendments were made in Section 7.4 Labelling of non-retail containers.

1. SCOPE

This standard applies to fresh or dried kava products that are used to prepare a beverage when mixed with potable water, intended for human consumption, in conformity with the description in Section 2 of this standard. The standard does not apply to the final kava beverage as such, or kava products used for medicinal purposes, or as ingredients in foods or other tradable product, or for any other purposes.

2. DESCRIPTION

Kava products are derived from selected parts of the Noble cultivar of the kava plant, *Piper methysticum* G. Forst. in the family Piperaceae. The parts of the kava plant used to produce kava products may include:

- a) peeled, fresh and/or dried rhizomes, basal stems (up to the first node on each kava branch); and
- b) fresh and/or dried roots.

Upper stems, leaves, peelings (bark), and extraction residues are excluded.

2.1 Fresh kava products

Fresh kava products are prepared using peeled rhizomes, peeled basal stems and/or roots.

2.2 Dried kava products

Dried kava products may be in the form of intact lateral roots or peeled rhizomes, or peeled chips, or in powdered form.

3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTORS

3.1 Raw materials

Kava plants used as raw material for kava products shall be a Noble variety. The Noble variety shall be confirmed using their morphological characteristics. Kava of the wild, *Piper wichmannii* and Two-day (Tudei) varieties are excluded.

The following list is non-exhaustive and includes examples of vernacular terms used to describe some Noble varieties in the various regions:

- i. Federated States of Micronesia: *Rahmwahnger*;
- ii. Fiji: *Damu, Dokobana loa, Dokobana vula, Yonolulu, Loa kasa balavu, Loa kasa leka, Matakaro balavu, Matakaro leka, Qila balavu, Qila leka, Vula kasa balavu, Vula kasa leka, Yalu*;
- iii. Hawaii: *Hanakapi'ai, Hiwa, Honokane Iki, Kumakua, Mahakea, Mapulehu, Moi, Nene, Opihikao, Pana'ewa, Papa 'Ele'ele, Papa 'Ele'ele Pu 'upu'u, Papa kea*;
- iv. Papua New Guinea: *Kau kupwe*;
- v. Samoa: *Ava La'au, Ava Le'a, Ava Loa, Ava Talo, Ava Mumu*;
- vi. Solomon Islands: *Feo, Tahu, Temo*;
- vii. Tonga: *Kava Lekahina, Kava 'Akauhina, Kava Lekakula, Kava 'Akaukula, Kava Fulufulu, Kava Valu, Kava Kofe*;
- viii. Vanuatu: *Ahouia, Amon, Asiyai, Bir Kar, Bir Sul, Biyaj, Borogoru, Borogu, Gorgor, Ge gusug, Ge vemea, Ge wiswisket, Kelai, Leay, Melmel, Melomelo, Miela, Naga miwok, Olitao, Palarasul, Palasa, Palimet, Pia, Poivota, Pualiu, Puariki, Sese, Silese, Urukara*.

3.2 Production and post-harvest handling

Kava plants should be cultivated using good agricultural practices.

The roots, rhizomes and/or basal stems are harvested and washed and peeled when tissues have been exposed to sunlight. They may be sliced, dried or fresh. Dried kava may also be ground into powder.

3.3 Composition

Kava as defined in Sections 2 and 3.1.

3.4 Moisture

Dried kava products shall have a moisture content not exceeding 12 percent.

3.5 Quality criteria

Kava products shall be:

- of known Noble kava varieties, based on meeting the criteria of 'Absorbance of acetonitrile extracts' (less than or equal to 0.9 absorbance units) and with a suitable total kavalactone;
- have no intentional adulteration;
- free of leaves, bark, and/or stems;
- practically free from pests;
- practically free from damage caused by pests;
- free of visible mould;
- free from soil and foreign materials; and
- free from foreign odour.

3.6 Packaging and storage

Kava products shall be packaged in such a manner as to safeguard the hygienic and organoleptic quality of the products.

Kava products shall be stored in such a manner as to avoid pest access or harborage, protected from contamination, and under conditions of temperature and humidity that minimize deterioration and minimize mould growth.

Fresh kava products shall be quick frozen and maintained at $< -18^{\circ}\text{C}$.

Dried kava products shall be stored in a sealed container and the moisture content shall not exceed 12 percent.

3.7 Preparation of kava for use as a beverage

If prepared from dried kava, the powder is mixed with potable water and may be filtered prior to consumption.

If prepared from fresh kava, the ground or macerated kava is mixed with potable water and may be filtered prior to consumption.

4. FOOD ADDITIVES

No additives are permitted in the products covered by this standard.

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).¹

The products covered by this standard shall comply with the maximum residue limits for pesticides established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

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)² and the *Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Moisture Foods* (CXC 75-2015).³ 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).⁴

7. LABELLING

The products covered by this standard shall be labelled in accordance with the *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods* (CXS 1-1985).⁵ In addition to these requirements, the following specific provisions apply:

7.1 Name of the product

The name of the food shall be "fresh kava" or "dried kava" together with the part of the kava plant from which the kava product is derived. Kava products shall have a clear marking that they are Noble kava. Optionally, the name of the variety(ies) of kava plant from which the kava product is derived may be stated.

7.2 Origin of the product

The name of the country of origin and, optionally, island or district where grown, or national, regional or local place name shall be marked on each container. The *Principles for Traceability/Product Tracing as a Tool within a Food Inspection and Certification System* (CXG 60-2006)⁶ shall be adhered to when tracing a product to its origin.

7.3 Instructions for use

The label of each container of kava products shall have a clear, conspicuous and easily-readable message, which includes the following points:

- a) the statement "Steps to prepare the kava beverage" or a similar statement followed by specifically numbered actions to prepare the kava beverage; and
- b) the first action referred to in Section 7.3(a) should read "Use only potable water to prepare the kava beverage" or a similar statement.

7.4 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)⁷.

7.5 Optional labelling

Kava products may have a clear marking to indicate that they are not intended for medicinal purposes.

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)⁸ relevant to the provisions in this standard, shall be used.

NOTES

¹ FAO and WHO. 1969. *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 193-1995. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

² FAO and WHO. 1969. *General Principles of Food Hygiene*. Codex Alimentarius Code of Practice, No. CXC 1-1969. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

³ FAO and WHO. 2015. *Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Moisture Foods*. Codex Alimentarius Code of Practice, No. CXC 75-2015. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

⁴ FAO and WHO. 1997. *Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods*. Codex Alimentarius Guideline, No. CXG 21-1997. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

⁵ FAO and WHO. 1985. *General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 1-1985. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

⁶ FAO and WHO. 2006. *Principles for Traceability/Product Tracing as a Tool within a Food Inspection and Certification System*. Codex Alimentarius Guideline, No. CXG 60-2006. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

⁷ FAO and WHO. 2021. *General Standard for the Labelling of Non-Retail Containers of Foods*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 346-2021. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

⁸ FAO and WHO. 1999. *Recommended Methods of Analysis and Sampling*. Codex Alimentarius Standard, No. CXS 234-1999. Codex Alimentarius Commission. Rome.

Members of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in the region of North America and South West Pacific are indicated on the Codex website at <https://www.fao.org/fao-who-codexalimentarius>.