

Specifications for the import of Fruit and Vegetable Preparations, Nuts and Other Parts of Plants

GCC

Range of fruit and vegetable preparations: canned fruits and vegetables, frozen fruits and vegetables, concentrated, pickled or marinated, jams and jellies; packed in cans, glass jars, flexible pouches, plastic bottles/jars and tetra type composite packaging

In 2007, the GCC Food Safety Committee developed a "Guide for Food Import Procedures for the GCC Countries." This guide was meant to unify the applied procedures for clearing food consignments, as well as unify the required import certificates for different types of foods. The intent was to help facilitate the movement of food products within the GCC once customs unification is fully implemented. In 2008, the GCC member countries decided to postpone the application of the guide to further study it to ensure it fully complies with the guidelines of international organizations such as **Codex Alimentarius, the World Animal Health Organization and International Plant Protection Consortium**. The guide is still being reviewed by GCC members.

No import permits are required, however for non-animal origin requirements the specific product requirements for the product range are as follows:

Product	Title of Certificate	Attestation Required on Certificate	Purpose	Requesting Ministry
Fruits and Vegetables	Phytosanitary Certificate	Products are inspected and/or tested according to appropriate official procedures and are considered to be free from quarantine pests specified by importing country .	Food safety	MOA
Processed Foodstuffs	Health Certificate*	Exported products were processed or manufactured under conditions that comply with sanitary and health laws of	Food safety	SFDA

		the exporting country and are fit for human consumption		
--	--	---	--	--

*Health Certificate (paper or electronic) issued by the competent authority in the country of origin or the country of exportation, attesting that the safety (and suitability) of the consignment of food is in accordance with the relevant technical regulations of the GCC (including registration numbers of food establishments).The certificate should include according to the GCC May 2011 draft the following:

“The plant product is fit for human consumption, in accordance with the hygiene requirements of the GCC.”

“The plant product was handled in accordance with the GCC requirements, at an establishment that has been subjected to inspections by the Competent Authority and implements a food safety management system based on HACCP principles or an equivalent system.”

**Phytosanitary Certificate. The certificate should include according to the GCC May 2011 draft the following:

“Plants and plant products are free from quarantine pests and from regulated non quarantine pests, in accordance with the GCC requirements.”

In addition to the general requirements and the general labeling requirements for the GCC please refer to the available GSO standards hereafter for the specific products:

- **GSO Standard No. 1016:1998 on microbiological criteria for food.**(See GSO link below)
- **GSO Standard GSO 150:2007 on expiration periods of food products**
- **GSO Standard No. 640:1996 for jams and jellies**

This standard is concerned with jams, jellies and citrus marmalade. It does not apply to the products containing non-carbohydrate sweeteners or low sugar content intended for special use as diet or other uses, or products intended for industrial use.

- **GSO Standard No. 2133:2011 for grape syrups (dibs)**
- **GSO Standard No. 1813:2007 for date syrup (dibs)**
- **GSO Standard No. 473:2009 for pickled fruits and vegetables**

This Gulf Standard applies to the packed or unpacked pickles fruits and vegetables offered for direct consumption, and do not cover pickled cucumbers, kimchi, table olives, sauerkraut, chutneys and relishes.

- **GSO /Codex Standard No. 2035:2010 for preserved tomatoes**

This Gulf Standard applies the products, as defined in Section 3 below, and offered for direct consumption, including for catering purposes or for repacking if required. This standard also applies to the product when indicated as being intended for further processing. The standard does not include

dried tomatoes and preserved tomatoes containing other vegetables such as pepper and onions in quantities that materially alter the flavor, aroma and taste of the tomato component.

- **GSO Standard No. 1292:2002 for canned mixed vegetables**
- **GSO Standard No. 1057:2002 for tomato concentrates**

The standard is concerned with tomato concentrates and it does not include tomato ketchup, tomato sauce or similar products, which are highly seasoned products of varying concentrations, containing ingredients such as pepper, onions vinegar, sugar, etc., in quantities materially alter the flavor, aroma and taste of the tomato component.

- **GSO Standard No.595:1995 microbiological examination of commercial sterility for canned food**
- **GSO Standard No.1993:2009 for frozen mouloukhia**

This GSO standard is concerned with frozen mouloukhia (*Jew's mallow*) conforming to the characteristics of plant (*corchorus olitoris*) for direct consumption without further processing.

- **GSO Standard No. 1978:2009 for frozen okra**

This standard is concerned with frozen and fresh okra conforming to the characteristics of plant (*Hibiscus esculentus*) and prepared for human consumption

- **GSO Standard No.222:2005 for table olives**
- **GSO Standard No.1865:2008 canned sweet corn**
- **GSO Standard No. 345:1994 for frozen peas**

This standard is concerned with frozen peas of the species *pisum sativum L*, which is offered for direct consumption without further processing except repacking.

- **GSO Standard No.838:1997 canned chickpeas**

The technical regulations and standards of the GCC countries will be used as the primary basis for certification of food shipments by exporting countries. Where deemed appropriate by the GCC, e.g., where current GCC technical regulations and standards are not comprehensive in terms of specific requirements for certain imported foods, the GCC may defer to Codex, OIE (World Organization for Animal Health or the *Office International des Epizooties*) and IPPC (International Plant Protection Convention) standards, guidelines and recommendations as the basis for certification (and other assurances).

Note: The link below permits the access to GSO standards; those standards are not free and can be purchased online.

Useful Links

Gulf Standard Organization (GSO); includes food standards; can purchase standards online.

<http://www.gso.org.sa/standards>

Codex alimentarius standards: many GCC standards match the codex standards, since GCC is a member of the WTO.

http://www.codexalimentarius.net/web/standard_list.do?lang=en