

# **TECHNICAL FILE SETTING OUT THE SPECIFICATIONS WITH WHICH IRISH CREAM MUST COMPLY**

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## 1. Name and category of spirit drink including the geographical indication:

### 1.1. Name:

Irish Cream

### 1.2. Category of spirit drink:

Liqueur (category 32 in Annex II to Regulation (EC) No 110/2008).

### 1.3. Description of Irish Cream:

Blend of fresh Irish dairy cream in a flavoured/sweetened alcohol base containing Irish Whiskey and other permitted ingredients.

## 2. Principal physical, chemical and/or organoleptic characteristics:

### 2.1. Product specification:

Irish Cream is a spirit drink with a minimum alcohol by volume of 15% v/v. They are only produced on the island of Ireland including Northern Ireland and consist of stable emulsions of fresh Irish dairy cream in a flavoured and sweetened alcohol base, and which contain Irish whiskey as defined by the Irish Whiskey Act, 1980 and its amendments and the technical file under Regulation (EC) No 110/2008.

### 2.2. Appearance:

The spirit drink is cream coloured and its hue can vary depending on specific flavours and ingredients. The product has a homogenous and smooth consistency providing a stable emulsion without appearances of physical instability during its commercial shelf-life.

The dairy cream in addition to the process of homogenisation of the cream liqueur, which occurs during production, confers a smooth texture and perceptibly pleasant mouth-feel whilst, on imbibing, the gradual melting of the butter-fat over time delivers a progressive release of the flavour compounds present and improves sensory perceptions during consumption.

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## 2.3. Compositional Standards:

### 2.3.1. Dairy Content:

Irish Cream liqueur shall contain a minimum of 10% milk fat when measured on a weight/volume basis in the final product. The milk fat content in Irish Cream liqueur shall consist of fresh Irish dairy cream produced on the island of Ireland including Northern Ireland from Irish milk obtained on the island of Ireland including Northern Ireland and which complies with Council Regulation 2597/97 as amended. Cream means that part of the cow's milk which is rich in fat, and which has been separated by skimming or otherwise and obtained from milk. It shall be pasteurised but shall not be sterilised, UHT treated or frozen.

### 2.3.2. Alcohol Content:

The minimum alcoholic strength of Irish Cream is 15% v/v which is obtained by the use of ethyl alcohol of agricultural origin or from distillates of agricultural origin. A portion of the final alcohol content will arise by reason of the presence of Irish whiskey and additionally any alcohol of agricultural origin present in the flavours used in the production of Irish Cream.

### 2.3.3. Irish Whiskey content:

The alcohol content of Irish Cream shall contain a minimum of 1% of Irish Whiskey. Such whiskey must comply with the requirements specified in the Irish Whiskey Act, 1980 and any subsequent amendments and the technical file under Regulation No 110/2008.

### 2.3.4. Sweetening / Sugar use:

Irish Cream has a minimum sugar content, expressed as invert sugar, of 100 grams per litre. This sugar can be in the form of any one or any combination of more than one sweetener as permitted in Annex I of Regulation 110/2008.

### 2.3.5. Other Ingredients

The flavours, emulsifiers, stabilisers, chelating agents and colours contained in the product shall be those permitted for use in food or alcoholic beverages by legislation.

### 2.3.6. Final Composition:

The final product shall embrace the characteristics, taste and properties of Irish Cream Liqueur. Irish Cream Liqueur cannot be produced in concentrated form for future reconstitution in a secondary location off the island of Ireland.

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### 3. Definition of the geographical area concerned:

Production of Irish Cream must take place in the geographical area of the island of Ireland.



### 4. The method for obtaining the spirit drink:

Irish Cream Liqueur consists of a mixture of fresh Irish dairy cream, alcohol, together with sugar and/or honey or other sweetening agent (carbohydrates, flavourings and other ingredients) and contains Irish Whiskey. The levels and percentage of each ingredient present may vary, thus contributing to brand individuality.

There are two methods for the production of Irish Cream.

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## 4.1. Method 1 – ‘Single Stage’

- i. Initial spirit premix – preparation includes the combining of alcohol, carbohydrates, water and also usually flavourings and colourings;
- ii. Second premix - sometimes termed a *protein premix*, is prepared by:
  - a) Dissolving citric acid (or its salt) and dairy protein and/or other natural proteins, in water. Further emulsifiers may be added to better reinforce the dairy emulsifier.
  - b) Mixing this thoroughly with Irish dairy cream.
- iii. The product mixture is finally prepared by mixing the *initial spirit premix* with the *second/protein premix*.
- iv. *The complete* product mixture is *homogenised* so that the average particle size of the cream globule is reduced to less than 5 microns, preferably less than 2 microns.

The addition of dairy protein and/or other natural proteins, which together act as emulsifiers to the dairy cream, is an essential part of the production process as effective emulsification imparts shelf life to Irish Cream by protecting the dairy cream from the otherwise adverse effects of the alcohol present.

## 4.2. Method 2 – ‘Two Stage Process’

- i. A protein premix, is prepared by:
  - a) Dissolving citric acid (or its salt) and dairy protein, and/or other natural proteins, in water. Further emulsifiers may be added to better reinforce the dairy emulsifier.
  - b) Mixing this thoroughly with Irish dairy cream.
- ii. The mixture is homogenised so that the average particle size of the cream globule is reduced to less than 5 microns, preferably less than 2 microns.
- iii. The spirit premix is prepared and includes the combining of alcohol, carbohydrates, water, and also usually flavourings and colourings;
- iv. The spirit premix is subsequently added to the homogenised mixture outlined in point ii above.

## 4.3. Differences between the two methods

The difference in the two processes consequently lies in the fact that in the single stage process all ingredients are homogenized while, in the two stage process, only the dairy and emulsified portions are homogenised.

Both processes outlined above are designed to ensure effective emulsification of the milk fat globule and the subsequent reduction of the emulsified milk fat globule particle size to ensure that the criteria of Stokes’ Law are optimised in the final product. The creation of these properties consequently ensures that the normally incompatible mixture of Irish dairy cream and alcohol will remain stable for the appropriate commercial shelf life.

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## 4.4. Bottling

Irish Cream is manufactured on the island of Ireland. Bottling may take place outside the island. Any bottling taking place outside of the island will be subject to company controls and official verification, which will ensure the products' safety and integrity. When bottled outside of Ireland, the label must say so – expressed as 'Bottled in \_\_\_\_\_'.

## 5. Details bearing out the link with the geographical environment or the geographical origin:

Three elements form the basis for the claim for a Geographical Indication for Irish Cream.

### 5.1 Irish Dairy Cream

Irish Cream Liqueur must contain fresh Irish dairy cream coming from Irish milk which complies with Council regulation 2597/97 of 18 December 1997 or equivalent. Irish milk is milk produced on the island of Ireland including Northern Ireland.

Since the unique Irish seasonal and cattle herd husbandry practices affect milk and milk-fat characteristics, the use of this ingredient imparts distinctive quality and organoleptic properties to the final product.

Irish dairy products have intrinsic characteristics due to Ireland's geographic location and its climatic seasonality, giving such products a number of unique characteristics. As an island washed by the Gulf Stream, Ireland experiences a much more moderate climate than it might otherwise expect at this latitude. In consequence, the resulting climate is uniquely suited for grass production. The seasonality of grass production affects cattle feeding patterns and other major aspects of animal husbandry, such as the particularly extensive reliance on grass as a natural feedstuff. All these circumstances make Ireland uniquely suited to the production of dairy produce with consistent and superior quality.

### 5.2 Irish Whiskey

The unique, intrinsic qualities of the product are enhanced by its Irish Whiskey content, which must be used in the production of Irish Cream. Irish Whiskey is a Geographical Indication and is a distinctive whiskey which has flavours that develop as a result of the use of Irish grain, water and maturation in wooden casks on the island of Ireland for a minimum of three years. The creation of Irish whiskey is a highly skilled process and requires the individual experience and expertise of the Distiller, stillman and blender to ensure the finest, high quality whiskey is produced.

### 5.3 Production Techniques

The technique of creating cream liqueurs was developed in Ireland. The creative combination of fresh Irish dairy cream, spirits and Irish Whiskeys proved an instant hit among consumers.



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This success resulted in other producers around the world replicating the technique to produce similar products. Irish Cream, as the original, continues to be the most popular product within the liqueur category.

The original adoption, subsequent optimisation and commercialisation of the production techniques in Ireland further supports the Geographical Indication claim for Irish Cream.

## 6. Requirements laid down by Community and/or national provisions and/or regional:

- 6.1. *Spirit Drinks*: Regulation (EC) No. 110/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15th January 2008, Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 716/2013 of 25 July 2013 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EC) No 110/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the definition, description, presentation, labelling and the protection of geographical indications of spirit drinks. National legislation enforcing these including SI No 429/2009 – European Communities (Spirits Drinks) Regulation 2009 amended by SI No 118 of 2013 European Communities (Spirit Drinks) (Amendment) Regulation 2013 and any subsequent amendment or replacements.
- 6.2. *Milk*: REGULATION (EU) No 1308/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 establishing a common organisation of the markets in agricultural products and repealing Council Regulations (EEC) No 922/72, (EEC) No 234/79, (EC) No 1037/2001 and (EC) No 1234/2007
- 6.3. *Cream*: Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1898/87 of 2 July 1987 (amended by Commission Regulation (EEC) no 222/88 and Council Decision 95/1/EC)
- 6.4. *Whiskey*: Irish Whiskey Act 1980
- 6.5. *Colours*. Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of 16th December 2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on food additives and amendments. And Commission Regulation (EU) No 231/2012 of 9 March 2012 laying down specifications for food additives listed in Annexes II and III to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council and amendments.
- 6.6. *Sweeteners*: Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of The European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on food additives and amendments. And Commission Regulation (EU) No 231/2012 of 9 March 2012 laying down specifications for food additives listed in Annexes II and III to Regulation (EC) No 1333/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council and amendments.
- 6.7. *Hygiene and Food Safety*: Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004, amending Regulations (EC) 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002, *Commission Regulation (EC) No 1019/2008 of 17 October 2008. And Regulation (EC) No 219/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2009.*
- 6.8. *Labelling Advertising and Presentation of Foodstuffs*: Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers, amending Regulations (EC) No 1924/2006 and (EC) No 1925/2006, of the European Parliament and the Council, and repealing Commission Directive 87/250/EEC, Council Directive 90/496/EEC, Commission Directive 1999/10/EC, Directive 2000/13/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council, Commission Directives 2002/67/EC and 2008/5/EC and Commission regulation (EC) No 608/2004.

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6.9. *Flavouring*: Regulation (EC) No 1334/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on flavourings and certain food ingredients with flavouring properties for use in and on foods and amending Regulation (EC) No 1601/91 of the Council, Regulations (EC) No 2232/96 and (EC) No 110/2008 and Directive 2000/13/EC.

## 7. Name and address of Applicant:

### 7.9. Applicant name:

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

### 7.10. Address:

Food Industry Development Division  
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine  
Agriculture House  
Kildare Street  
Dublin 2  
Ireland

## 8. Official controls

Controls on Irish Cream are based on meeting legislative requirements, implementing quality control systems and ongoing systems supervision of the control of the Geographical Indication “Irish Cream” by the competent authorities.

Verification of compliance with the provision of this technical file in the Member State’s Ireland the United Kingdom will be carried out respectively by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Her Majesty’s Revenue and Customs..

### 8.1 Competent authorities

Irish Cream is an island of Ireland geographical indication. The two Departments responsible for geographical indications in the two jurisdictions are:

- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Agriculture House, Kildare Street, Dublin 2, IRELAND;
- Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Areas 7 E Millbank. C/o Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London SW1P 3JR, UNITED KINGDOM

## 9. Supplemental information:

### 9.9. History:

Irish Cream is a relatively recent addition to the pantheon of traditional Irish drinks. Indeed when they were first unveiled in Dublin in 1974, Irish Cream created a novel category of spirit drinks. The combination of fresh Irish dairy cream, spirits and Irish whiskey has proven to be

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extremely popular and Irish Cream Liqueurs have contributed substantially to the global growth of the liqueur sector.

## 9.2 Economics and exports:

Irish Cream Liqueurs are very valuable to numerous and varied sectors of the Irish economy but most particularly to the Irish dairy industry. Approximately 350 million litres of fresh Irish milk are required annually to produce Irish Cream Liqueur.

Apart from the direct value of the huge export of Irish Cream, the added-value of the procurement of quality Irish raw materials and premium packaging currently accounts for a major contribution to our national economy. It is estimated that currently Irish Cream Liqueur is the largest contributor to Irish beverage exports with over 270 hundred thousand bottles being produced daily. Over 90% of Irish Cream is exported.

Many employment opportunities were created in Irish Cream plants and also in the factories and processing plant of their suppliers.

## 10. Specific Labelling Rules

Irish Cream Liqueurs must bear the sales denomination “Irish Cream Liqueur” or “Irish Cream”. The compulsory sales denomination (the relevant category description) must:

- Appear on the front of the bottle and on packaging or materials used for display purposes during the marketing of Irish Cream ;
- Be prominent, printed in a conspicuous place in such a way as to be easily visible and legible to the naked eye and indelible so that it is clear that it is the sales description of the liqueur;
- Be printed in a way that gives equal prominence to each word making up the name of the category;
- Be as prominent as any other description of the liqueur on the container or packaging.

The compulsory sales denomination must not be:

- Overlaid or interrupted by other written or pictorial matter
- Used in conjunction with any other words.

Spirit drinks must not be labelled, packaged, sold, advertised or promoted in such a way to suggest they are Irish Cream Liqueur unless they meet the relevant requirements set out in the technical file.

Irish Cream is a geographical indication. The geographical link is supported by the presence of Irish dairy cream, Irish Whiskey and the creation of the category on the island of Ireland. In the context of a reference to the geographical indication status, a reference to Irish Whiskey content which includes details of other alcohol content can be made.