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**Priests (caper) (*Capparis* spp.) —  
Specification and test methods**

*Câpriers (Capparis spp.) — Spécifications et méthodes  
d'essai*

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ISO copyright office  
CP 401 • Ch. de Blandonnet 8  
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva  
Phone: +41 22 749 01 11  
Fax: +41 22 749 09 47  
Email: [copyright@iso.org](mailto:copyright@iso.org)  
Website: [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)

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## Foreword

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The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 34, *Food products*, Subcommittee SC 3, *Fruits and vegetables and their derived products*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

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## Introduction

Unique, piquant-flavoured capers are the flowering buds of the low-growing caper shrub. The buds are one of the most desired ingredients in kitchens all around the Mediterranean basin. The buds botanically belong to the family of Capparaceae, in the genus *Capparis*. Scientific name: *Capparis spinosa*.

The plant is a spiny, trailing, deciduous shrub native to the Mediterranean. It prefers a warm, humid climate and grows in abundance all over Cyprus, Italy, Greece, North Africa and some Asia Minor regions including Turkey. The shrub begins producing flower (caper) buds from the third year of plantation.

In general, the small cream-coloured buds are gathered by handpicking in the early hours of the morning. If left to bloom, the buds unfold into beautiful, whitish-pink, four-sepal flowers with long tassels of purple stamens. Soon after harvesting, the buds are washed and allowed to wilt in the sun for few hours before they are put into jars and covered with salt, vinegar, brine or olive oil.

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