
Labneh — Specification

Table of contents

| | | |
|-------|--|------------------------------|
| 1 | Scope | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 2 | Normative references | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 3 | Terms and definitions | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 3.1 | Labneh | 2 |
| 3.2 | Heat treated Labneh after fermentation | 2 |
| 3.3 | Labneh preserved in oil | 2 |
| 4 | Requirements | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 4.1 | Raw materials | 2 |
| 4.1.1 | Essential raw materials | 2 |
| 4.1.2 | Optional requirements | 2 |
| 4.2 | General requirements | 2 |
| 4.3 | Compositional requirements | 2 |
| 5 | Food Additives | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 6 | Contaminants | 3 |
| 6.1 | Heavy metals | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 6.2 | Mycotoxins | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 6.3 | Pesticide residues | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 6.4 | Veterinary drug residues | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 7 | Hygiene | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 8 | Packaging | |
| 9 | Labelling | Error! Bookmark not defined. |
| 9.1 | Name of food | 3 |
| 9.2 | Declaration of milkfat content | 4 |
| 10 | Methods of sampling | 4 |
| | Bibliography | Error! Bookmark not defined. |

Foreword

The African Organization for Standardization (ARSO) is an African intergovernmental organization established by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the Organization of African Unity (AU) in 1977. One of the fundamental mandates of ARSO is to develop and harmonize African Standards (ARS) for the purpose of enhancing Africa's internal trading capacity, increase Africa's product and service competitiveness globally and uplift the welfare of African communities. The work of preparing African Standards is normally carried out through ARSO technical committees. Each Member State interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), governmental and non-governmental organizations, in liaison with ARSO, also take part in the work.

ARSO Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

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

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ARSO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

This African Standard was prepared by ARSO TC 04: Milk and Milk Products.

© African Organisation for Standardisation 2025 — All rights reserved*

ARSO Central Secretariat
International House 3rd Floor
P. O. Box 57363 — 00200 City Square
NAIROBI, KENYA

Tel. +254-20-2224561, +254-20-3311641, +254-20-3311608

E-mail: arso@arso-oran.org

Web: www.arso-oran.org

* © 2025 ARSO — All rights of exploitation reserved worldwide for African Member States' NSBs.

Copyright notice

This ARSO document is copyright-protected by ARSO. While the reproduction of this document by participants in the ARSO standards development process is permitted without prior permission from ARSO, neither this document nor any extract from it may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form for any other purpose without prior written permission from ARSO.

Requests for permission to reproduce this document for the purpose of selling it should be addressed as shown below or to ARSO's member body in the country of the requester:

© African Organisation for Standardisation 2025 — All rights reserved

ARSO Central Secretariat
International House 3rd Floor
P.O. Box 57363 — 00200 City Square
NAIROBI, KENYA

Tel: +254-20-2224561, +254-20-3311641, +254-20-3311608

E-mail: arso@arso-oran.org
Web: www.arso-oran.org

Reproduction for sales purposes may be subject to royalty payments or a licensing agreement. Violators may be prosecuted.

Labneh — Specification

1 Scope

This African Standard specifying the requirements, sampling and test methods for Labneh cheese intended for direct human consumption or for further processing.

2 Normative references

The following standards are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitute requirements of this Standard. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced standard (including any amendments) shall be applied.

ARS 53, *General Principles of Food Hygiene – Code of practice*

ARS 56, *Labelling of Prepackaged Foods*

ARS 1034, *Dairy Industry-Glossary of terms*

CXS 192, *General Standard for Food Additives*

CXS 193, *General Standard for Contaminants and Toxins in Food and Feed*

ISO 707, *Milk and milk products — Guidance on sampling*

ISO 6579-1, *Microbiology of the food chain — Horizontal method for the detection, enumeration and serotyping of Salmonella — Part 1: Detection of Salmonella spp.*

ISO 6888-1, *Microbiology of the food chain — Horizontal method for the enumeration of coagulase-positive staphylococci (Staphylococcus aureus and other species) — Part 1: Method using Baird-Parker agar medium*

ISO 11290-1, *Microbiology of the food chain — Horizontal method for the detection and enumeration of Listeria monocytogenes and of Listeria spp. — Part 1: Detection method*

ISO 14501, *Milk and milk powder — Determination of aflatoxin M1 content — Clean-up by immunoaffinity chromatography and determination by high-performance liquid chromatography*

ISO 16649-1, *Microbiology of food and animal feeding stuffs — Horizontal method for the enumeration of beta-glucuronidase-positive Escherichia coli — Part 1: Colony-count technique at 44 degrees C using membranes and 5-bromo-4-chloro-3-indolyl beta-D-glucuronide*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions in ARS 1034 and the following shall apply:

3.1

Labneh

fermented milk product obtained from the lactic fermentation (by pure starters of lactic acid bacteria) of milk or pasteurized milk products after partial whey separation had been done with any appropriate method.

3.2

heat-treated Labneh after fermentation

product-treated with appropriate heat (90°C for 30 seconds or equivalent) after fermentation to inhibit the activity of starters and enzymes.

3.3

Labneh preserved in oil

thick, concentrated product in the form of balls preserved in olive oil or any other suitable food oil.

4 Requirements

4.1 Raw materials

Raw materials and ingredients used shall comply with relevant standards.

4.1.1 Essential raw materials

- a) Milk and/or products obtained from milk.
- b) Potable water for use in reconstitution or recombination.
- c) Starter cultures of harmless lactic acid and/or flavour producing bacteria and cultures of other harmless microorganisms.

4.1.2 Optional raw Materials

- a) Sodium chloride.
- b) Gelatine and starch, provided, they are added only in amounts functionally necessary as governed by Good Manufacturing Practice.
- c) Herbs and spices.

4.2 General requirements

Labneh shall:

- a) have a cream or white colour, a soft and smooth body, and good spreadability with little syneresis,
- b) have a clean flavour and slight acidity, and
- c) be free from dirt, foreign matter and without off-flavour and textural defects.

4.3 Compositional requirements

Labneh cheese shall meet the compositional requirements given in Table 1 when tested in accordance with the test methods specified therein. Labneh cheese may be classified as identified in Table 1 and meet the compositional requirements, as shown.

Table 1— Compositional requirements for Labneh cheese

| Parameter | Cheese category | | | Test method |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| | Full fat | Medium fat | Low fat | |
| Milk fat in dry matter, % (m/m) | Min 38 | Min 25% | less than 25 | ISO 23319 |
| Moisture, % (m/m) (max) | 74 | 75 | 78 | ISO 23319 |

5 Food Additives

Food additives may be used and only within the limits specified in General Standard for Food Additives (CXS 192) – 01.2.1.2 Fermented milks (plain), heat-treated after fermentation.

6 Contaminants

6.1 Heavy metals

The products covered by this African Standard shall comply with those maximum limits for metal contaminants specified in CXS 193.

6.2 Mycotoxins

When tested in accordance with ISO 14501, the level of aflatoxin M₁ shall not exceed 0.50 µg/kg.

6.3 Pesticide residues

Pesticide residue limits shall be in accordance with limits set by the Codex Alimentarius Commission for the product.

6.4 Veterinary drug residues

Veterinary drug residue limits shall be in accordance with limits set by the Codex Alimentarius Commission for the product.

7 Hygiene

The products covered by this African Standard shall be produced, prepared and handled in accordance with the provisions of the appropriate sections of ARS 53 and ARS 1036.

Labneh cheese shall be free from microorganisms and products originating from microorganisms in amounts which may represent a hazard to human health.

Labneh cheese shall comply with microbiological limits given in Table 2 when tested in accordance with the methods specified therein.

Table 2 — Microbiological limits for Labneh cheese

| Food Category | Micro-organisms | Sampling plan | | Limits | | Test method reference | |
|--|----------------------------------|---------------|---|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| | | n | c | m | M | | |
| Fermented milks | Salmonella | 5 | 0 | Absence in 25 g | | ISO 6579-1 | On the market during the shelf-life and during handling |
| | Listeria monocytogenes | 5 | 0 | Absence in 25 g | | ISO 11290-1 | On the market during the shelf-life |
| | Coagulase-positive staphylococci | 5 | 0 | 10 cfu/g | 10 ² cfu/g | ISO 6888-1 | On the market during the shelf-life and during handling |
| | Enterobacteriaceae | 5 | 1 | 10 cfu/g | 10 ² cfu/g | ISO 21528-2 | On the market during the shelf-life |
| n = number of units comprising the sample c = number of sample units giving values between m and M m= The level of the required MCR in the product M= Value or level of microbial limit not to be reached or greater than in any unit of the sample | | | | | | | |

8 Packaging

Cheese shall be packaged in suitable food grade containers which will safeguard the hygienic, nutritional, technological, and organoleptic qualities of the product during dispatch, transport and use of the product until the end of its shelf life.

9 Labelling

In addition to the provisions of ARS 56 and ARS 1034, the following specific provisions apply:

9.1 Name of the food

The name of the food shall be Labneh, or “Heat Treated Labneh” for the products heat treated after fermentation, provided that the product is in conformity with this Standard. Where customary in the country of retail sale, alternative spelling may be used.

9.2 Declaration of milk fat content

The milk fat content shall be declared in a manner found acceptable in the country of sale to the final consumer, either (i) as a percentage by mass, (ii) as a percentage of fat in dry matter, or (iii) in grams per serving as quantified in the label provided that the number of servings is stated.

10 Methods of sampling

For checking the compliance with this standard, the methods of sampling contained in ISO 707, shall be used.

Bibliography

EAS 3157, Labneh — Specification