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

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Foreword

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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.

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

1 Scope

This document specifies requirements and test methods for priests (caper). It includes requirements for caper buds.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 874, *Fresh fruits and vegetables — Sampling*

ISO 2859-1, *Sampling procedures for inspection by attributes — Part 1: Sampling schemes indexed by acceptance quality limit (AQL) for lot-by-lot inspection*

3 Terms and definitions

No terms and definitions are listed in this document.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

4 Description

Capparis ovata Desf. and *Capparis spinosa* L. from the family Capparaceae have a bushy structure and grow in both upright and leaning positions (see [Figure 1](#)).

When the plant creates a bud in the spring, this bud is going to be a flower. If the bud is picked before it becomes a flower, it is called a caper bud.



Figure 1 — Capers

5 Classification and requirements

5.1 General

Caper buds shall be divided into classes according to their quality and diameter (see 5.2).

5.2 Classes

Caper buds are divided into six classes:

- Extra class;
- Class I;
- Class II;
- Class III;
- Class IV;
- outside the class.

5.3 Requirements

5.3.1 General requirements

Caper buds shall be:

- clean and free from visible foreign matter;
- matured to meet the market demand, with a natural colour.

Additionally, caper buds shall be free from:

- abnormal external moisture;
- foreign taste and smell;
- rotten and damaged buds.

5.3.2 Class requirements

The diameters for different classes of caper buds are given in [Table 1](#).

Table 1 — Diameter values according to class requirements

Bud diameter (mm)	Extra class	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Outside the class
	0 to 7,0	7,1 to 8,0	8,1 to 9,0	9,1 to 11,0	11,1 to 13,0	> 13,0

6 Tolerances

6.1 General

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

6.2 Class tolerances

6.2.1 Extra class

Caper buds not meeting the specifications of this class but meeting those of Class I are allowed in up to 5 % in number of each package.

6.2.2 Class I

Caper buds not meeting the specifications of this class but meeting those of Class II are allowed in up to 10 % in number of each package.

6.2.3 Class II

Caper buds not meeting the specifications of this class but meeting those of Class III are allowed in up to 10 % in number of each package.

6.2.4 Class III

Caper buds not meeting the specifications of this class but meeting those of Class IV are allowed in up to 10 % in number of each package.

6.2.5 Class IV

Caper buds not meeting the specifications of this class but meeting the general specifications are allowed in up to 10 % in number of each package.