



Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards**Seventy-sixth session**

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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce**Prunes * ¹****From 5 October meeting****Submitted by the secretariat**

The following document is submitted to the Working Party for adoption as the UNECE standard for prunes.

This document is submitted according to ECE/CTCS/2019/10 section IV, ECE/CTCS/2019/2 Decision 2019-8.6, and A/75/6 (Sect.20) and supplementary information.

I. Definition of produce

This standard applies to prunes (dried ripe plums) of varieties (cultivars) grown from *Prunus domestica* L. intended for direct consumption or for food when intended to be mixed with other products for direct consumption without further processing. This standard does not apply to prunes that are processed by salting, sugaring, flavouring or roasting or for industrial processing.

Prunes may be presented in one of the following styles:

- Whole, unpitted from which pits have not been removed
- Whole, pitted; from which pits have been removed.

* Pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 19 of the Working Procedures of WP.7 and the intersessional approval procedure, the secretariat - in consultation with the Bureau of the Specialized Section on Standardization of Dry and Dried Produce - informs delegations that this document is open for comments until 28 September 2021.

¹ In some countries "prunes" is used interchangeably with "dried plums". For ease of reading, the word "prunes" is used throughout the text. Anywhere it appears in the standard, the words "dried plums" can be substituted, including in the marking provisions.

II. Provisions concerning quality

The purpose of the standard is to define the quality requirements for prunes 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 requirements²

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

- Without peduncle;
- fleshy, the flesh being elastic and pliable
- sound, produce being affected by rotting or deterioration such as to make it unfit for human consumption is excluded
- clean, practically free from any visible foreign matter
- free from living pests, whatever their stage of development
- free from damage caused by pests, including the presence of dead insects and/or mites, their debris or excreta
- free from damage to skin and/or flesh affecting in aggregate more than 20 mm in diameter such as:
 - callous growth-cracks, occurring at the ends of prunes, scars, splits or breaks
 - splits or breaks exposing a substantial part of the flesh and seriously affecting the appearance of the fruit
 - cracks, splits or breaks down to the stone in unpitted prunes
- free from mould filaments visible to the naked eye
- free of fermentation
- free of abnormal external moisture
- free of foreign smell and/or taste.

The condition of the prunes 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

The prunes shall have a moisture content not exceeding 35.0 per cent.

However, prunes with a moisture content exceeding 35.0 per cent should be labelled as high moisture or equivalent denomination.

² Definitions of terms and defects are listed in Annex III of the Standard Layout — Recommended terms and definition of defects for standards of dry (Inshell Nuts and Nut Kernels) and dried produce. See https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/DDP_StanLayout_2020_e_0.pdf.

³ The moisture content is determined by one of the methods given in Annex I of the Standard Layout — Determination of the moisture content for dried produce. See https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/DDP_StanLayout_2020_e_0.pdf. The laboratory reference method shall be used in cases of dispute.

Prunes may be treated with preservatives or preserved by other means, (e.g. pasteurization).

C. Classification

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

Class I and Class II.

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 of prunes is done by the number of prunes in 500 g or in 1 lb (453 g). These stated designations are not correlated.

Pitted prunes must be sized after pitting.

To ensure uniformity in size, the subsequent tables or the numeral categories must be applied.

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A. Size nomenclature by weight, per count

Table A. Designation per 500 g

Designation	Number of prunes per 500 g	
	Pitted prunes	Unpitted prunes
Super giant	not more than 44	not more than 32
Giant	from 45 to 56	from 33 to 44
Very large	from 57 to 72	from 45 to 55
Large	from 73 to 84	from 56 to 66
Medium	from 85 to 100	from 67 to 77
Small	from 101 to 120	from 78 to 99
Very small	more than 120 prunes	more than 99

Table B. Pitted prunes designation per pound (453g)

Designation	Number of prunes per pound (453 g)
Extra large	not more than 36 to 43 prunes
Large	from 44 to 53 prunes
Medium	from 54 to 67 prunes
Small	from 68 to 85 prunes

B. Numerical categories

Size categories may also be described numerically by the range of average count per 500 g or per pound (453g), for example: 30/40; 35/45; 90/120 etc.

C. “Pressure-pitted prunes”

Sizing of pressure-pitted prunes is optional.

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 characteristics of the class indicated.

Defects allowed (percentages by weight or number).	Unpitted Prunes		Pitted prunes	
	Class I	Class II	Class I	Class II
(a) Tolerance for produce not meeting the minimum requirements	10	15	10	15
of which no more than				
Non-characteristic colour and texture	10	15	10	15
Fermented	1	2	1	2
Damaged by pests ^a	2	4	2	4
Rotten or deteriorated ^a	1	2	0.5	2
of which mouldy ^a (note about reservation of France)	0.5	1	0.5	1
Skin or flesh damage, calluses, heat injury	2	4	2	4
End cracks			8	10
Living pests	0	0	0	0
(b) Size tolerances (if sized)				
For produce not conforming to the size indicated, in total, depending on the characteristics of the product	10	10	10	10
(c) Tolerances for other defects				
Extraneous matter, i.e., stem (attached or pieces), leaves (whole or pieces), by weight)				
Foreign matter such as stones, metal, and glass (by weight)	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Whole pits and pit fragments among pitted fruit			2	2

[Table note text] France does not permit tolerances for produce affected by pest damage, rot and mould.

Deleted: D. Uniformity of size¶
Prunes packed in accordance with the sizing methods established in this standard must be reasonably uniform in size.¶

In a sample of 5 kg of fruit taken from a given consignment, the difference between the number of the smallest prunes and that of the largest prunes per 500 g must not exceed:¶

25 for consignments of prunes of sizes ranging from 45 to 55 prunes per 500 g;¶

35 for consignments of prunes of sizes ranging from 56 to 77 prunes per 500 g;¶

45 for consignments of prunes containing more than 77 prunes per 500 g.¶

The difference is calculated by reference to 10 per cent (by weight) of the sample for the smallest prunes and 10 per cent (by weight) for the largest.¶

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V. Provisions concerning presentation

A. Uniformity

The contents of each package must be uniform and contain only prunes of the same origin, quality, size (if sized), variety (if indicated), and crop year (if indicated).

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

Prunes in Class I must be of the same variety.

B. Packaging

Prunes must be packed in such a way so as to protect the produce properly.

The materials used inside the package must be clean and of a quality so as to avoid causing any external or internal damage to the produce. The use of materials, particularly 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 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 package⁴ 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 authority⁵ if a country applying such a system is listed in the UNECE database.

B. Nature of produce

- name of the produce: the words “prunes”, “dried plums”, “unpitted prunes”, “prunes with pits”, “pitted prunes”, or “pressure-pitted prunes”
- name of the variety (optional)
- high moisture or soft prunes or equivalent denomination and moisture content, where appropriate.

C. Origin of produce

- country of origin⁶ and, optionally, district where grown or the national, regional or local place name

D. Commercial specifications

- class
- size expressed in accordance with the provisions of Section III, either:
 - as the minimum and maximum number of prunes contained in 500g or 1 lb (453 g), by “X/Y prunes per 500 g” “X/Y prunes per pound”; or
 - by the corresponding designation in 500 g or 1 lb (453 g)
- crop year (optional)

⁴ These marking provisions do not apply to sales packages presented in packages.

⁵ 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) has to 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 it is not the country of origin.

⁶ The full name or commonly used name should be given.

- “Best before” followed by the date (optional)/mandatory for high moisture produce
- net weight.

E. Official control mark (optional)