
**Pepper (*Piper nigrum* L.), whole or
ground — Specification —**

**Part 1:
Black pepper**

*Poivre (Piper nigrum L.), entier ou en poudre — Spécifications —
Partie 1: Poivre noir*
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Foreword

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Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

International Standard ISO 959-1 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 34, *Agricultural food products*, Subcommittee SC 7, *Spices and condiments*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 959-1:1989), which has been technically revised.

ISO 959 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Pepper (Piper nigrum L.), whole or ground — Specification*:

— Part 1: *Black pepper*

— Part 2: *White pepper*

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Annexes A and B form an integral part of this part of ISO 959. Annexes C and D are for information only.

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Printed in Switzerland

Pepper (*Piper nigrum* L.), whole or ground — Specification —

Part 1: Black pepper

1 Scope

This part of ISO 959 specifies requirements for black pepper (*Piper nigrum* L.) (see ISO 676), whole or ground at the following commercial stages:

- a) pepper sold by the producing country without cleaning or after a partial cleaning, without preparation or grading, called “non-processed (NP) or semi-processed (SP) pepper” in this part of ISO 959;
- b) pepper sold by the producing country after cleaning, preparation and/or grading, called “processed (P) pepper”, which can, in certain cases, be re-sold directly to the consumers.

When the term “black pepper” is used alone, it means that the specification applies to both types described, without distinction.

This part of ISO 959 is not applicable to black pepper categories called “light”.

NOTE Specifications for white pepper are given in ISO 959-2.

Recommendations relating to storage and transport conditions are given in annex C. Information regarding the microscopic structure of the pepper berry is given in annex D.

2 Normative references

The following standards contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this part of ISO 959. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All standards are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this part of ISO 959 are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the standards indicated below. Members of IEC and ISO maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO 676:1995, *Spices and condiments — Nomenclature.*

ISO 927:1982, *Spices and condiments — Determination of extraneous matter content.*

ISO 928:1997, *Spices and condiments — Determination of total ash.*

ISO 930:1997, *Spices and condiments — Determination of acid-insoluble ash.*

ISO 939:1980, *Spices and condiments — Determination of moisture content — Entrainment method.*

ISO 948:1980, *Spices and condiments — Sampling.*

ISO 1108:1992, *Spices and condiments — Determination of non-volatile ether extract.*

ISO 1208:1982, *Spices and condiments — Determination of filth.*

ISO 5498:1981, *Agricultural food products — Determination of crude fibre content — General method.*

ISO 5564:1982, *Black pepper and white pepper, whole or ground — Determination of piperine content — Spectrophotometric method.*

ISO 6571:1984, *Spices, condiments and herbs — Determination of volatile oil content.*

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this part of ISO 959, the following definitions apply.

3.1

black pepper

dried berry of *Piper nigrum* L., having an unbroken pericarp

3.2

black pepper, non-processed (NP)

pepper that has not undergone any clearing, preparation or grading by the producing country before being exported, and that conforms to the requirements of this part of ISO 959

3.3

black pepper, semi-processed (SP)

pepper that has undergone partial cleaning but without preparation or grading by the producing country before being exported, and that conforms to the requirements of this part of ISO 959

3.4

black pepper processed

pepper that has been processed (cleaning, preparation, grading, etc.) by the producing country before being exported, and that conforms to the requirements of this part of ISO 959

3.5

black pepper, ground

pepper obtained by grinding black pepper berries without adding any foreign matter to the pepper, and that conforms to the requirements of this part of ISO 959

3.6

grey pepper

commercial name sometimes given to ground black pepper

3.7

light berry

berry that has reached an apparently normal stage of development but the kernel does not exist

3.8

pinhead

berry of very small size that has not developed

3.9

broken berry

berry that has been separated into two or more pieces

3.10

extraneous matter

all materials other than black pepper berries, irrespective of whether they are of vegetable (e.g. stems and leaves) or mineral (e.g. sand) origin

NOTE Light berries, pinheads or broken berries are not considered as extraneous matter.

4 Description

Whole black pepper is the whole dry berry of *Piper nigrum* L., generally picked before complete ripening. Berries of black pepper generally have a diameter of 3 mm to 6 mm and are brown, grey or black in colour with a wrinkled pericarp.

Ground black pepper is obtained by grinding black pepper berries, without adding any foreign matter to the pepper.

5 Requirements

5.1 Odour and flavour iTeh STANDARD PREVIEW

When ground, the odour and flavour shall be characteristic of black pepper, strongly sharp and very aromatic. The product shall be free from foreign odours and flavour.

NOTE The appearance of berries has no direct relation to their flavour. Smaller berries can be more aromatic than berries of larger size or better appearance.

5.2 Freedom from mould, insects, etc.

Black pepper shall be free from mould growth and living insects, and practically free from dead insects, insect fragments and rodent contamination visible to the naked eye (corrected, if necessary, for abnormal vision) or with such magnification as may be necessary in any particular case. If the magnification exceeds $\times 10$, this fact shall be mentioned in the test report.

In the case of ground black pepper, impurities shall be determined according to the method given in ISO 1208.

5.3 Physical characteristics

Whole black pepper shall meet the requirements specified in table 1.

5.4 Chemical characteristics

The black pepper shall meet the requirements specified in table 2 when tested by the specified method.

6 Sampling

Black pepper shall be sampled using the method specified in ISO 948.

Samples of whole black pepper shall be ground so that all material passes through a sieve with aperture of size 1 mm. The material thus obtained shall be used for determining the characteristics given in table 2.

7 Test methods

Samples of black pepper shall be analysed to ensure conformity with the requirements of this part of ISO 959 by following the methods specified in tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 — Physical characteristics of whole black pepper

Characteristics	Requirements		Reference test method
	Pepper NP or SP	Pepper P	
Extraneous matter, % (<i>m/m</i>) max.	2,5	1,5	ISO 927
Light berries, % (<i>m/m</i>) max.	10	5,0	Annex A
Pinheads or broken berries, % (<i>m/m</i>) max.	7,0	4,0	Physical separation and weighing
Bulk density, g/l, min.	450	490	Annex B

NOTE In addition, especially in the case of ground pepper, it is recommended that a microscopic examination be carried out (see annex D).

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Table 2 — Chemical requirements of black pepper, whole or ground

Characteristics	Requirements			Reference test method
	Pepper NP or SPT	Pepper P	Ground pepper	
Moisture content, % (<i>m/m</i>) max.	13,0	13,0	13,0	ISO 939
Total ash, % (<i>m/m</i>) max., on dry basis	7,0	6,0	6,0	ISO 928
Non-volatile ether extract, % (<i>m/m</i>) min., on dry basis	6,0	6,0	6,0	ISO 1108
Volatile oils, % (ml/100 g) min., on dry basis	2,0	2,0	1,0*	ISO 6571
Piperine content, % (<i>m/m</i>) min., on dry basis	4,0	4,0	4,0	ISO 5564
Acid-insoluble ash, % (<i>m/m</i>) max., on dry basis	—	—	1,2	ISO 930
Crude fibre, insoluble index, % (<i>m/m</i>) max., on dry basis	—	—	17,5	ISO 5498

* The volatile oil content should be determined immediately after grinding.

8 Packing and marking

8.1 Packing

Whole black pepper and ground black pepper shall be packed in clean, sound, dry packages, made of material which does not affect the product but which protects it from the ingress of moisture or loss of volatile matter.

The packaging shall also comply with any national legislation relating to environmental protection.

8.2 Marking

The following particulars shall be marked on each package or on a label attached to the package:

- a) name of the product and the tradename, if any;
- b) name and address of the manufacturer or packer, or trademark;
- c) code or batch number;
- d) net mass;
- e) commercial stage (NP or SP or P);
- f) producing country;
- g) destination, i.e. the name of port or town;
- h) any other information requested by the buyer, such as the year of harvest and the date of packaging;
- i) reference to this part of ISO 959.

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Annex A (normative)

Determination of percentage of light berries in black pepper

A.1 Reagent

A.1.1 Alcohol-water solution, of relative density $d_{20}^{20} = 0,80$ to $0,82$.

If the temperature is different from 20 °C , a correction factor shall be used.

The alcohol used in the preparation of this solution can be ethanol, denatured alcohol previously rectified, or propan-2-ol.

A.2 Procedure

A.2.1 Test portion

Weigh, to the nearest $0,01\text{ g}$, $50,0\text{ g}$ of sample, from which the extraneous matter has been previously removed, into a 600 ml glass beaker.

A.2.2 Determination

Add 300 ml of the alcohol-water solution (A.1.1) to the glass beaker and mix the contents with a spoon. Leave the product standing for 2 min , then remove the floating berries with the spoon. Only berries floating on the surface shall be removed and not those that remain in suspension some distance below the surface of the alcohol-water solution. Repeat the stirring, standing and removal operations until no more berries float after two successive stirrings.

Dry the berries removed on blotting paper to eliminate the excess liquid, then spread them in dry air on a piece of paper, textile or other absorbent material. Leave the berries for 1 h , then weigh to the nearest $0,01\text{ g}$.

A.3 Expression of results

The percentage by mass of light berries in the sample is equal to

$$\frac{m_1}{m_0} \times 100\%$$

where

m_0 is the mass, in grams, of the test portion;

m_1 is the mass, in grams, of the light berries removed.

Annex B (normative)

Whole black pepper: Determination of apparent bulk density

B.1 Scope

This annex specifies a method for the determination of the apparent bulk density of whole black pepper.

B.2 Principle

Weighing a volume, exactly measured, of 1 litre of pepper.

B.3 Apparatus

B.3.1 Apparatus for measuring bulk density, consisting of

- **cylinder**, of capacity 1 litre, or a cylinder of greater capacity but equipped with apparatus allowing levelling of the product to the 1 litre level;
- **hopper**, of capacity greater than 1 litre and equipped with a gate;
- **device**, for fixing the hopper above the cylinder at a certain distance, to allow free fall of the product into the cylinder from a constant height.

Figure B.1 shows an example of such an apparatus.

NOTE This is the apparatus applicable to the reference method. However, for routine control and when the apparatus described is not available, it is possible to use a cylinder of 1 litre capacity and a funnel.

B.3.2 Balance

A special balance allowing the cylinder to be hooked to one side of the beam and equipped on the other side with a suitable plate serving as tare.

B.4 Procedure

B.4.1 Determination

Weigh the empty cylinder, if necessary.

Place the cylinder on a horizontal plane and set the hopper on it with a fixing device.

Pour the pepper into the hopper until it is filled. Open the gate and allow the pepper berries to flow freely into the cylinder until the level slightly exceeds the upper level or the 1 litre level, according to the apparatus used.

Level the pepper, according to the case, to the upper level of the cylinder with a ruler, or to the 1 litre level with a suitable device with which the cylinder is equipped. In the latter case, remove the excess berries.

Remove the hopper and its support, then weigh the cylinder filled with the pepper.