Product Specification for Tørrfisk fra Lofoten

1. Name
Tørrfisk fra Lofoten



2. Description of Tørrfisk fra Lofoten
Tørrfisk fra Lofoten is naturally dried cod/arctic cod (*Gadus morhua*) from Lofoten. The designation includes stockfish which meets the requirements for sorting cf. current industry standard for sorting of stockfish.

The raw material used is cod/arctic cod caught around Lofoten and Vesterålen from January through April. During this time, mature cod from the cold polar waters of the Barents Sea travels to the Vesterålen and Lofoten areas to spawn. This raw material is considered to hold very good quality and is very well suited for producing stockfish.

Tørrfisk fra Lofoten shall have a water content of 16-27%, a protein content of 68-78% and a fat content of approximately 1%.

3. Geographical area
Fish for production of Tørrfisk fra Lofoten is to be caught around Lofoten and Vesterålen, delivered to a landing facility in Lofoten and naturally dried, sorted and packed in Lofoten. Lofoten consists of the municipalities Flakstad, Moskenes, Røst, Vestvågøy, Værøy and Vågan.



4. Proof of product origin

Cod/arctic cod for production of Tørrfisk fra Lofoten shall be caught outside Lofoten and Vesterålen. This is ensured by a statement on the fisherman's contract note denoting in which region/fishing ground the fish is caught, as well as the species.

Proof that the product originated in Lofoten is ensured by labelling the wholesale packaging with, among other things, lot number and the manufacturer's company number.

5. Production method

Raw material:

Tørrfisk fra Lofoten shall be manufactured from cod/arctic cod captured around Lofoten and Vesterålen from January through April.

The fish is to be bled as it is being taken up. In order to ensure thorough bleeding, the fish is to be put in water. The fish is then to be gutted. The incision shall start between the pectoral fins and go down to the anus. Liver, roe and other entrails are to be removed. The flesh must not be damaged. The fish shall be beheaded according to regulations. Then the fish shall be washed in clean water.

Handling and transportation of fish going to Lofoten for hanging shall take place in accordance with current regulations.

Fish landings:

Fish that have been sorted for hanging are to be rinsed thoroughly in clean water before two and two fish of equal size are bound together with for example blocking yarn above the tails. One fish is to be rotated so that the ties are tightened and are well attached around both fish. The fish are to hang in the same direction. After blocking, the fish is to be rinsed again in fresh, running water. The fish is not to be iced. The fish is to be hung as soon as possible after it is caught.

Hanging and drying:

The fish is to be hung to dry on flat racks or piles. The fish are not to hang towards each other or against the rack. The fish is to be inspected after a few days of hanging. Any remnants of liver are to be removed, and fish hanging towards each other are to be separated to prevent hanging spots.

Depending on the weather conditions, the drying process takes from 2-4 months, and intake shall normally take place in May/June. "The fish sound" determines when the fish is fully dried.





Post-drying:
When the fish has been dried on a rack, it is to be taken in and post-dried in a warehouse. The fish is to be stacked on pallets, and with enough space between the pallets for air to circulate and for inspection.

Sorting:
Stockfish of the Prima sorting shall be virtually flawless with a natural shape and open belly, clean neck and belly, no trace of slick formation, without hanging spots or frost damage. Stockfish of the Second sorting can have small, but not significant flaws.

Stockfish is to be sorted into various quality groups according to the current industry standard. Important criteria for further sorting into quality groups are the size and thickness of the fish.



Packing:
Packing of Tørrfisk fra Lofoten shall take place in Lofoten. This is out of consideration for the quality of the end product. Good and correct quality requires that a sorting according to given sorting criteria is done before packing. This sorting requires a specific competence, a competence developed and maintained by the stockfish industry in Lofoten.

Stockfish is to be packed in jute or cardboard.

6. Proof of link
Stockfish has been a very important commodity in Norway for centuries, and up until the mid-1800s it was the most important sales product from Norwegian fish. Thanks to the long shelf life of stockfish, neither distance nor transportation time caused problems. The first regular shipments of stockfish probably went to England in the early 1100s. During this time, the population grew rapidly in both England, Germany and France, and they needed all the additional food they could get. During this time, the church also extended the orders to refrain from eating meat to more days in the year than just Lent, and this contributed strongly to stockfish becoming a significant supplement to the diet in these countries.

Several regulations from the 1300s show that stockfish manufacturing was very significant in Norway during the Middle Ages. Among other things, a regulation from King Haakon V in the year 1313 requires that all litigations in Hålogaland should rest during the fishing of arctic cod from 2 February to 25 March. Also the fact that stockfish was used as currency and displaced butter as land rent, shows the great significance of stockfish manufacturing.

During the 1500s, stockfish was considered Norway's most important export product, and was better paid than grain. The value of stockfish trade is evident from for example statements from 1563, when over 200 small cargo boats participated in the sailing from Lofoten to Bergen. The cargo of approximately 2,000 tons of fish carried by these cargo boats, represented a value of 105,000 daler, which was three times Norway's total state income at the time. During the centuries when stockfish was the most important commodity, three out of four exported round fish came from Lofoten. Most of the stockfish was transported to Bergen for further sale. The annual export of stockfish has been estimated to 4,000 tons in the 1300s, 6,600 tons in the 1600s, 11,000 tons in 1790 and 18,000 tons in 1890. The stockfish production was at its peak during the period 1920-1929 with a 10-year average of 26,600 tons of stockfish. From 1920 to 1981, most of the stockfish was exported to Nigeria, while Italy is the largest export market today.

The natural conditions for stockfish manufacturing in Lofoten are particularly good because in addition to a tremendous influx of mature arctic cod during the Lofoten fishing, there are also particularly favourable climatic conditions for natural drying. This has formed the basis for the development of the manufacturing process and the industry's long culture and history in Lofoten.

The climate in Lofoten from January through April is mild and relatively dry with temperatures from -0.8 °C to +2.2 °C and average precipitation from 132 mm to 108

mm. This makes Lofoten the only place in the world where one has access to raw materials of particularly good quality at a time when the climate is particularly favourable for natural drying for 3-4 months. This ensures high quality stockfish.

Stockfish manufacturing requires good knowledge at all levels in order to obtain good quality. Expertise in manufacturing, quality sorting and market requirements have traditionally been handed down through generations. Until the 1900s, all discarding (quality sorting) of stockfish took place in the export ports, mainly in Bergen. The stockfish discarders (gazelles) had to undergo a 6-year apprenticeship before they could take their exam. Sorting and quality assessment of stockfish was knowledge which historically has been handed down through generations in families and/or in companies. Standardization and determination of normative standards for manufacturing and sorting have come in recent times. Recently, there has also been established discarder training for the industry, which consists of theoretical education as well as practical training in the companies.

Stockfish from cod from Lofoten obtains a higher price in the market than other stockfish from cod, and has a good reputation in the foreign market, especially in Italy.





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