

# HOW DO SPECIALTY FOOD INGREDIENTS AND THEIR MANUFACTURERS CONTRIBUTE TO THE SAFETY AND CONVENIENCE OF FOOD?

## What are specialty food ingredients?

Specialty food ingredients typically preserve, texture, emulsify, colour, help processing and add an extra health dimension to produced food. They are all key to guarantee the wide range of processed foods as offered today to the consumer. With their technological, nutritional and health related functions they make the food tasty, pleasant to eat, safe, sustainable, healthy and affordable.

## Position of specialty food ingredients industries in the food chain



## Specialty food ingredients are an essential part of a wide range of the food products we take for granted these days

Our way of life has thoroughly changed in the last few decades. Activities away from the home have reduced the amount of time consumers spend in the kitchen. The use of specialty food ingredients, combined with innovative food technology, has made possible the large scale preparation of good wholesome food at economical prices.

Thanks to specialty food ingredients we also have access to many convenience foods such as dry sauce mixes, instant mashed potato and instant desserts as well as prepared dishes and snacks.

Considerable progress has been made in the area of health and nutrition. The preparation of foods such as margarine containing poly-unsaturated fats and many low-calorie products would be impossible without using specialty food ingredients.

Indeed, there is a whole range of different ingredients that are essential in many of the day-to-day foods we eat in our busy modern lives.

## Specialty food ingredients actively contribute to the safety of food

Several types of specialty food ingredients are added to a food with a safety purpose. The precise nature and purpose of a food determines what specialty food ingredients are needed, as does the way in which it is processed. Just as different food products have different properties, so do the various specialty food ingredients; for example, food additives exhibit specific properties, even if they are designed for the same purpose, such as preservation or emulsification. Some foods are acidic and so any additives used must remain stable in acidic conditions. Other foods require heating to high temperatures, which means the food additive must be able to withstand heat. The differences between additives may be very subtle, but it is only when one stops to consider their specific properties that it becomes evident that such a wide variety is essential.

For example, specialty food ingredients can be used to:



Stop foods from deteriorating too rapidly, e.g. by preventing undesirable micro-organisms from growing, or by slowing down the chemical reactions that make them go off (e.g. preservatives, cultures in fermented products)



Maintain a food's nutritional profile, for example by preventing vitamins, essential amino-acids and unsaturated fats from degrading (e.g. antioxidants).



Mitigate the formation of undesirable components such as acrylamide generated in a wide range of cooking processes (e.g. enzyme asparaginase and ingredients such as citric or ascorbic acid, calcium salts).

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**The European specialty food ingredients industries spent in average €2 billion on R&D every year. They do have the potential to develop innovative ingredients in order to increasingly contribute to safe and convenient food in future.**



EU Specialty Food Ingredients represents a united voice for the specialty food ingredients industry on scientific, technical and regulatory issues relating to food products in Europe. It is our aim to ensure that all stakeholders - from manufacturers and retailers to regulatory authorities and consumers - are correctly informed of the use, safety and benefits of specialty food ingredients. In total, more than 200 international and national food ingredients companies are currently involved in the Federation's activities through direct membership or an association. 3-8% of EU specialty food ingredients manufacturers' turnover is dedicated to research and development.

For more information, please visit: [www.specialtyfoodingredients.eu](http://www.specialtyfoodingredients.eu)