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TECHNICAL DATA SHEET

VANILLA BEANS – GOURMET / RED GRADE EUROPE / RED GRADE US

Vanilla planifolia Andrews (Bourbon vanilla)

1. PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION

Parameter	Specification
Product Name	Vanilla Beans – Gourmet / Red Grade Europe / Red Grade US
Botanical Name	Vanilla planifolia Andrews (Bourbon vanilla)
Family	Orchidaceae
Country of Origin	Madagascar
Part Used	Cured whole pods (beans)
Process	Hand-pollinated, traditional Bourbon curing: blanching, sweating, sun-drying, conditioning
Grades Covered	Gourmet, Red Grade Europe, Red Grade US (see Sections 3–4)
HS Code	0905.10 (neither crushed nor ground)

2. DESCRIPTION

Whole cured vanilla pods (Vanilla planifolia, "Bourbon" type), hand-pollinated and cured according to the traditional Madagascar Bourbon method. Product is free from additives, artificial flavouring and irradiation.

Three grades are offered, differentiated mainly by moisture content, texture and intended use: Gourmet (whole, supple, high-moisture beans for retail and fine pastry), Red Grade Europe and Red Grade US (drier, more brittle extraction-grade beans, sorted to the target moisture conventionally required by each destination market).

3. ORGANOLEPTIC CHARACTERISTICS

Parameter	Gourmet	Red Grade Europe	Red Grade US
Appearance	Whole, plump, unsplit, glossy/oily	Thinner pods, some splits and surface blemishes accepted	Thinner pods, more brittle, splits and blemishes accepted
Color	Black to dark chocolate-brown, uniform	Reddish-brown	Reddish-brown, often darker/duller than Europe grade
Texture	Supple, fleshy, oily to the touch	Semi-supple, firmer and drier than Gourmet	Firm to brittle; may crack when bent
Aroma	Rich, deep, characteristic sweet vanilla note	Intense, slightly more concentrated	Intense, concentrated

Villa Martin 25 Rue Labigorn | Cité Duplex Pile 32/12 | 501 Toamasina – Madagascar

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4. PHYSICAL & CHEMICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Parameter	Gourmet	Red Grade Europe	Red Grade US
Moisture Content	30 – 35%	25 – 28%	21 – 24%
Vanillin Content (dry basis)	min. 1.3% (up to 2%)	min. 1.6% (up to 2.2%)	min. 1.6% (up to 2.2%)
Length	13 – 18 cm	13 – 18 cm	13 – 18 cm
Split Rate	Whole, unsplit only	Splits and cuts accepted	Whole pods, extraction grade (no cut pieces)
Recommended Use	Retail, fine pastry, visible-bean applications	Extraction, flavoring, food industry (EU moisture convention)	Extraction – whole pods for the US market (US moisture convention)

Red Grade Europe and Red Grade US are both extraction-grade beans of comparable aromatic potency; they differ primarily in target moisture content, reflecting the conventional import/curing requirement of each destination market. Length is given as a standard range and can be adjusted to the buyer's requirement upon request.

5. PACKAGING

Gourmet: vacuum-packed in food-grade PE/PA pouches, standard net weight 1 kg (alternative formats and tins available on request).

Red Grade Europe / Red Grade US: packed in cartons, net weight 20 kg, with food-grade paraffined paper lining between the vanilla beans and the carton. Numbered by lot. Palletization available on request.

6. STORAGE CONDITIONS

Gourmet: keep vacuum-sealed in a cool place (below 15°C recommended), away from direct sunlight and humidity. Once opened, re-seal promptly and refrigerate to preserve moisture and prevent mold.

Red Grade Europe / Red Grade US: keep cartons closed in a cool, dry, well-ventilated place, away from direct sunlight and humidity.

7. SHELF LIFE

Gourmet: 36 months, vacuum-sealed, under recommended storage conditions.

Red Grade Europe / Red Grade US: 24 months in original carton packaging, under recommended storage conditions.

8. REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

This product is intended to comply with:

- ISO 5565-1:1999 – Vanilla – Part 1: Specification (reference standard)
- ISO 5565-2:1999 – Vanilla – Part 2: Test methods (reference standard)
- Regulation (EC) No. 396/2005 and subsequent amendments regarding Maximum Residue Levels (MRLs) for pesticides
- Regulation (EC) No. 2073/2005 on microbiological criteria for foodstuffs
- Non-GMO, non-irradiated, 100% natural whole vanilla beans – no additives, no artificial flavouring

Note: moisture and vanillin content are indicative ranges compiled from Madagascar export-market benchmarking, pending confirmation against 501 Spices' own batch analysis. Microbiological parameters and heavy-metal/pesticide residue results are available on request, per shipment, based on the Certificate of Analysis (COA) issued for each lot.