

# SPECIALTY FOOD INGREDIENTS: ADDITIVES IN THE SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

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Delivering nutritional, technological and health benefits, specialty food ingredients are key in the manufacturing of food and drinks, ensuring that products are tasty, affordable and safe. Food additives, for example, can fulfil a variety of functions that consumers often take for granted – e.g. making food storable, transportable and convenient. So let's take a closer look at what they are, why they're used and how they are regulated.



**2 in 5 Europeans take a personal interest in food safety, with 50% considering it an important factor when buying food. <sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>EFSA, Special Eurobarometer Wave EB91.3, Food Safety reactions in the EU, April 2019

## HOW CAN I BE SURE THAT FOOD ADDITIVES ARE SAFE?



All additives must be assessed and declared safe by national and international food safety authorities (e.g. JECFA, EFSA) before they can be used in food and drinks.

For each additive, health experts review all available and relevant scientific data to identify the quantity that can be safely ingested on a daily basis over a lifetime, and use this to deduce maximum levels of use.

Additives that were permitted in the EU before 2009 are re-evaluated and checked against latest scientific findings.

Any information that casts reasonable doubt on the safety of an additive is investigated, and action is taken whenever and wherever problems occur.

## HOW DOES THE FOOD INDUSTRY ENSURE TRANSPARENCY?



**Declaration:** Food additives have to be listed on the label by name or E-number.

**Function:** Product labels must include the function of the additive in the finished product.

**Reason:** Food additives must fulfil a clearly defined technological need that cannot be achieved by any other means.

**Access:** Details of all authorised additives are publicly available [here](#).

## CAN FOOD ADDITIVES SUPPORT THE SAFETY OF FOOD AND DRINKS?



Indeed. Take preservatives as an example. In food they prevent the development of harmful or even life-threatening levels of microbiological spoilage.

This leads to extended shelf life and a reduction in food waste.

Antioxidants are another example. They prolong the shelf-life of foods by protecting them against oxidation.

**Did you know?** The oldest preservatives are salt, sugar, vinegar and spices, which were first used hundreds of years ago.