

CODEX STANDARD FOR AVOCADO

CODEX STAN 197-1995

1. DEFINITION OF PRODUCE

This standard applies to commercial varieties (cultivars) of avocados grown from *Persea americana* Mill. (Syn. *Persea gratissima* Gaertn) of the *Lauraceae* family, to be supplied fresh to the consumer, after preparation and packaging. Parthenocarpic fruit and avocados for industrial processing are excluded.¹

2. PROVISIONS CONCERNING QUALITY

2.1 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the avocados must be:

- whole;
- sound, produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for consumption is excluded;
- clean, practically free of any visible foreign matter;
- practically free of pests affecting the general appearance of the produce;
- practically free of damage caused by pests;
- free of damage caused by low temperature;
- having a stalk not more than 10 mm in length which must be cut off cleanly. However, its absence is not considered a defect provided the place of the stalk attachment is dry and whole;
- free of abnormal external moisture, excluding condensation following removal from cold storage;
- free of any foreign smell and/or taste.

2.1.1 The avocados must be carefully picked. Their development should have reached a physiological stage which will ensure a continuation of the maturation process to completion. The mature fruit should be free of bitterness. The development and condition of the avocados must be such as to enable them:

- to withstand transport and handling, and
- to arrive in satisfactory condition at the place of destination.

¹ Governments, when indicating the acceptance of the Codex Standard for Avocado, should notify the Commission which provisions of the Standard would be accepted for application at the point of import, and which provisions would be accepted for application at the point of export.

2.2 CLASSIFICATION

Avocados are classified in three classes defined below:

2.2.1 “Extra” Class

Avocados in this class must be of superior quality. In shape and colouring they must be characteristic of the variety. They must be free of defects, with the exception of very slight superficial defects of the skin, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package. If present, the stalk must be intact.

2.2.2 Class I

Avocados in this class must be of good quality and show the typical colour and shape of the variety. The following slight defects, however, may be allowed, provided these do not affect the general appearance of the produce, the quality, the keeping quality and presentation in the package:

- slight defects in shape and colouring;
- slight skin defects (corkiness, healed lenticels) and sunburn; the maximum total area should not exceed 4 cm².

The defects must not, in any case, affect the flesh of the fruit. The stalk, if present, may be slightly damaged.

2.2.3 Class II

This class includes avocados which do not qualify for inclusion in the higher classes, but satisfy the minimum requirements specified in Section 2.1 above. The following defects may be allowed, provided the avocados retain their essential characteristics as regards the quality, the keeping quality and presentation:

- defects in shape and colouring;
- skin defects (corkiness, healed lenticels) and sunburn; the maximum total area should not exceed 6 cm².

The defects must not, in any case, affect the flesh of the fruit. The stalk, if present, may be damaged.

3. PROVISIONS CONCERNING SIZING

Size is determined by the weight of the fruit, in accordance with the following table²:

Size Code	Weight (in grams)
2	>1220
4	781 to 1 220
6	576 to 780
8	461 to 575
10	366 to 460
12	306 to 365
14	266 to 305
16	236 to 265
18	211 to 235
20	191 to 210
22	171 to 190
24	156 to 170
26	146 to 155
28	136 to 145
30	125 to 135

The minimum weight of avocados must not be less than 125 g.

4. PROVISIONS CONCERNING TOLERANCES

Tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each package for produce not satisfying the requirements of the class indicated.

4.1 QUALITY TOLERANCES

4.1.1 “Extra” Class

² Nevertheless, no account should be taken for a given fruit of a deviation of more or less than 2 per cent with regard to the size code indicated.

Five per cent by number or weight of avocados not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class I or, exceptionally, coming within the tolerances of that class.

4.1.2 Class I

Ten per cent by number or weight of avocados not satisfying the requirements of the class, but meeting those of Class II or, exceptionally, coming within the tolerances of that class.

4.1.3 Class II

Ten per cent by number or weight of avocados not satisfying the requirements of the class nor the minimum requirements, with the exception of produce affected by rotting, marked bruising or any other deterioration rendering it unfit for consumption.

4.2 SIZE TOLERANCES

For all classes, 10 per cent, by number or weight of avocados corresponding to the size immediately above and/or below those indicated on the package.

5. PROVISIONS CONCERNING PRESENTATION

5.1 UNIFORMITY

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only avocados of the same origin, variety, quality and size. The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of the entire contents.

5.2 PACKAGING

Avocados must be packed in such a way as to protect the produce properly. The materials used inside the package must be new,³ clean, and of a quality such as to avoid causing any external or internal damage to the produce. The use of materials, particularly of paper or stamps bearing trade specifications is allowed, provided the printing or labelling has been done with non-toxic ink or glue.

Avocados shall be packed in each container in compliance with the Recommended International Code of Practice for Packaging and Transport of Tropical Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (CAC/RCP 44-1995).

5.2.1 Description of Containers

³ For the purposes of this Standard, this includes recycled material of food-grade quality.

The containers shall meet the quality, hygiene, ventilation and resistance characteristics to ensure suitable handling, shipping and preserving of the avocados. Packages must be free of all foreign matter and smell.

6. MARKING OR LABELLING

6.1 CONSUMER PACKAGES

In addition to the requirements of the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Pre-packaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985, Rev. 2-1999), the following specific provisions apply:

6.1.1 Nature of Produce

If the produce is not visible from the outside, each package shall be labelled as to the name of the produce and may be labelled as to the name of the variety.

6.2 NON-RETAIL CONTAINERS

Each package must bear the following particulars, in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked, and visible from the outside, or in the documents accompanying the shipment.⁴ For produce transported in bulk these particulars must appear on a document accompanying the goods.

6.2.1 Identification

Name and address of Exporter, Packer and/or Dispatcher. Identification code (optional).⁵

6.2.2 Nature of Produce

Name of produce if the contents are not visible from the outside. Name of variety and/or commercial type (optional).

6.2.3 Origin of Produce

Country of origin and, optionally, district where grown or national, regional or local place name.

⁴ Governments, when indicating their acceptance of this Standard, should notify the Commission as to which provisions of this Section apply.

⁵ The national legislation of a number of countries requires the explicit declaration of the name and address. However, in the case where a code mark is used, the reference “packer and/or dispatcher (or equivalent abbreviations)” has to be indicated in close connection with the code mark.

6.2.4 Commercial Identification

- Class;
- Size expressed in minimum and maximum weight in grams;
- Code number of the size scale and number of fruits when it is different from reference number;
- Net weight (optional).

6.2.5 Official Inspection Mark (optional)

7. CONTAMINANTS

7.1 HEAVY METALS

Avocados shall comply with those maximum levels for heavy metals established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission for this commodity.

7.2 PESTICIDE RESIDUES

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

8. HYGIENE

8.1 It is recommended that the produce covered by the provisions of this Standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev. 3-1997), and other relevant Codex texts such as Codes of Hygienic Practice and Codes of Practice.

8.2 The produce should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods (CAC/GL 21-1997).