
UNECE STANDARD DDP-17

concerning the marketing and
commercial quality control of

CASHEW KERNELS

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NOTE

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards

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The revised standard for cashew kernels is based on document ECE/CTCS/WP.7/2023/19, reviewed and adopted by the Working Party at its seventy-eighth session in 2023.

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Please contact us at the following address with any comments or enquiries:

Agricultural Standards Unit
Economic Cooperation and Trade Division
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland
Email: agrstandards@un.org

UNECE Standard DDP-17 concerning the marketing and commercial quality control of cashew kernels

I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to cashew kernels obtained by heating, shelling and peeling the true fruits of the cashew tree *Anacardium occidentale* (L.). This standard does not apply to cashew kernels that are processed by salting, sugaring, flavouring, roasting or oil frying or to cashew kernels for industrial processing.

Cashew kernels may be presented in one of the following styles:

- Whole: whole kernels of characteristic shape, with more than 7/8th of the kernel intact. Kernels with no more than one eighth of kernel broken off are considered as whole.
- Broken: kernels where one eighth or more of the original kernel is broken off. Designations of broken as follows:
 - Butts: kernels of not less than 3/8th of a whole kernel, which have been broken crosswise, but the cotyledons are still naturally attached.
 - Splits: kernels split lengthwise naturally, provided that no more than one eighth is broken off.
 - Pieces: kernels, which have broken into more than two pieces.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements of cashew kernels after preparation and packaging.

However, if applied at stages following export or dispatch, the holder/seller shall be responsible for observing the requirements of the standard. The holder/seller of products may not display such products or offer them for sale, or deliver or market them in any manner other than in conformity with this standard.

A. Minimum requirements¹

In all classes, subject to the special provisions for each class and the tolerances allowed, the cashew kernels must display the following characteristics observed by the naked eye or corrected 20/20 vision² when appropriate:

- intact; the presence of a small hole at the proximal end of the whole kernel or a central split or crack is not considered a defect
- sound; produce affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for human consumption is excluded
- free from damage affecting the appearance of the produce
- clean; practically free of any visible foreign matter
- free from living pests, whatever their stage of development

¹ Definitions of terms and defects are listed in Annex III of the Standard Layout – Recommended terms and definitions of defects for standards of dry (inshell nuts and nut kernels) and dried produce <https://unece.org/trade/wp7/DDP-Standards>.

² Loupe, binocular or other magnifying equipment should not be used when assessing defects.

- free from damage caused by pests, including the presence of dead insects and/or mites, their debris or excreta
- free from mould filaments
- free from rancidity
- free from spots in aggregate in excess of 3 mm in diameter or 7 mm² on the kernels
- free from blemishes and areas of discoloration or spread stains in pronounced contrast with the rest of the kernel
- free from adhering testa exceeding an aggregated area of 6 mm in diameter or shell liquid
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of foreign smell and/or taste.

The condition of the cashew kernels must be such as to enable them:

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

B. Moisture content³

Cashew kernels shall have a moisture content not exceeding 5.0 per cent.

C. Classification

In accordance with the defects allowed in section “IV. Provisions concerning tolerances”, cashew kernels are classified into the following classes:

“Extra” Class, Class I, and Class II.

<i>Class</i>	<i>Commercial designation</i>	<i>Description</i>
“Extra”	“white”	white, pale ivory, pale ash-grey, light yellow
Class I	“scorched” or “lightly blemished”	light brown, light ivory, light ash-grey, deep ivory, yellow
Class II	“scorched seconds” or “dessert”	light brown, amber, light blue, deep brown, deep blue, discoloured, spotted, immature, shrivelled, blemished, and stained kernels are permitted.

The defects allowed must not affect the general appearance of the produce as regards quality, keeping quality and presentation in the package.

III. Provisions concerning sizing

Sizing is mandatory in “Extra” Class, but optional for Class I and Class II. Designation of sizes is as follows:

³ The moisture content is determined by Method 1 and/or 2 in Annex II of the Standard Layout for UNECE Standards on Dry and Dried Produce. The laboratory reference method shall be used in cases of dispute.

Whole

<i>Size code or count</i>	<i>Maximum number of kernels per pound</i>	<i>Maximum number of kernels per kilogram</i>
150	150	325
180	180	395
210	210	465
240	240	530
320	320	706
450	450	990
500	500	1100

Pieces

<i>Designation/Size code</i>	<i>Minimum size</i>
Large pieces	not passing through a sieve of aperture 4.75 mm
Small pieces	not passing through a sieve of aperture 2.80 mm
Very small pieces	not passing through a sieve of aperture 2.36 mm
“Baby bits” or “granules”	not passing through a sieve of aperture 1.70 mm

IV. Provisions concerning tolerances

At all marketing stages, tolerances in respect of quality and size shall be allowed in each lot for produce not satisfying the minimum requirements of the class indicated.

<i>Defects allowed</i>	<i>Tolerances allowed, percentage of defective produce, by number or weight</i>		
	<i>“Extra”</i>	<i>Class I</i>	<i>Class II</i>
(a) Tolerances for cashew kernels not satisfying the minimum requirements	6	9	12
of which no more than:			
Not sufficiently developed, shrunken or shrivelled	1	2	*
Mould, rancidity, decay	0.5	1	1
Damage by pests	0.5	1	1
Living pests	0	0	0
Superficial damage,** spotted (whole kernels only)	1	2	5
Adhering testa	3	3	5
(b) Size tolerances, if sized			
For produce not conforming to the size indicated, in total:			
Wholes (by number)	10	10	10
Pieces (by weight) (smaller sizes)	10	10	10
(c) Tolerances for other defects			
Broken kernels (butts, splits and pieces) in wholes	10	10	10
Pieces in butts/splits	10	10	10
Kernels of a colour of the next lower class	5	5	—
Foreign matter; and extraneous matter such as loose shell fragments, loose testa fragments, dust (by weight)	0.1	0.1	0.1

* Tolerance is not applicable, shrivelled kernels are permitted, as per description in the classification.

** Damages on the surface of the kernel not exceeding an area of 8 mm² and a depth of 2 mm.

V. Provisions concerning presentation

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package⁴ must be uniform and contain only cashew kernels of the same origin,⁵ quality, style and size (if sized).

The visible part of the contents of the package must be representative of its entire contents.

B. Packaging

Cashew kernels must be packed in such a way as to protect the produce properly.

The materials used inside the package must be clean and of a quality such as to avoid causing any external or internal damage to the produce. Cashew kernels must be packed in hermetically sealed containers. 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.

Packages must be practically free of all foreign and extraneous matter in accordance with the table of tolerances in section “IV. Provisions concerning tolerances”.

VI. Provisions concerning marking

Each package⁶ must bear the following particulars in letters grouped on the same side, legibly and indelibly marked and visible from the outside:

A. Identification

Packer and/or dispatcher:

Name and physical address (e.g. street/city/region/postal code and, if different from the country of origin, the country) or a code mark officially recognized by the national authority⁷ if a country applying such a system is listed in the UNECE Code Mark Registry.

B. Nature of produce

- “Cashew kernels”
- Style.

⁴ The term “packages” is defined in Annex III of the Standard Layout for UNECE Standards on Dry and Dried Produce.

⁵ Since the process of deshelling and peeling of inedible raw cashew nuts to produce edible cashew kernels is “significant transformation” the country where the raw cashews are shelled may be designated as country of origin.

⁶ These marking provisions do not apply to sales packages presented in packages.

⁷ The national legislation of a number of countries requires the explicit declaration of the name and address. However, in cases where a code mark is used, the reference “packer and/or dispatcher” (or equivalent abbreviations) must be indicated in close connection with the code mark, and the code mark should be preceded with the ISO 3166 alpha country code of the recognizing country, if not the country of origin.

C. Origin of produce

- Country of origin⁸ and, optionally, district where grown or national, regional or local place name.

D. Commercial specifications

- Class and/or commercial designation
- Size (if sized) expressed in accordance with section III
- Crop year (optional).

E. Official control mark (optional)

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⁸ The full or a commonly used name should be indicated.