

INFOODS System for describing foods

The International Network for Food Data Systems (INFOODS) also developed a system for describing foods (Truswell et al., 1991 at <http://www.fao.org/wairdocs/AD069E/AD069E00.HTM>). The system provides the possibility to describe foods using free-text descriptors for six major facets: source of food name and descriptive terms; name and identification of the food; description of “single” foods; description of “mixed” foods; customary uses of food (optional), and sampling and laboratory handling of food.

INFOODS SYSTEM FOR DESCRIBING FOODS

A. Source of food name(s) and descriptive terms.

These may be discerned from the food obtained for analysis (visually and/or using label information),
OR taken from a database (hard copy or tape),
OR from a published paper, laboratory report, or thesis,
OR obtained from someone familiar with the food,
OR obtained from a combination of the above sources.

B. Name and identification of the food

1. Name of food in the **national language** of the country (name of the national language)
2. **Local name** of food (name of local language or dialect)
3. **Nearest equivalent name** of this food in English, French, or Spanish.
4. **Country** or area in which sample of food was obtained
5. Food group and code for this food in **database used in the country** (provide database citation)
6. Food group and code for food in **regional nutrient database (provide database citation)**
7. **Codex Alimentarius** or INFOODS food indexing group

Compare food against definitions of “single” and “mixed” (multi-ingredient) foods.
For “single” food, answer Section C.
For “mixed” food or if uncertain, answer Section D.

C. Description of “single” foods

1.
 - a) **Food source** (in English, French, or Spanish)
 - b) Scientific name of food source (Latin)
 - c) Variety, breed, or strain
2. **Part** of plant or animal
3. **Country** or area of origin
4. **Manufacturer's name** and address. Batch or lot number
5. Other **ingredients** (including additives)
6. Food **processing and/or preparation**; where processed/prepared
7. **Preservation** method
8. **Degree of cooking**
9. **Agricultural production** conditions
10. **Maturity** or ripeness
11. **Storage** conditions
12. **Grade**
13. **Container** and food contact surface
14. **Physical state**, shape, or form
15. **Colour**
16. **Other descriptors** not covered above
17. Availability and location of **photograph** or drawing of this food

D. Description of “mixed” (multi-ingredient) foods

1. **Ingredients** and quantities if available; source of ingredient information
2. **Recipe** procedure
3. **Place** where multi-ingredient food was made
4. Availability and location of **photograph** or picture
5. **Manufacturer's** name and address
6. **Container** and food contact surface
7. **Preservation** method
8. **Storage** conditions
9. **Final preparation** of this multi-ingredient food

E. Customary uses of food

Optional for single or mixed foods

1. Typical **portion** weight and corresponding household measure or size
2. **Availability; frequency and season** of consumption
3. Usual **place of food in the diet** (time of day, place in meal, etc.)
4. Food **users**
5. Specific **purposes** of the food; special claims

The next section is essential information regarding all foods. It may be coupled with the numerical component data or with the food name.

F. Sampling and laboratory handling of food

1. Date of collection
2. Weight(s) of sample(s)
3. Percentage edible portion; nature of edible portion
4. Percentage of refuse; nature of refuse
5. Place of collection: supplier(s) and type of outlet(s)
6. Handling between supplier and laboratory
7. Handling on arrival at laboratory
8. Laboratory storage and subsequent handling
9. Strategy for analyses
10. Reason for doing analyses